

COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Shooting of Audio-visual Productions

This FAQ provides answers to questions from the audio-visual production community following the directives issued by the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) and the Direction générale de la Santé publique (DGSP) regarding health and safety measures to protect against COVID-19.

The DGSP's directives may change as the pandemic progresses. The answers given in this FAQ are valid as of October 23, 2020 in all regions of Québec.

This FAQ covers 8 major topics.

1. THE SMALL STABLE TEAM	2
2. ACTORS AND BACKGROUND PERFORMERS	3
3. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT.....	4
4. FILMING LOCATIONS.....	5
5. PHYSICAL CONTACT AND SOCIAL DISTANCING	5
6. CONTROL MEASURES.....	6
7. ADVERTISING.....	6
8. STUNT WORK.....	7

1. THE SMALL STABLE TEAM

1.1 What is a small stable team (SST)?

A team of limited size, fewer than 10 people working together exclusively.

1.2 What is the maximum number of people in an SST?

9 or fewer.

1.3 Is there a maximum length of time that an SST can exist?

There is no maximum duration.

1.4 Can an actor be part of two SSTs in two different productions at the same time? Why?

No. The risk of viral transmission increases slightly when you are in an SST, so you don't want to increase it further by exposure to two SSTs. When not filming, everyone involved in an SST is encouraged to follow public health recommendations for social distancing, which greatly reduces the risk of transmission.

1.5 What is meant by a "controlled zone" or "zone 1"?

This is a zone where performers and workers in SSTs are isolated from others.

1.6 What are the distancing rules in an SST?

According to the CNESST's *Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for Audiovisual Production – COVID-19*, "performers can be at least 1 metre away from other people, without surgical masks or protective eyewear, if they work on a single set specifically dedicated to them and form a stable team of fewer than 10 people.

For periods not exceeding 15 minutes per day, cumulatively, these performers may shoot scenes at less than 1 metre apart, without surgical masks or protective eyewear.

Individuals at risk of serious complications, as well as workers on unstable teams or working on more than one set, must stand at least 2 metres apart if they are not separated by a physical barrier or if they are not wearing surgical masks or protective eyewear."

1.7 Outside of filming, do SST members have health guidelines to follow?

SST members must follow general public health guidelines, which include staying 2 metres away from people who are not in their household or SST, washing their hands frequently, avoiding indoor gatherings of more than 10 people, and wearing a mask or face covering in situations where a 2-metre distance cannot be maintained (such as in stores or on public transportation).

1.8 Is confinement recommended for actors and crew during the period of shooting?

No. There is a residual risk of COVID transmission after confinement as practised in the audio-visual industry or the professional sports community in some Western countries. Moreover, this practice contravenes Québec's labour standards.

1.9 How long is the precautionary period between shoots for SST members?

From 7 to 10 days.

1.10 Can this period be shortened by diagnostic tests?

No.

1.11 Can directors be part of an SST, and if so, under what circumstances?

No. Directors cannot be part of an SST. They must remain 2 metres away from the actors at all times.

1.12 Can members of an SST be added or removed during filming?

Members can be removed at any time. Adding members to the SST is not recommended. One member can be added per week (7 days), as long as they have not been part of another SST in the last 7-10 days and do not have any COVID symptoms.

1.13 How many SSTs can a production form, and according to what criteria or principles?

A production can form one, two or three SSTs in the same place if the surface area and configuration of the workspaces make it possible to isolate them from each other and from others involved in the production. Also, the production may form other SSTs if the shooting takes place in different locations.

1.14 Can children be included in an SST? Do the child's age and grade level have an impact on their inclusion in an SST?

Children can be included in an SST regardless of age and what grade they are in.

2. ACTORS AND BACKGROUND PERFORMERS

2.1 Can scenes involving babies and children be filmed? What are the rules for adults and children involved in a scene?

Yes, babies and children can be filmed according to the same rules set out in the CNESST's Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for Audiovisual Production – COVID-19.

2.2 What are the rules for children and adolescents who are not part of an SST, with regard to distancing and face coverings? Do their age and grade level affect these rules?

Children and adolescents must follow the same rules as adults, except for the wearing of masks, which is recommended but not mandatory for children aged 2 to 10. Children 2 years old and under are not permitted to wear masks.

2.3 What about the elderly or people with underlying conditions?

They can take part in the shooting, but it is in their interest to remain 2 metres away from other people.

2.4 How many background performers can be put together for outdoor scenes and what rules must be respected?

It is recommended to restrict the number of background performers. They must always remain 2 metres away from others, except for a maximum 15 minutes (cumulative) per day.

2.5 Under what conditions can background performers move around without PPE when shooting a scene (for example, if they move around without stopping in an interior space, such as a corridor, without talking and without interacting with each other)?

The cumulative time of these movements must be minimized as much as possible and should never exceed 15 cumulative minutes per day per background performer.

3. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

3.1 Does the crew have to wear PPE at all times?

Yes, except for those working at all times 2 metres away from others on the production and except for a cumulative period of no more than 15 minutes per day per person.

3.2 Can a good quality face covering replace a surgical mask?

No. Surgical masks are recommended by the CNESST and DGSP for work situations. There is currently no standard in Québec for face coverings.

3.3 Can a visor be worn without further protection?

No. A surgical mask must be worn in addition to a visor or safety glasses when 2-metre distancing is not possible.

3.4 How do I decide when to replace my mask?

A surgical mask should be replaced as soon as it is soiled or wet or after 4 hours of continuous use. Depending on the person or type of activity, 2 to 4 masks are required per 8-hour shift.

4. FILMING LOCATIONS

4.1 Do the same general rules also apply when a production is shot in a public place?

Yes.

