



SOUND DEPARTMENT

TRAFFIC LIGHT SYSTEM COVID-19 GUIDELINES

May 2022

Before you work:

All crew **MUST** fill in a COVID-19 Health Declaration.
If you have any COVID-19 symptoms, **do not come to work**. Please get tested.

The Traffic Light System

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The system is based on the following levels:

- GREEN is when there are some COVID-19 cases in the community, and sporadic imported cases. Community transmission will be limited and COVID-19 hospitalisations will be at a manageable level. The health system will be ready to respond, including primary care, public health, and hospitals.
- At ORANGE, there will be increasing community transmission that is putting pressure on our health system. The whole of the health system will focus its resources, but can continue to manage primary care, public health, and hospitals. There may also be an increasing risk for at-risk people.
- At RED, action will need to be taken to protect both at-risk people and protect our health system from an unsustainable number of hospitalisations.

Factors for considering a shift between levels: local vaccination coverage; capacity of the health and disability system; testing, contact tracing and case management capacity; and the transmission of COVID-19 within the community, including its impact on key populations.

Localised lockdowns will be used as part of the public health response in the new framework across all levels, and there may still be a need to use wider lockdowns (similar to the measures in the previous Alert Levels 3 or 4).

Vaccination Passports

There is no longer a requirement to use My Vaccine Pass for any businesses. The Non-Vaccination Passport sections of the Protocols have now been removed and all productions will work under the same regulations.

If a production chooses to use vaccination passports, they must undertake a health and safety risk assessment, along with any other relevant legal assessment, to ensure they are not unlawfully discriminating against workers within the workplace. A production must undertake a COVID-19 health and safety risk assessment to ascertain if there are any roles within production that require vaccination. A risk assessment might identify that some work can only be undertaken by a vaccinated employee for work health and safety purposes – for example, where the risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 at work is higher than it is in the community. Productions should follow [WorkSafe's advice and guidance](#) in respect of how to conduct a health and safety risk assessment, and may also wish to seek independent legal advice.

Productions choosing to use vaccination passports must clearly communicate this in advance of your booking.

QUICK GUIDE TO THE TRAFFIC LIGHT LEVELS

	RED	ORANGE	GREEN
Expected productions	All scale productions, provided they can work with minimum 1m physical distancing requirements and strict guidelines in regards to Close Proximity work.	All scale productions, provided they can work with a recommended 1m physical distancing requirement and appropriate guidelines in regards to Close Proximity work.	No restrictions on production.
Crew	Crew to work from home where possible. Day players, casuals and extras need stringent screening.	Production should facilitate crew working from home if appropriate.	No restrictions.
Physical Distancing	Minimum 1m	Recommended 1m	No restrictions.
Personal Protective Equipment	Face coverings are strongly recommended. Face coverings mandatory on flights, public transport, taxis, retail, public venues, recommended whenever leaving the house.	Face coverings are strongly recommended. Face coverings are mandatory on flights, public transport, taxis, retail and public venues.	PPE must be available for those who wish to (or who are requested to) use it. Face coverings are mandatory on flights.
Close Proximity Work - Make Up - Costume - Stunts - Close Actor Interaction	Close Proximity work can be undertaken with strict PPE & hygiene measures in place. Please refer to the Close Proximity guidelines.	Close Proximity work can be undertaken with appropriate and agreed PPE & hygiene measures in place. Please refer to the Close Proximity guidelines.	No restrictions. Vigorous hygiene standards to be maintained. Crew may be asked to wear PPE.
Surveillance Testing	Surveillance testing is highly recommended.	Surveillance testing should be considered.	Some productions may wish to utilise regular surveillance testing.
Food / Catering	Contactless service only. Unit/Craft Services should be “café-style”. Or individual snack packages can be prepared and handed out.	Contactless service is recommended. Unit/Craft Services should be “café-style”. Or individual snack packages can be prepared and handed out.	General food hygiene standards are adhered to. Hand washing, sanitiser stations available in all eating areas.

DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC GUIDANCE – SOUND DEPARTMENT

Sound Department crew must be aware of and trained to work under the specific Traffic Light settings prior to commencing work, including the correct use of PPE and physical distancing requirements.

