

COVID-19 Production Playbook

The Complete Guide to Keeping Your
Team, Talent, and Clients Safe on Set.

Created by Blue Ant Plus

BLUE ANT
PLUS
BRAND STORYTELLERS



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When COVID-19 shook up our industry, none of us knew how long it would last, or just how much it would affect our work. What we *did* know was that our clients needed branded content more than ever—and that we had a series of productions already in the works, with many more to come.

So to ensure that the show could go on safely for our coworkers, our talent, and our clients, our executive producer, Laura Hepes, worked closely with our legal team to create the on-set safety procedures you'll find in this document—all adapted from the guidelines set out by the Commercial Production Association of Toronto. She then honed them based on real-world knowledge gained during the last six busy months.

Laura's obsession with on-set safety led to her becoming an official COVID-19 Compliance Officer, certified by the state of California for TV, film, and music production. We consider her the final word in COVID-era production safety, and she'll be the first person to tell you to put your mask back on if you remove it during a shoot!



Overview

On-set safety is your responsibility...

As the producer of any campaign, big or small, it's on you to ensure the safe surroundings and behaviour of everyone on set, whether you're working with union, non-union, or freelance crews. This means that you're responsible not only for providing a clean space, but also for supplying everyone with the necessary equipment (masks, gloves, sanitizer, etc.) and ensuring that they follow the on-set protocols discussed here.

Communication is key, so make sure everyone has read the rules before they show up to a shoot.

The four components of on-set safety



Training



Screening



Self-assessment



On-set protocol

Training



Set the tone for a safe shoot

We're all inundated with information about staying safe in the COVID era, but habits still vary on issues like washing hands and disinfecting workspaces. As the producer, it's your job to set objective expectations for sanitization techniques and safety procedures for everyone on set. That means assigning specific safety roles and making sure everyone is aware of the rules.

Assign a campaign supervisor

To keep your team focused on their work, assign one person the task of enforcing your on-set safety practices and monitoring the crew's health during production.

Stay current on COVID

Safe-shoot practices continue to evolve, so be sure to update your on-set guidelines based on the latest findings. For instance, gloves are now considered necessary only for handling "possibly contaminated" items, as wearing them all day (instead of constant hand washing) can actually spread more germs.

Become a COVID-19 compliance officer
Want to take safety to the next step?
Become an official COVID-19 Compliance Officer, certified for music video, commercial, television and film-production sets. Check it out.



Screen Policy + Protocol

1.

Before you leave home for the shoot, complete the official Ontario self-assessment survey so that you're aware of the most up-to-date symptoms. Retake the survey during the shoot if you feel the onset of symptoms. Upon arrival for each shoot day, everyone must complete a health questionnaire. (You'll find ours on the next slide.)

2.

Using a contactless thermometer, check the temperature of everyone as they enter the set and any other time when team members will be in close contact (e.g., before filming of maskless scenes).

3.

For shoots where multiple performers will be together without wearing masks or keeping their distance from each other, they should get tested for COVID-19 five days before production starts (to allow time for the results) and, if possible, self-isolate until the shoot date.

Here is our questionnaire

COVID 19 Health screening for entry on set

NAME _____

1. Have you been tested for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

YES

NO

2. If yes, have you received the results?

YES

NO

3. If yes, were the results positive?

YES

NO

4. Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19?

Sore throat

Headache

Fever

Dry cough

Tiredness

Aches and pains

Diarrhea

Loss of taste or smell

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

Chest pain or pressure

Loss of speech or movement

YES

NO

5. Have you been in close contact with anyone who has symptoms in the past 14 days or has tested positive in the past 14 days?

YES

NO

6. Have you travelled outside the country in the last 14 days?

YES

NO

7. Has someone in your household travelled outside of the country in the last 14 days?

YES

NO

SIGNATURE: _____

Self Assessment



Be clear about the symptoms

We're all eager to do what we love, so some team members and talent may overlook symptoms they don't want to see. It's up to you to make sure they're aware of the symptoms of COVID-19—and how easily infections can spread on set.

To put everyone at ease, use the government's official self-assessment tool and symptom information at ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread.



What if a crew member has symptoms?

Anyone involved in a shoot should tell the campaign supervisor *before* the shoot day if:

- They've tested positive for COVID-19.
- They're experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- They've travelled abroad in the past 14 days.
- A public-health official has told them to self-quarantine.
- They've come into close contact (within two metres or living in the same home) with anyone in the above categories.

Any crew member who fits any of the above scenarios **should stay home** on shoot day. And since that may mean a short-term cancellation, the campaign supervisor should **have standbys on call** for all key positions, including talent.

The production will also **comply with local health authorities' disclosure requirements** to assess risk of exposure to other cast and crew members.



What if **someone** shows up with symptoms?

1. Tell the campaign supervisor immediately.
2. Place the crew member in a designated area that's separated from other cast and crew.
3. Make sure they wear a mask and leave as soon as possible.
4. The campaign supervisor must notify the crew and a local health unit.

If someone on-set has passed all of the health checks but begins showing symptoms after leaving a shoot, everyone who shared that set will need to self-isolate—even if it means shutting down the rest of the production.

To help with contact tracing in those instances, be sure to keep all health-screening surveys so you can send them to your local public health unit.



