



CATHEDRAL CHORAL SOCIETY PHASED REOPENING PLAN

Current Version: Monday, September 13, 2021

I. Statement of Purpose

For more than a year, choral singing — in its in-person form — has been silenced due to the safety hazards associated with the spread of Covid-19. However, many people — more than 1 in 10 Americans — enjoy the experience of choral singing (Chorus America). The Cathedral Choral Society (CCS) believes singing is important for mental health, community connection, economic impact, and artistic expression, and for those reasons we are planning for a safe return to in-person choral singing. The safety of our singers, staff, and patrons comes first and we are putting new measures in place to protect us all.

In preparation for the safe reopening of our CCS programming, we would like to outline our policies and guidelines. As Covid-19 safety practices are ever-evolving, we are creating this plan to be as flexible as possible so that we can quickly and efficiently adjust to any new regulations, guidance or developments issued by the CDC and DC Government.

We are eager to resume rehearsals and performances; however, we must balance that excitement with the ongoing need to protect the health and wellbeing of all involved. While the CDC has relaxed masking protocols for those who are vaccinated, the act of singing increases levels of aerosol and droplet emission. Consequently, it is the opinion of the CCS that it is worthwhile to implement more conservative practices to prevent disease spread until the CDC and our own medical advisors recommend otherwise.

GOALS

1. The safety of our patrons, singers, and staff.
2. The phased return to in-person choral events.
3. The reporting of any event-related Covid-19 cases.



II. The CCS Phased Reopening Plan

The Cathedral Choral Society plans to reopen in two phases.

Phase 1 includes outdoor, socially distanced community singing opportunities open to the public in the Amphitheater at Washington National Cathedral.

Dates of *SummerSing* events: June 20, July 25, August 22, September 19, 2021.

Phase 2 is a return to indoor rehearsing and performing at Washington National Cathedral. Rehearsals are anticipated to begin in October 2021, with the first concert being presented in December 2021.

Both phases – and the safety protocols for each – are dependent on guidelines from the CDC, restrictions from the City of Washington, D.C., the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, and the guidance of the medical community. The safety protocols as outlined in this document will change over time based on the recommendations of the aforementioned.

III. General Safety Guidelines

In accordance with CDC public health guidelines, along with the most current scholarly research (see addendum), the Cathedral Choral Society reopening plans adhere to the following:

1. CDC Guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>
2. Washington, D.C. Phased Opening Guidance & Restrictions:
<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/page/stay-home>
3. Washington National Cathedral
The guidelines for safety protocols at Washington National Cathedral are set by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation (PECF) following CDC guidelines.

From the Bishop of Washington, regarding singing in church services:

We have all missed singing, and recent CDC guidelines tell us that singing indoors by fully vaccinated people wearing masks is a safe activity. Therefore, singing is once again permitted by choirs and congregations, as you feel comfortable. This is an opportunity to encourage choir members and parishioners to receive the vaccine before returning, as the more people who are vaccinated, the safer all of us are in church. It is also within your authority,



or that of your music minister, to insist that all choir members be vaccinated. I recommend that you do so, but leave it to your discretion.

Bishop **Mariann Budde** - May 13, 2021.

PHASE 1: OUTDOOR *SUMMERSINGS* IN THE CATHEDRAL AMPHITHEATER

Approved by board vote on May 26, 2021

June – September

CCS will begin a phased reopening in June with an outside, *SummerSing* experience in the Amphitheatre at the Washington National Cathedral. The Amphitheatre will operate at a reduced capacity with singers and participants socially distanced six feet apart. Household groups participating will be arranged together in ‘pods’ with no more than six people per pod. The total number of participants will not exceed capacity guidelines as determined by the City of Washington, D.C.

Current singers are NOT required to participate and may join in as their comfort level and schedules permit.

Because all participants in the *SummerSings* will be singing and mixed together, everyone will be asked to abide by the same set of guidelines, as follows.

GUIDELINES FOR SUMMERSING PARTICIPATION

Participants Must:

- Present proof of vaccination upon registration for the event. The date of the final shot must be at least 14 days prior to the *SummerSing* event.
 - In the case of a medical exemption for vaccination, a letter signed by a medical doctor stating the reason for the exemption must be provided at the time of registration for the event, along with proof of a recent negative Covid-19 test.



- Wear appropriate and well-fitted face coverings over both nose and mouth while entering the amphitheater. Masks may be removed once participants are in their assigned locations.
- Sign a participation waiver.
- Remain socially distanced.
- Stay home if feeling sick.
- Report any onset of Covid-19 symptoms or a positive Covid-19 test to the event organizers-post event.

PHASE 2: INDOOR REHEARSALS & CONCERTS AT WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

Approved by board vote on September 10, 2021.