The below is a guide only and should be applied appropriate to the relevant regional Traffic Light Setting. The higher the Traffic Light level, the stricter adherence. Please consult with your H&S officer if you have any questions or concerns.

Introduction to Department undertakings:

- Pre-Production tasks – remote (home)
- Pre-Production tasks – on site / in production office
- Management/coordination of Sound team
- Liaison with Post-Production and on-set departments in regards to technical requirements
- On-Set operation and troubleshooting as required

Department Bubbles

- Off Set Sound Department bubble (remote preparation).
- Off Set Sound Department bubble (production office)
- On Set Sound Department bubble (Unit/Tech base AND on Set)
- On Set Department HODs/Department Liaison bubble

Contact Tracing:

- Productions are encouraged to have contact tracing of some sort in place to prevent a wider production outbreak, but it is no longer a Government requirement.
- All crew or approved site visitors must sign a COVID-19 Declaration before starting work or visiting a work site
- If using vaccination passports, production to ensure anyone entering a controlled worksite has a valid and current vaccination passport.
- All entry and exit points should be controlled and monitored.
- All workers should keep a log of non-worksites locations (i.e. stores, etc.) and interactions (meeting suppliers, location owners, etc.) they have during working hours.
- All workers are recommended to keep note of their interactions outside of work hours (whilst on a job).

Personal Hygiene Requirements and Measures

- Any worker who feels unwell must not come to work, if unwell at work they must go home.
- If a worker displays any of the symptoms of COVID-19, please call Healthline immediately (0800 358 5453) or your doctor. Production and the Health & Safety Departments must also be notified. And all close contact workers to be identified.
- If a person or persons are confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19, site closure(s) should be considered. This decision should be made on the advice of a public health officials based on information on the extent of the exposure.
- Please wash/sanitise your hands upon arrival at a work site.
- A strict personal hygiene & hand washing/sanitising regime must be observed in line with the ScreenSafe and Ministry of Health guidelines.
- Personal work stations to be cleaned/sanitised each day.
- In accordance with Ministry of Health guidelines, PPE (gloves and masks) should be available.
- Within all Traffic Light Settings, face coverings are strongly recommended. And it would be expected that most productions will require them as part of their H&S plan.
- If you choose to wear PPE, the type is up to you and should be based on the level of risk for your business or service, the working proximity, the physical work area, and the length of time people are together.
- Work should only be completed within one metre if it can't otherwise be achieved. The time spent in Close Proximity needs to be kept to a minimum.

Work Space Hygiene

On and off set

- Hand sanitising stations and PPE (gloves, masks) should be readily available at production office/location/studio and outside of communal facilities (ie. Portaloo's).
- Laptop/screen/equipment cleaning products should be readily available at production office/location/studio.
- Make sure sound crew are trained in appropriate equipment cleaning/sanitising, particularly for delicate electrical equipment.
- Personal kit/equipment/laptops to be used only by one person.
- Sound equipment to be sanitised at the end of each day. For larger productions, consider a designated sound crew member who is dedicated to maintaining high hygiene practices for all equipment.
- Regular aeration of any office space, open windows when possible. Avoid recycling air.
- Air conditioning should be run on fresh air setting, not on recirculate.
- Sanitise surfaces & mop floors at the end of each day where required.
- No visitors to site. Only workers involved in the project to enter any locations or work sites.

Kitchen & Catering

- Stagger lunch where possible and apply physical distancing measures.
- Depending on the current level, consider no open snacks, fruit or shared food.
- Consider lunch box style lunches to be prepared, or where appropriate, subsidy for workers who are required to bring own lunch.
- All communal cutlery & crockery must be sterilised in dishwasher. Compostable cutlery & crockery to be used if sterilisation is not possible.
- Communal kitchen items to be sanitised before & after use.

Toilets, Showers & Drying Rooms

- Physical distancing rules also apply to the use of shared facilities, including toilets, shower and drying rooms.
- Sanitising stations on location available outside of communal facilities (i.e. portaloo's).
- If numbers require then add additional toilet facilities, i.e. portaloo's
- Hygiene posters and signage should be clearly visible in shared spaces like kitchens, toilets, entrances and exits, etc.

