



OHIO MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Museums “Open to the Public” Guideline Considerations

The following information includes ideas to demonstrate a museum’s commitment to provide a comfortable, safe, and healthy space for visitors and staff.

Please be advised that some or all of the following information may not be applicable to every institution. It is strongly recommended that before implementing any of the ideas below the institution carefully evaluates, and consults with outside legal counsel as appropriate, the legality, applicability and potential efficacy of this information for the institution.

This is a living document that will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect state guidelines and mandates, as well as industry best practices.

Please note: this document will be updated with the Ohio Department of Health’s “Responsible RestartOhio” plan for museums when it is released.

[Click here to see the Responsible RestartOhio protocols for General Office Environments from the Ohio Department of Health](#)

[Click here to see the Responsible RestartOhio protocols for Consumer, Retail & Services from the Ohio Department of Health](#)

(Please note: Museums are NOT considered Consumer, Retail & Services as part of the Ohio Department of Health’s Responsible RestartOhio plan, and must remain closed until further notice from the Governor. This plan is just an example of what museums might need to take into consideration when allowed to reopen.)

State of Ohio – Five Protocols for All Open Businesses

- Require face coverings for employees and recommend them for clients/customers at all times
- Conduct daily health assessments by employers and employees (self-evaluation) to determine if “fit for duty”
- Maintain good hygiene at all times – hand washing, sanitizing and social distancing



- Clean and sanitize workplaces throughout workday and at the close of business or between shifts
- Limit capacity to meet social distancing guidelines
- Establish maximum capacity at 50% of fire code
- Use appointment setting where possible to limit congestion

State of Ohio – Actions with a COVID-19 Infection is identified:

- Immediately report employee or customer infections to the local health district
- Work with local health department to identify potentially exposed individuals to help facilitate appropriate communication/contact tracing
- Shutdown shop/floor for deep sanitation if possible
- Professionally clean and sanitize site/location
- Reopen in consultation with the local health department

Museum, physical building

- Determine how many days a week the museum is open, taking into consideration time needed for deep cleaning and natural virus degradation
 - According to the World Health Organization, studies have shown that the COVID-19 virus can survive for up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel, less than 4 hours on copper and less than 24 hours on cardboard.
- Determine hours museum is open, which could range from the museum’s open hours pre-coronavirus, to new, reduced hours
- Determine schedule for custodial staff to thoroughly clean/disinfect both public areas and back-of-the-house areas
 - This may be influenced by the museum’s ability to source masks, gloves, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing products
- Post a sign at the front entrance stating that individuals who have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19, or those who have had contact with a person with COVID-19 should not enter the museum
 - See sample sign at the end of this document, or on the [OMA Reopen Resources for Museums page](#)
- Determine your museum’s policy on face coverings for the general public, and post signs reminding visitors of that policy
- Post signs reminding visitors to wash hands, use sanitizer, and social distance while in the museum
- Hand sanitizer stations should be present in the lobby and throughout the museum
- Tissues should be available to visitors
- To reduce/eliminate unnecessary touch points, consider trash cans with foot pedal-controlled lids



- Consider how any public water fountains can be disinfected between guests, or offer alternatives like disposable cups. If proper disinfecting between guests is not feasible, consider discouraging use of public drinking fountains
- Sanitize the entrance and exit doors consistently throughout the day
- If you have an elevator, only allow the number of individuals who can safely socially distance in the elevator at one time
- Allow only the number of individuals who can safely socially distance in the restroom at one time
- If your organization has a playground or play-space area, consider closing the area until local health officials open public playground areas
- If an external company is contracted for cleaning, museum staff must coordinate and supervise the cleaning in the exhibits and/or collections area
- Establish an isolation room for suspected infected staff or visitors with COVID-19 showing symptoms, having the room stocked with masks and gloves to be given to the possibly infected individual and all individuals attending to the suspected infected individual

Museum Exhibit Areas

- Manage visitor flow by considering one-way travel patterns through exhibits
- Consider closing hands-on areas; touchable education collections and/or traveling trunks should be discontinued
- Offer alternative programs or media to provide access to information usually provided via touch screens and other interactive exhibits, such as downloadable audio tours
- Consider suspending any touchscreen interactives or placing a plastic sheet (Mylar) over touchscreens that can be disinfected or replaced on a regular basis
- Engage in frequent cleaning and sterilization of high touch areas
 - See a sample list of high-touch/high-traffic areas at the end of this document or on the [OMA Reopen Resources for Museums page](#)
- Add security in exhibit areas to ensure adherence to guidelines

