Australian Screen Production Industry
COVID-Safe Guidelines
Summary of Changes – Version 2, Date Issued DECEMBER 2021

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ADDENDUM:

Australia has had an accelerated roll out of COVID-19 vaccination since the Delta variant outbreak in June 2021. Over 80% of people 16 years plus are now fully vaccinated in NSW and based on first dose uptake it is projected that a coverage in the low 90's will be achieved. Projections suggest that more than 90% of Australians aged 16+ will be double vaccinated by 2022, though vaccine coverage varies by state, territory and region Vaccines are now widely accessible and the next phase of the roll out will be to provide booster doses as evidence suggests a waning of immunity for most vaccines four to six months after administration.

Further consideration and review of these Guidelines will take place when International Borders are opened and when any other substantive changes occur.

During lockdowns, COVID-19 circulated predominantly among lower socio-economic groups in specific suburbs. With the opening of the economy will come a greater diversity of social mixing and transmission in networks not previously impacted.

VACCINATION:

The Australian Government's policy is that COVID-19 vaccinations are voluntary for most Australians, although its aim is to have as many people possible choose to be vaccinated.

Some states and territories have also issued Public Health Orders mandating vaccination for certain industries or workers. For example, on 1 October 2021, the Victorian Government announced that all workers on the relevant 'Authorised Worker' list will be required to have their first COVID-19 vaccine dose by 15 October 2021 to continue working onsite. These workers will need to be fully vaccinated by 26 November 2021. Further information about the situation in Victoria can be found on the Victorian Government's website and [when available] the Victorian Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:

Risk Management Approach:

- Consider current local and regional transmission during the risk assessment and risk management process to ensure any implemented control measures are proportionate.

Vaccinations:

- Encourage cast and crew to receive the Covid-19 vaccine at their earliest opportunity.

Ventilation and Filming Indoors:

- Include a ventilation plan, and audits of ventilation, in safety officer's responsibilities and as part of the production planning process.

- Refer to any State Government or SafeWork mandates or advice with regards to interior square meter caps, or physical distancing requirements, including interior of vehicles.

Testing:

- If there is local and regional transmission of Covid-19, or scenes requiring close proximity or exertion, consider an enhanced testing regime.
- Encourage cast and crew to be tested for Covid-19 prior to the commencement of work at an interval proportionate to local risk.

Production Planning:

- Ensure a clear chain of command and communication has been established with regards to suspected on-set symptom or case protocols. This must be agreed and communicated to cast and crew prior to the commencement of principal photography, and included in the final Safety Briefing and issuing of Covid Safety Protocol documentation

Contact tracing:

- NSW, and other states may follow, is devolving contact tracing and notification of contacts back to workplaces. Within NSW, productions will not be actively supported in their contact tracing by NSW Health as previously. Safework will provide supportive advice and direct workplaces to guidance on websites. This will require COVID safety staff to make their own determinations of close and casual contacts (outside of those personally identified by cases to the health department) and advise them of the need to get tested and isolate.
  Productions will need to access guidance such as below to guide their own assessment where government agencies are not providing direct support:
  o NSW Health COVID-19 Contact Risk Assessment for General Workplace Settings

Mandatory Control Measures:

	Original	Amended
PHYSICAL DISTANCING	Ensure there is not more than 1 person per 4 square metres of floor space where possible (subject to any relevant public health / emergency management orders and directions)	**Limit crowding** with square metre caps in indoor areas, **such as**, 1 person per 4 square metres of floor space, where possible (subject to any relevant public health / emergency management orders and directions). Refer to State Government or State-based SafeWork for guidance.
HYGIENE	Undertake deep cleaning at the end of each day (including the set, production office, workshops, kitchen and food service areas and any common touch areas like door handles)	Undertake **thorough** cleaning at the end of each day (including the set, production office, workshops, kitchen and food service areas and any common touch areas like door handles)
WORKING ARRANGEMENTS	N/A	Include audits of ventilation (eg. designated windows are open) in safety officer's responsibilities.
HIGH RISK SETTINGS		High risk settings are those that

		appear to support efficient transmission of the virus and cause "super spreading" events. Factors that increase the risk of super spreading events include: • Mass gatherings indoors • Poor ventilation • Exercise causing high respiratory rates • Loud talking or singing
RISK ADJUSTED MEASURES		Productions operating in regions that have no mask requirements in health facilities or in public indoor or transport settings can reasonably assume that the jurisdiction is at a low level of transmission risk and can adjust their controls proportionately. However, the recommendation that masks need not be worn in offices in NSW should not be interpreted as a guidance for productions. We have learned that foodborne transmission of COVID-19 is not a common (if ever) transmission route. Consider if the need for individually packed meals is a necessity in areas of low/no community transmission. Standard food service hygiene practices (including buffest style serving) can be applied and coupled with the use of commercial dishwashers.
SAFETY AND/OR MEDICAL	Ensure that anyone displaying cold / flu symptoms is removed from the workplace, seeks medical advice and receives a medical certificate and / or undergoes a COVID-19 test (returning a negative result) prior to return to work	Ensure that anyone displaying cold / flu symptoms is removed from the workplace, seeks medical advice and receives a medical certificate and undergoes a COVID-19 test (returning a negative result) prior to return to work **after their symptoms have resolved.**

Now that the circumstances of COVID-19 transmission in Australia are substantially different to when the original Guidelines were comprised and made available, and much more is known regarding routes of transmission, health responses within both Federal and State levels, and vaccination coverage is growing, some of the measures contained may now appear excessive in the current environment.

It is acknowledged that enforcing of practices which are no longer deemed necessary may create conflict between Covid supervisors, safety officers etc. There needs to be consideration of **current** risk to productions given location, action and perceived risk which may or may not be 'scaled up or down' depending on changing circumstances. As is evident in 2021, this can change very quickly, therefore it is strongly recommended that Productions still have a carefully considered Covid plan in place to ensure information is in place and available should Covid risk increase.

Productions are also encouraged to consider the importance of minimising environmental impacts and reducing resource use in the workplace. Health and safety can still be maintained while implementing environmental measures.

Screen Australia has published COVID-Safe Sustainability Guidance complied by Sustainable Screens Australia to enable screen productions to integrate sustainability into work practices without compromising the health and wellbeing of cast and crew. This guidance should be used in conjunction with the Australian Screen Production Industry COVID-Safe Guidelines. It is not intended to replace or supersede the COVID-Safe Guidelines or current government public health orders and directions.