Interaction with Other Departments, Suppliers, Cast & Extras

Gear Prep

- All suppliers should have their own policy and plan for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic including contact tracing and the cleaning/sanitising of all equipment. Please notify production if you have concerns.
- Rental houses should have the gear in a prep bay cleaned and ready for pickup or testing, as well as adequate procedures for handling equipment handovers.
- Rental houses should have equipment and hand sanitiser readily available.
- Rental houses should have strict contact tracing procedures in place, i.e. a sign in/out system in place, etc.
- All equipment hand-overs should be contactless.
- Consider working with the Costume department to pre-rig microphones in optimum positions in costumes to avoid microphone being affixed to actor, or requiring further adjustment when artist is in costume. This may require costume decisions to be taken earlier and may need testing during pre-production. Consider shooting costume camera tests with sound.
- Sound department to consult with VFX supervisor to investigate if microphones can be mounted external to costumes and digitally removed.

Meetings

- Sound or inter-departmental meetings to be remote or on digital platforms as far as practicable. Or hold meetings in open areas wherever possible.
- PPE should be available for essential inter-departmental meetings.

- Physical production meetings to be carried out with physical distancing appropriate to the current Traffic Light level. If possible, particularly if in a confined space, a 10 person limit is recommended. Use of a face covering is strongly recommended.
- Reduce physical interaction with other departments as far as reasonably practicable.
- Interactions with other crew, cast and public must be as per physical distancing protocols.
- Main Unit, 2nd Unit and Splinter Unit to be treated as completely different units with limited physical interactions.
- Reduce physical interaction with other departments as far as reasonably practicable.
- Interactions with other crew, cast and public must be as per physical distancing protocols.

Travel

- Ride-sharing is not recommended unless you are already in a small and regular work bubble and if physical distancing is maintained. Use of a face covering is strongly recommended.
- Crew who travel together should always be part of the same work bubble.
- No recycling air, clean air fan inlet only, open windows where possible.
- Shared vehicles should not be used outside work.

Set Protocol

- Sets should be treated as closed sets, with essential crew on set only.
- A 1 meter distance to cast and other crew (DOP, camera team, etc.) must be adhered to.
- To avoid on-set congestions, liaise with 1st AD for appropriate times to fit/adjust radio mics, etc.
- The Sound Mixer does not need to be on set but could be provided with suitable isolated area. On location this may be a separate room.
- For any sequences in moving vehicles sound mixer should be in separate vehicle.
- Discuss supplying a separate small speaker set up for use by the Director or 1st AD to communicate with the cast or off-set crew using separate microphones.
- Whenever practicable, only the camera department will plug cables and equipment into the camera. Please liaise with them to ensure contactless work.
- Allow other departments time and space to complete their work.
- For enclosed shooting sets, please ensure regular aeration, open windows when possible. It is recommend that crew are allowed time during the day to get fresh air.
- A designated radio mic fitting area (possibly with workspace for equipment sanitation) may be required away from set or the costume fitting area. Please discuss with production/locations/costume departments.

Equipment & Kit

- All kit must be cleaned/sanitised between locations and at the end of each day.
- All radio mics must be cleaned between cast and at the end of each day.
- It is advisable that radio mics are designated to specific cast members whenever possible.
- Headphones should be designated individual crew members and sanitised at the end of each day.
- Avoid double handling of consumables like batteries. Consumables should be sanitised before handling. Consider assigning multiple transmitters to cast to avoid battery changes.
- Hands to be washed/sanitised regularly
- Consider a tag system for identifying cleaned equipment to save time.
- Everything should live cleaned in a case. Assume cases/handles are always exposed and require hand washing after handling.
- It is recommended that, whenever practicable, cast (or a crew member already in the cast's Close Proximity Bubble, i.e. their Make Up Artist or Costume Standby) fit their own radio mics. When this is not possible, a Close Proximity Bubble should be considered and discussed with Production. See below section.

Sound Cards & Rushes Procedures

- Sound cards should be handed over in transit cases that are sanitised before handover and Cards should be sanitised before return.
- Appropriate Rushes Drives handling procedure to be developed by each production/ post-production to ensure safety of anyone handling cards and of the rushes themselves.
- Production should consider sending a single Rushes Drive with all data rather than sending multiple camera cards and a sound card to post.