The guidelines that CCS will follow in determining the best practices for returning to indoor rehearsals and performances include:

- City mandates regarding masking & capacity levels.
- CDC and NIH guidelines regarding best-practices for health and safety.
- Mandates from Washington National Cathedral and the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation.

DC Guidance 8/12/2021:

https://coronavirus.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/coronavirus/page_content/attachments/Masks_Guidance_DCHealth_COVID-19_Guidance_R2021.8.12.2021ForPosting.pdf

International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study Updated Guidelines
8/12/21:

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4717034/international-coalition-performing-arts-aerosol-study-july-2021-update-final.pdf>

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF & CONTRACTORS



The Cathedral Choral Society of Washington, D.C.’s (“CCS”) goal is to achieve and maintain a 100% vaccination rate among our employees, for everyone’s safety, and so that we can resume holding in-person staff meetings, meetings with board members and donors, rehearsals, concerts, and more.

The CDC and EEOC have deemed that COVID-19 is a direct threat to the health and safety of others. Therefore, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, an employer can have a policy that protects the health and safety of others from a direct threat. The CDC has also indicated that employers may ask all employees who will be physically entering the workplace if they have COVID-19 or symptoms associated with COVID-19, and ask if they have been tested for COVID-19.

Symptoms associated with COVID-19 include, for example, fever, chills, cough, and shortness of breath. Accordingly, it is CCS’s policy is to provide an appropriate questionnaire before allowing employees to enter the facility. **Additionally, it is the policy of CCS, to require vaccinations of all employees and contractors** who are expected, as a part of their duties, to interact in person with other employees or contractors, board members, singer members, or patrons.

If an employee is not vaccinated for an exempt reason and the employee’s position is such that an accommodation is possible, CCS will make reasonable accommodations.

To receive a medical exemption, the employee must provide a written, signed document from a medical doctor on the doctor’s letterhead stating the reason for the exemption.

For a religious exemption, the employee must provide a written statement describing the request with supporting information or documentation, such as a signed letter from a religious leader.

The executive director will review vaccination rates, Federal and DC regulations and alter office work policies as necessary to maintain a safe environment.

OFFICE WORKSPACE & MEETINGS

Employees of CCS will return to in-person work on or around September 1, 2021. Beginning on that date, the following policies will apply to CCS work:

1. Only fully vaccinated people¹ will be permitted to work in the CCS offices.

¹ In general, people are considered fully vaccinated: 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after



2. When CCS hosts guests in the offices, masks will be required of all employees and guests unless the guest shows proof of vaccination.
3. Employees are encouraged to take meetings with non-employees *outside* of the offices, either in the Library boardroom, outdoors, or in an alternate space.
4. Employees may opt to work remotely – when possible – if they feel their health and safety is at risk.
5. The office space will be cleaned by Washington National Cathedral staff regularly; however, employees are encouraged to clean and disinfect private and communal spaces regularly. Cleaning supplies will be supplied by CCS.
6. Employees are encouraged to stay home if they feel under the weather.

A remote working policy is currently being developed for CCS employees and will be available by September 1.

a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine. See CDC, [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html#vaccinated), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html#vaccinated>, (Updated on May 16, 2021).



GUIDELINES FOR SINGERS

To ensure our patrons' health and security, as well as the safety of our performers and staff, the Cathedral Choral Society has implemented the following policies, effective September 1, 2021. **These policies are subject to change based on guidance from health professionals or mandates from local government.**

1. Proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 is required to attend all indoor rehearsals and performances of the Cathedral Choral Society. Prior to the first rehearsal, singers will be asked to email or upload their proof of vaccination.
 - a. "Full vaccination" means that either 14 days have passed since receiving the second dose of FDA or WHO authorized double-dose vaccines or that 14 days have passed since receiving the sole dose of FDA or WHO authorized single-dose vaccines.
2. **Due to the substantial risk of Covid-19 transmission when singing, especially indoors, exemptions from the vaccination requirement will not be accepted at this time.**
3. As per the current mandate from City government, masks are required at all times for all regardless of vaccination status in all indoor spaces. Should this policy change, CCS will reevaluate based on venue size, social distancing, airflow, and other health and safety benchmarks.
4. Singers are asked to self-monitor their own health, and to not attend rehearsal if they are experiencing any symptoms associated with Covid-19.
5. Singers may – and should – make decisions about attendance based on their own health and safety. Singers who choose to opt out of a rehearsal or concert due to these concerns will not be penalized or removed from future CCS activities.
6. Rehearsal venues will be chosen for the overall health and comfort of the singers. While not every venue can provide information about air circulation, the staff will work hard to create a safe environment for singing.
7. The length of each rehearsal – or each part of rehearsal – will not exceed that recommended by the most recent aerosol study, before participants will be asked clear the space. This time is currently set at 50 minutes.
8. As per the recommendation of the most recent study of aerosol transmission, singers will be required to maintain a distance of 3 feet from each other while singing.
9. Singers will be asked to sign a waiver indemnifying the Cathedral Choral Society in the event of Covid-19-related illness.
10. Concerns about the health and safety of the chorus members should be communicated to the Chorus Manager or the Executive Director.

GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS



As a resident ensemble at Washington National Cathedral (WNC), CCS follows the health and safety policies and protocols set by the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation (PECF). Those policies can be found at: <https://cathedral.org/host-an-event/covid/>

Additional information about visiting Washington National Cathedral can be found here: <https://cathedral.org/visit-us/faq/>

At this time, there is no Covid-19 vaccination requirement to visit the Cathedral or attend a concert, and the Cathedral will be open at full capacity. As per the mandate from the City of Washington, D.C., all visitors are required to wear masks while indoors.

PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT

IF YOU ARE SICK, STAY HOME

If you or someone in your group doesn't feel well, has exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 in the previous 14 days, or has been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the previous 14 days, please stay home.

FLEXIBLE EXCHANGE POLICY

If on the day of your performance you do not feel well or are concerned about your own health and safety, you have several options:

1. Watch the live stream of the event.
2. Exchange your tickets for a future CCS concert.
3. Request a full refund.

SHARE INFORMATION WITH YOUR PARTY

If you are the ticket purchaser, you will have accepted the Terms of Service affidavit regarding rules for mask-wearing and general health and safety. Shortly before your performance date, you will receive a Know Before You Go email from us, sharing the most up-to-date version of this important information with you. Please be aware that only the ticket purchaser will receive these emails, so be sure to share these communications with everyone in your party so that they are aware of what to expect on their visit.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU VISIT

As we work together to ensure the Washington National Cathedral is a COVID-safe venue, here are some measures you can expect on your upcoming visit.



MASKS ARE MANDATORY FOR AGES 2 AND UP

Masks are mandatory at all times and during the entire performance, for those aged 2 and up.

Please see the CDC's [guide to masks](#) for recommended face coverings.

OUR STAFF IS THERE TO HELP

Ushers and security guards are available throughout the performance to monitor everyone's safety, and to assist in any way they can. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, please speak to one of our friendly staff who will assist you.

PLEASE RESPECT THE RULES

These rules have been created for the safety of all patrons. Patrons will not be allowed to enter the venue without a mask or if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID. Patrons who refuse to keep their masks on will be asked to leave the venue without a refund.

SEATING CONFIGURATION

The Cathedral Choral Society is currently selling tickets up to our full capacity for all performances after September 1, 2021. This means that there will not be physical distancing within the venue, and you will have patrons sitting directly next to, in front of, and behind you. Should city mandates or other health organization advise against maintaining a full capacity, you will be notified.

ARRIVAL

To ensure timely entry, please arrive early for your performance. Once you have entered, we ask that you move swiftly to your seat to avoid crowding in the lobby.

KEEP YOUR SEAT

We strongly encourage you to stay in your allocated seat unless you are purchasing merchandise or using the restrooms. When you have completed these activities, please move back to your seat as soon as possible. When you must move around, remember masks are mandatory at all times. Please follow the signs and the directions of our ushers.

OCCUPANCY CAPACITIES



Small spaces such as restrooms and elevators may have a posted maximum capacity to avoid overcrowding. Please respect the posted limits.

SANITIZE YOUR HANDS

We will have hand sanitizing stations located at several points around the theater and in the restrooms for your use. Please make sure to use these regularly during your visit.

AT THE END OF THE CONCERT

At the end of the performance, please allow extra time to exit in an orderly fashion and avoid crowding. Once you have exited the Cathedral, we ask that you promptly move away to ensure others can exit without congestion.

VENUE INFORMATION – WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

(For the most up-to-date information, visit: <https://cathedral.org/host-an-event/covid/>)

Outlined below are Washington National Cathedral's cleaning procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines were developed according to recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and National Institutes of Health and will be reevaluated as new guidance emerges.

1. Properly worn face masks are required of our staff, volunteers, visitors, worshippers, and vendors.
2. Automatic hand sanitizer dispensers will be available to guests in the event space.
3. In addition to regular, thorough cleanings, staff is frequently wiping down furniture and other commonly touched surfaces (such as door handles) using EPA-approved disinfectants. We have also upgraded our HVAC system air filters.
4. Public water fountains and hand driers will not be in use.

EMPLOYEE SCREENING

All CCS and WNC employees, contractors, and volunteer singers are vaccinated and will wear a mask or face covering while at work.

CONTACT TRACING

If we are notified of a positive COVID diagnosis of an audience member, we will promptly alert the appropriate health authorities for contact tracing.



PLEASE NOTE: These protocols currently in place are subject to change in compliance with revisions to national and local guidelines regarding COVID-19. While we will provide the most up-to-date public health procedures to improve patron safety, they are not an absolute protection against contracting COVID-19. Patrons assume their own risk by entering the facility.

