

COVID-19 Safety Considerations – August 2020

The restrictions introduced across the world to combat the spread of Covid-19 are gradually being lifted. Families and 'social bubbles' have been dancing together even under lockdown, and now in a few places it is possible to dance socially in larger groups, especially if precautions are taken. New Zealand has declared itself Covid-19 free and groups are dancing there without the need for social distancing. The RSCDS Board felt that branches and groups might welcome some points to consider if they are beginning to think about re-starting classes and dances. Outdoor events offer a higher level of safety, but appropriate precautions would still be necessary.

Given the global reach of the RSCDS it is impossible to provide specific guidelines. Each branch or group is responsible for its own activities and must comply with national and local regulations and health authority guidance. These are different in each country and often between regions within countries. They change frequently and can be tightened as well as relaxed. Each branch or group is best placed to judge when members feel it is right to resume dancing and under what conditions. They may also wish to consider consulting their branch or group insurance broker.

Until the pandemic has effectively ceased and/or an efficacious vaccine has been developed and administered, event organisers should consider putting precautions in place to prevent the spread of the virus and protect the health and welfare of dancers and musicians

The points below are offered only as an aid to help event organisers plan for a safe return to dancing. They have been compiled with input from Sir Harry Burns, former Chief Medical Officer of Scotland and Professor of Global Public Health at the University of Strathclyde in consultation with his colleagues.

- **Communication** - Communicate with the venue to ascertain its specific regulations and also with members in advance so that precautions can be implemented and dancers know what to expect.
- **Attendance** - Limit numbers at an event to help with physical distancing in accordance with local regulations. Keep a record of those attending to help with contact tracing, should that become necessary.
- **COVID-19 Infection** - Require dancers with a diagnosis of COVID-19 or any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 not to attend classes or dances for at least 14 days. Dancers should also avoid classes and dances for at least 14 days after exposure to an infected individual. Should they subsequently become infected a further 14-day self-isolation would become necessary. Advise people who are obese or who are over 70 years with serious underlying chronic health conditions, not to dance.
- **Sanitizer** - Ensure hand sanitizer is available and ask dancers to wash or sanitize their hands prior to dancing, between each dance, after visiting the toilet and at the end of the evening's class or dance. Dancers should avoid touching their face at all times.
- **Gloves** - Contrary to our original guidance, we are now no longer recommending the wearing of gloves due to the inability to sanitize cloth gloves and the potential for allergy to disposable gloves. The regular use of hand sanitizer and avoidance of face touching as described above should provide a reasonable level of protection.
- **Masks** - Masks should be worn. A well-fitting surgical mask, or at least a double-layer cloth mask, is recommended.
- **Ventilation** - Ensure the venue is ventilated as much as possible and entry and exit doors are left open. Air-conditioning should be switched off because the virus thrives in cooler air.
- **Entry & Exit** - Different entry and exit points from the venue should be designated if possible.
- **Physical Distancing** - Observe current physical distancing guidelines.
- **Refreshments** - Avoid providing food and refreshments. Dancers can bring their own drinks.
- **Payment** - Offer alternatives to cash as a means of payment for admission or ask dancers to bring the exact amount to avoid handling money.
- **Seating arrangements** - Remind dancers to use only one chair and avoid touching other surfaces as much as possible.
- **Programme** - Choose exercises in class, and dances on the programme, that help to maintain physical distancing and minimise hand touching.