5. PHYSICAL CONTACT AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

5.1 Under what conditions are actors allowed to be within 1 metre of one another?

For a period not exceeding 15 cumulative minutes per day, performers may shoot scenes at less than 1 metre apart, without surgical masks or protective eyewear. Scenes shot within 1 metre must be timed for each actor involved and counted by adding up each timed sequence to ensure that the maximum of 15 cumulative minutes per day is not exceeded.

However, scenes between two performers involving physical contact (sex scenes, contact between parts of the face) are not permitted, except for actors from the same household who have been living at the same address for some time prior to the shoot.

In addition, friendly gestures that are of very short duration, such as a handshake or a comforting gesture such as a hand on the shoulder, are permitted. An aggressive gesture to the back or an instantaneous gesture, such as a slap or a punch, is also permitted.

In some exceptional cases, a scene with no physical contact may be shot with the actors at less than 1 metre apart, without being included in the prescribed 15 cumulative minutes, when one of the actors (who must be from the same SST) is wearing PPE, which can be rendered invisible on the screen by a special effect.

5.2 Which types of physical contact are not permitted and why?

Scenes between two performers involving physical contact (sex scenes, contact between parts of the face) are not permitted due to the high risk of viral transmission, except for actors from the same household who have been living at the same address for some time prior to the shoot.

5.3 Does the cumulative 15 minutes per day apply to persons other than actors?

This measure applies to all members of the SST, in order to make possible the shooting of scenes at less than 1 metre away without PPE. On the other hand, if someone performs all of their tasks at least 2 metres away, they don't need to

wear PPE even if, for brief unforeseen moments in their day not exceeding 15 minutes in total, they are less than 2 metres away from another person (such as in a corridor, for example).

5.4 Can only actors who are a couple in real life shoot intimate contact scenes (sex scenes, face-to-face contact, etc.)?

Yes, this applies to actors from the same household who have been living at the same address for some time prior to the shoot.

5.5 Can two actors dance together?

Yes, actors from the same household who have been living at the same address for some time prior to the shoot can dance together. It is also permitted if the actors are 1 metre away from each other and are members of the same SST, or in exceptional cases, when they are less than 1 metre apart but one of them is wearing PPE.

5.6 How is the distance between people measured?

It is measured from one head to the other.

6. CONTROL MEASURES

6.1 Must a person responsible for enforcing health and safety measures be present on a film set or at a location?

No, but it is strongly recommended, in order to avoid an outbreak on the set.

6.2 Do producers have the right to require that a crew member take a COVID-19 test?

The test does not replace any of the measures recommended in the CNESST's Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for Audiovisual Production – COVID-19. However, producers may agree with the other parties to have tests conducted in addition to the measures recommended by the CNESST.

7. ADVERTISING

7.1 Do advertising shoots have to follow the standards and guidelines set out in the CNESST's Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for Audiovisual Production – COVID-19?

Yes.

8. STUNT WORK

8.1 Is fighting with physical contact permitted, and if so, under what conditions?

Fight scenes are permitted at all times if the performers are wearing appropriate PPE. Such scenes are also permitted if the stunt performers are in an SST: they can then be less than 1 metre away without PPE for a cumulative total of 15 minutes per day per stunt performer.

8.2 Is fighting without physical contact and without PPE permitted if a distance of at least 1 metre between people is maintained?

Yes, if the people concerned are in the same SST.

8.3 What general safety measures are to be taken during rehearsals and training involving actors and stunt performers?

All rehearsals and training must be done with appropriate PPE.

8.4 If the stunt performers are in a different SST from the actors, can they shoot more than 15 minutes of fight scenes per day, without physical contact and without PPE?

The standard remains the same if stunt performers who are members of an SST are less than 1 metre apart. Even if there is no physical contact, they must respect the rule of 15 cumulative minutes maximum per day, per person, and enter the time in the records.

8.5 Can actors form an SST with stunt performers?

Yes, an SST can include both stunt performers and actors, as long as it is limited to fewer than 10 people. An SST can also be made up exclusively of stunt performers, also with a limit of fewer than 10 people.

8.6 Can more than one stunt performer be put in the same dressing room at the same time?

No. The section on special measures for audio-visual productions in the CNESST's Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for Audiovisual Production – COVID-19 states that "if the same dressing room is used by more than one performer, one following the other, it must be cleaned and disinfected between each performer's use."

8.7 Who is responsible for ensuring that health and safety rules are respected during the filming of stunts?

The producer is responsible for ensuring that health and safety rules are respected. It is strongly recommended that a person be identified for this purpose on each set.

8.8 How often should there be a cleaning of specialized stunt equipment, such as mattresses, radios and props, during rehearsals or filming days? Can this equipment be shared?

Please refer to the section on special measures for audio-visual productions in the CNESST's Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for Audiovisual Production – COVID-19. It states that:

- "As far as possible, limit the number of pieces of equipment, decorative items or props;
- Microphones must be disinfected after each use;
- Any backdrops, equipment, objects or props to be used on a shoot must be cleaned and disinfected before and after use;
- Workers and performers who have to handle backdrops, equipment, objects or props while filming must wash their hands frequently."

This information applies to both rehearsals and shoots.

8.9 Does the protective equipment for stunts used by actors have to be washed at the end of each rehearsal or shooting day?

Equipment, objects or props used in a rehearsal or shoot must be cleaned and disinfected before and after use.

8.10 Do the stunt coordinator and stunt performers have to wear their PPE at all times on the set and in the production office?

It is not required to wear PPE when distancing is respected. Individuals must wear PPE when they are 2 metres away from other people or 1 metre in the case of other SST members. Stunt performers who are part of the same SST can, however, be less than 1 metre away without PPE for a cumulative total of 15 minutes per stunt performer per day.

8.11 Do stunt performers have to wear different clothing than what they came to work in, in order to avoid the risk of contamination?

No.