Cast

- COVID-19 information to be distributed to cast prior to their arrival on set.
- All cast must fill in a COVID-19 Health Declaration prior to work.
- Face masks/coverings and PPE shall be made available to all cast.
- Cast may be asked to use a face covering whenever practicable. Some productions may require this as part of their H&S plan.
- All cast to wash/sanitise hands on arrival at location/studio
- A COVID-19 induction and health check on arrival by a competent person, i.e., registered nurse, paramedic or the safety officer.
- Whenever possible, a specific cast area must be set up with physical distancing observed.
- Whenever possible, one AD should be assigned to key cast and another AD assigned to extras/stunts/additional cast.
- Personal bags or items should be left in the cast/costume/make up area.
- Each cast member may want a water proof wet bags for their personal items to travel to set. Only 3rd AD or cast to carry this, and only cast member is to put things in & take things out.
- No phones on set, no one else to handle cast personal belongings.
- Disposable Cast water bottles are recommended. Cast to handle their own food – no double handling.
- ADs to sign in/out cast at the start and end of the working day. Contactless is preferred so you should consider using electronic systems if practicable.

Close Proximity Bubbles

Close proximity tasks (0-1metre) introduces a higher risk and PCBU's must eliminate or minimize this increased risk by applying the appropriate control measures.

- Close contact scenes with less than a metre physical distance (a Close Proximity Environment) must only be done after thorough discussion and mutual agreements with producer, Cast/Agent and other affected departments (H&S, Make Up, etc.).
- *For specific guidance around intimacy scenes (kissing, etc.) please discuss well in advance with your Health & Safety Officer.*
- For some productions longer-term Close Proximity Bubbles might be created to avoid contact with other bubbles (i.e. key Cast, their Make Up Artist, Costume Standby and/or PA/Driver).
- Communication must be clear about who is in the Close Proximity Bubble.
- The Close Proximity Bubble size must be kept to minimum, ideally less than 3. No more than 10 people.
- Time spent in Close Proximity should be limited to the absolute minimum necessary time.
- While in a Close Proximity Bubble, contact with other bubbles should be kept to an absolute minimum. The crew member should also consider the extent and impact this may have on their family and social life.
- Cast's individual comfort levels must be taken into account and there must be no coercion. Consent must be gained for each and every scene of an intimate/close nature. Cast must never be required to perform intimate or close action they are not comfortable with.
- The emphasis is on transparency and communication. Performers will get scripts and information regarding the intimate/close scenes well in advance of rehearsals and shooting. They need to know the level of intimacy/physical action required in detail and the length of time expected to be in close/intimate proximity.
- Cast will be given adequate time to consult privately with their agent prior to agreeing to the scene. Nothing should be last minute.
- Close Environment scene details shall be re-confirmed prior to blocking/filming and Cast and crew comfort levels re-assessed.
- Crew working in a Close Proximity Bubble should wear appropriate PPE if requested or recommended.
- Use of a face covering is strongly recommended.
- If you choose to wear PPE, the type is up to you and should be based on the level of risk for your business or service, the working proximity, the physical work area, and the length of time people are together.

- Work should only be completed within one metre if it can't otherwise be achieved. The time spent in Close Proximity needs to be kept to a minimum. At all other times, a one-meter distance should be maintained.
- *Please familiarise yourself with the Close Proximity and Scene Specific Guidance sections of the ScreenSafe Covid-19 Protocols.*

Scheduling

- Ensure that the shoot schedule reflects the current Traffic Light setting and the additional time required to facilitate the current physical distancing guidelines. Particularly in regards to Close Proximity Bubble requirements.
- Ensure the shoot schedule reflects fatigue levels and the wellness of crew.
- Consider staggered calls and rolling lunches to maintain appropriate physical distancing.
- Sufficient time must be allocated for a thorough H&S/COVID-19 site induction at the start of the day and at each location.
- Crew may need additional time for gear cleaning/sanitising between locations moves and at the end of the day, so you may need to allow time for this.