Museum Staff

- The State of Ohio requires that all employees at open businesses wear a face covering
- Consider suspending volunteer program, or at a minimum consider extra protection of the vulnerable population on your staff/volunteer program

Museum Visitor Services

- Offer dedicated entrances/special opening hours for the vulnerable population
- Consider discouraging visitors from bringing in personal belongings to the museum
- Encourage visitors to use hand sanitizer upon entering the museum
- Individuals or groups must social distance at 6 feet apart at all times



- Install a physical barrier such as a sneeze guard at front desk
- Minimize all touch points and clean area touched by visitors before helping the next visitor
- When possible, utilize advance online ticket sales with timed entry on the quarter-hour including timed entry for museums who do not charge admission
- When ready to phase in walk-in visitors, adopt technology that alerts individuals when they can approach the entrance
- Establish a queue outside the entrance for those waiting to enter, with a minimum of six feet marked throughout the queue for guests to socially distance
- Encourage visitors to make non-cash payments; frequently clean and sanitize point-of-sale equipment
- Limit number of individuals at any one time in public areas
- Groups must stay together while maintaining social distancing
- Determine your museum's policy on face coverings, and post signs reminding visitors of that policy
 - The State of Ohio recommends members of the public wear a face covering when in the population
 - If your organization requires all visitors to wear face coverings, have a stock to make available to guests
- Consider taking temperature of each visitor upon entering the museum
 - There are many variables when taking this into consideration. It is recommended to seek a discussion with your organization's board and your local health authority prior to instituting this policy to ensure proper precautions and procedures are in place
- Encourage staff to report any safety and health concerns to museum security

Museum Store and Cafe

- Install a physical barrier such as a sneeze guard at cash register
- Limit number of individuals in museum store
- Offer curb side pick for museum store items
- Place sample museum store products on floor with stock in back
- Encourage visitors to make non-cash payments; frequently clean and sanitize point-of-sale equipment
- Ensure food service areas adhere to the same guidelines as restaurants, including limitation of seating and offering take-away
- Establish a waiting area for people to stand in line at appropriate distances

Museum Collections

- Caring for museum collections presents special considerations during the COVID-19 pandemic



- Collections staff are encouraged not to touch artifacts unless absolutely necessary during this time
- As few people as possible should be handling artifacts and no two people should handle the same artifact within natural virus degradation period
- Alternative collections management work, including database management is a good alternative during this time
- Limiting the number of persons in collections and on shared work space (computers and tools that part-time staff use on different days) should be enforced
- The following are resources that will prove helpful during this time:
 - Isolating, Disinfecting, and Cleaning Historic Materials - National Center for Preservation Technology and Training - Transcribed video presentation explaining cleaning methods for historic materials.
<https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/covid-19-basics-disinfecting-cultural-resources/>
 - Cultural Resources and COVID-19 - National Center for Preservation Technology and Training - This document explores how COVID-19 persists on surfaces and how you can effectively deactivate the virus while preserving valuable cultural resources. <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/cultural-resources-and-covid-19/>
- MNHS Workplace Historic Properties Enhanced Cleaning Guidance for COVID-19 - Minnesota Historical Society - Example of a cleaning plan from one institution.
[https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/resources/emergencyresources/mnhs-workplace-historic-properties-enhanced-cleaning-guidance-forcovid-19-\(1\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/resources/emergencyresources/mnhs-workplace-historic-properties-enhanced-cleaning-guidance-forcovid-19-(1).pdf?sfvrsn=0)
- National Park Service COVID 19 Exhibitory Cleaning Guidance - Guidance for Cleaning/Disinfecting Exhibitory to Combat Novel Coronavirus
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/covid-19-exhibitory-cleaning-guidance.htm>





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High-Touch, Deep Clean Areas Identified For Museums

As a museum's commitment is to provide a comfortable, safe and healthy space for visitors and staff, this includes enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures on the high-touch areas of the museum, including:

- Door knobs and handles
- Stair rails
- Elevator buttons
- Bathroom surfaces
- Water fountains
- Registration/information desk
- Stanchions
- Exhibit areas
- Seating areas
- Interactive screens
- Hand sanitizer stations
- Museum store



ATTENTION

If you are experiencing any COVID related symptoms (cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; or any two of these symptoms: fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat or new loss of sense of smell or taste) or have had contact with a person with COVID, please do not enter the museum.