IV. REPORTING COVID CASES IN EMPLOYEES, PATRONS OR VISITORS

If it is reported that anyone in attendance (singer, staff, patron, visitor) has contracted Covid-19, the Cathedral Choral Society will follow procedures required by the DC Government through the Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form. [[Link](#)]



ADDENDUM

Recent research on Covid19 and Singing:

Measurements and Simulations of Aerosol Released while Singing and Playing Wind Instruments. (4/13/2021)

<https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/articles/hq37vp75r> ,
<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4030003/aerosol-study-prelim-results-round-2-final.pdf>

Droplets and Aerosols Generated by Singing and the Risk of Coronavirus Disease 2019 for Choirs (8/27/2020)

<https://academic.oup.com/cid/advance-article/doi/10.1093/cid/ciaa1241/5908276>

Safer Singing During the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic: What We Know and What We Don't (7/2/2020)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7330568/>

High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice — Skagit County, Washington, March 2020 (5/15/2020)

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>

REHEARSAL AND CONCERT PRODUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

(From the University of Colorado/University of Maryland 4/13/21 Study relating to Choral Singing.)

The goals of the recommendations are to limit emissions and exposure to potentially infectious aerosol produced by musical performance. Wind instruments, singing, and theater performance produce respiratory particles, and the amount and size of particles emitted vary by intensity and pitch.

We recommend a layered approach to decreasing exposure to potentially infectious aerosol, larger droplets, and surfaces. The layered approach we recommend includes: wearing facemasks and putting masks over the bells of wind instruments; rehearsing and performing in well-ventilated spaces; limiting rehearsal time; practicing good hand hygiene; disposing of liquids from spit valves in an appropriate receptacle.



MASKS

Well-fitted masks for singers and performers were effective at decreasing aerosol and larger droplet emissions from musical performance. Aerosol concentrations in front of the mouth of singers decreased when a mask was worn. These control measures also decreased the jet speed and extent, decreasing the plume range of more highly concentrated aerosol exposure.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Performers should follow social distancing protocols as recommended by the CDC for music activities. Aerosol concentrations are highest closest to the source, both inside and outside, and decrease with distance.

REHEARSAL SPACE PREFERENCE ORDER

We recommend that musicians and performers perform in outside environments compared to indoor environments. If musicians cannot perform outside, then indoor performance spaces must be highly ventilated. Rehearsal space preference order:

OUTDOORS

Indoors with elevated outdoor air exchange rate from HVAC

Indoors with typical outdoor air exchange rate from HVAC plus recirculation air through MERV 13 filters or addition of appropriately sized HEPA air cleaners

Indoors with outdoor air exchange rate from open windows supplemented with appropriately sized HEPA air cleaners when airflow is reduced under certain outdoor wind conditions.

LIMITING REHEARSAL TIME

Study shows lowest risk with an exposure duration less than 30 minutes for indoor singing and 60 minutes for outdoor performance.

If indoor spaces are used, we recommend having at least three air changes per hour in the rehearsal room and limiting rehearsal time to 30 minutes^{4,5} at a time before leaving the room for at least one air change. For a room that has three air changes per hour, one air change is 20 minutes.

HEPA AIR CLEANERS TO SUPPLEMENT VENTILATION



- If indoor spaces are used, we recommend using HEPA air cleaners. Portable HEPA air cleaners have been shown in previous studies to decrease risk of airborne diseases such as tuberculosis.⁶ HEPA air cleaners increase air changes per hour and decrease aerosol concentrations in a room.
- The HEPA air cleaner should be appropriately sized for the space. This blog by Shelly Miller contains more information about CADR and HEPA air cleaners. An important number to consider when looking at HEPA air cleaners is the clean air delivery rate (CADR), which is often given in cubic feet per minute.

MITIGATION TECHNIQUES FOR CHORAL ENSEMBLES

From: <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NAfME-Position-and-Guidance-on-Singing-in-Our-Schools-March-2021.pdf>

Although no procedure is 100% effective, the following measures have been proven to mitigate the risks of spreading the virus through in-person singing:

- Masks must be worn at all times.
- Singers should stand 6 feet apart in every direction.
- In-person rehearsals should last no longer than 30 minutes before moving to a secondary space.
- Rehearsals can resume in the primary space after an appropriate amount of time for air exchange (see #4).
- Indoor rehearsal spaces should be ventilated, and indoor rehearsals should be “followed by a minimum of one air exchange rate (ACH), preferably 3 ACH, to change the air indoors with outside air.
- Larger rehearsal spaces are preferable.
- When possible, use of outdoor spaces for rehearsal is recommended.
- Depending on the size of the ensemble, directors may need to divide their group into smaller ensembles.
- Frequently wash hands using soap and water or hand sanitizers.