On-Set Protocol

WHILE ON SET, ALL CREW MEMBERS AND TALENT MUST:



Wear a mask (including talent when not on camera), and anyone who can't physically distance should wear gloves, face shields, and coveralls. All protective equipment must be properly worn and changed as needed.



Avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth—and unnecessary touching of on-set surfaces including equipment.



Wash their hands at the beginning of the shoot day, before and after handling equipment, before and after eating or drinking, after using the restroom, after sneezing or using a tissue, and every 30 minutes. If washing with soap and water isn't an option, provide hand sanitizer in multiple areas.



Discard tissues and disposable PPE in garbage bins, and wash hands afterwards.

Location

ARRANGE YOUR SET FOR SAFETY BY FOLLOWING THESE GUIDELINES:

- Distance all crew members and talent two metres apart whenever possible.
- Create designated areas for everyone on set.
- Lock and monitor set locations and storage when you're not using them.
- Keep a “closed set” so that only necessary personnel are present.
- Clean the set and equipment before, during, and after a shoot (ideally with a dedicated cleaning person).
- Use a dedicated cleaning service for larger shoots to sanitize high-touch areas (e.g., door handles) and washrooms.
- Allow ventilation by opening doors and windows when possible and avoiding AC use.
- Hire a disinfection spray service to spray certain sets like rented homes.
- Consider staggering shoot days—and adding an extra setup day—for larger shoots.
- Hold shoot-related meetings virtually whenever possible, including when scouting locations.

Food & Craft Services

We need to rethink all on-set communal areas, and the craft service table is no exception.

- To ensure safety, there will be no “shared” food items. That means no self-service buffet and no communal tongs or serving spoons.
- Instead, all snacks and meals you provide for your crew, talent, and clients must be individually wrapped or pre-packaged.
- Crew members should also stagger eating breaks or eat in different areas. And if possible, anyone on set should use outdoor eating spaces. This may require renting a tent.



Camera + Sound

A safe set calls for a less “hands on” approach, which means:

- Performers must physically wire themselves for sound, following the crew’s instructions.
- Sound should be recorded with a boom whenever possible.
- Instead of handing items to others, crew members should put them down so they can be picked up.
- Your set should have a separate area for monitoring video.
- Any non-essential crew members should have access to a live stream instead of being on set.



Camera + Sound

Cleaning your equipment is always essential, but now it's more important than ever. Be sure to disinfect all:

- Equipment at the start of each production day, and between each new user
- Props before and after use
- Microphones before another person uses them
- Gear during shooting breaks
- Camera cards before anyone else picks them up



Hair & Makeup

Hair and makeup styling should be for key cast members only, with the following precautions in mind:

Performers should do their own hair and makeup whenever appropriate.

They should also remove their own makeup when possible.

When makeup artists are necessary, they must wear masks and face shields, and they should apply makeup to only half of the talent's face so that the talent can wear a mask as well.

If talent isn't wearing a mask during makeup application, instruct them not to speak in order to avoid the spread of droplets.

Time spent on final checks must be limited.

The number of kit items on a workstation must be kept to a minimum.

Crew members must use gloves to dispose of applicators. Each cast member will need individual supplies (stored in marked bags).

Makeup must be mixed on disposable palettes, and should be de-potted when possible.

Wardrobe

A safe set also requires a streamlined approach to wardrobe, including:

- Disinfection of dressing rooms between each use
- No help from personal assistants while performers are dressing, unless necessary
- No sharing of clothing

Any talent should also be allowed to wear their own clothing when appropriate.



Talent

Keep your cast safe

No one wants to replace talent half-way through a project.

Keep performers safe with the following precautions:

Crew members should maintain distance while directing performer movement, and should never touch them.

Cameras should be spaced at least two metres from performers.

All talent must wear protective equipment (masks) whenever possible—that includes stand-ins.

Crew members must wear masks and face shields if they come within two metres of performers.

For productions with multiple performers, all talent should self-isolate before shooting and get tested for COVID.



Recap

Every production comes packaged with its own set of challenges, and there's no question that COVID has made capturing everything you need—while keeping everyone safe—tougher than ever.

But with the right precautions, your team can still produce great content during this tumultuous time.

Here's an easy checklist to keep you on track:

- Stick with a small-scale crew (necessary personnel only).
- Offer a live stream for everyone else.
- Use temperature checks and health screenings every day.
- Make sure everyone has (and uses) proper protective equipment.
- Add protective equipment and sanitization costs to your budget.
- Enforce physical distancing (and make it easy).
- Everyone must wash hands and sanitize equipment.
- Consider hiring a cleaning person.
- Provide designated spaces for crew members.
- Individually wrap all food, makeup, and tools.
- Location scouts and meetings should be virtual wherever possible.
- Keep up with the latest symptoms, and update your procedures to keep everyone safe.

Wanna know more?



Contact Us
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About Blue Ant Plus

We're a content studio that specializes in branded storytelling. We combine the agility of a boutique shop with the resources of a global media company.

As a full-service production studio, we're experts at creating branded stories of all shapes and sizes (video, editorial, photography—you name it).

We offer a turn-key experience, combining our in-house production capabilities with Blue Ant's proven recipe for compelling content.