



## American Repertory Theater

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### 14 GREATER BOSTON THEATRES UNITE TO ANNOUNCE COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SAFETY AS LIVE, INDOOR PERFORMANCES RESUME

*Proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test and masks  
will be required for all audience members*

*New survey results show majority of arts goers  
support these measures*

(BOSTON): Fourteen theatre companies in the Greater Boston area have banded together to announce a collective commitment to public safety as live, indoor performances resume in the region amid concerns around the rise in COVID-19 cases in the US.

These theatre companies will implement policies designed to protect the health and safety of everyone by requiring proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test for all artists, staff members, and audiences who attend live, indoor performances at their institutions. Masks will be required inside the theatres as well.

These policies will be in place starting immediately and valid through October 31, 2021 (in alignment with Broadway's current policies), and will be reevaluated as the situation evolves. They are based on CDC guidance and were developed in consultation with public health officials. Individual theatres will list their specific protocols and guidelines on their websites.

The organizations joining in this effort are: Actors' Shakespeare Project, American Repertory Theater, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Central Square Theater, The Front Porch Arts Collective, The Gamm Theatre, Gloucester Stage Company, Greater Boston Stage Company, The Huntington, Martha's Vineyard Playhouse, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Moonbox Productions, SpeakEasy Stage Company, and Wellesley Repertory Theatre. Other companies are expected to sign on in the coming weeks.

"We at The Huntington, along with our colleagues, are eager to welcome back audiences to live performances this fall, and we are prioritizing everyone's health and well-being in order to safely reopen," says **Huntington Managing Director Michael Maso**. "These measures will provide multiple layers of protection in our theatres - it's what our patrons want, and it's an essential part of our broader responsibility as public-facing institutions."

"We're committed to creating a culture of care," says **Central Square Theater Executive Director Catherine Carr Kelly**, who is also co-vice president of New England Area Theaters (NEAT), an association of midsize theatres. "All of our companies are fully vaccinated. Requiring proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test, along with wearing masks, increases the safety for fellow patrons and also for the artists and staff of each company."

### AUDIENCE OUTLOOK SURVEY DATA AND THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The recent announcements that theatres in New York City, Washington, DC, and Chicago have established similar policies around requiring proof of vaccination or negative COVID test and mask wearing, combined with the latest results of ArtsBoston's Audience Outlook Monitor survey, gives Greater Boston theatres increased confidence in implementing these measures.

The Audience Outlook Monitor is a longitudinal survey sponsored locally by **ArtsBoston** and run nationally by independent consultant **WolfBrown**, that has been regularly providing Greater Boston arts organizations with data about audience perceptions, concerns, and intentions during the pandemic. It has been a vital tool for arts groups in developing their plans, policies, and communications strategies.

In the most recent round of survey data collected August 9 - 13, 2021, 80% of respondents indicated that proof of vaccination would make them more likely to attend indoor events, and 50% said that proof of vaccination or negative COVID test is a prerequisite for their attendance. According to the survey, 98% of respondents reported being fully vaccinated or planning to do so.

The survey showed that news of the delta variant has reduced audience demand to return to indoor performances right away. In the June 2021 survey, 18% of respondents said they wouldn't attend an indoor event that week. That figure more than doubled to 39% in the recent August round of surveys. The increase reflects the rising level of concern of audience members

"After deep consideration on this topic and following the guiding principles of our Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience for Theater, we came to this decision, recognizing that the vaccines are now widely available and free," says **Mark Lunsford, ART Artistic Producer**. "Along with enhanced ventilation and universal masking, vaccination and testing are critical cornerstones of our multi-layered mitigation efforts that prioritize the safety of our community of staff, audiences, and artists."

"Requiring proof of vaccination or a negative test is the best way for us as a community to reopen responsibly," says **Paul Daigneault, SpeakEasy Stage Company Producing Artistic Director**. "It will allow us to move forward and continue to prioritize everyone's safety - audiences, artists, and theatre staff alike."

"The health and safety of the audience, artistic team, and staff must always be the first priority," says **Joseph Allen, associate professor and Director of the Healthy Buildings program at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health**. "That means when we have new tools available, we need to use them. On top of enhanced ventilation and masking, the vaccines offer an additional, and excellent, layer of protection that should give everyone even more confidence as we reopen theaters."

## PROTOCOLS FOR ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE

All patrons attending live, indoor performances at participating theatres must present proof of vaccination or proof of a negative COVID test before entering the venue, and must wear a mask inside the theatre.

Proof of vaccination may include showing either a vaccination card or a photo of the card, or a digital vaccine record (through an app such as Bindle at [www.joinbindle.com/people](http://www.joinbindle.com/people)). Anyone who is unable to be vaccinated or to verify their vaccination status for any reason will be required to show proof of a recent negative COVID test before entering.

Individual theatres may have their own guidelines and instructions for patrons; please see a theatre company's website or contact them directly for further details about specific policies.

## PARTICIPATING THEATRES:

[Actors' Shakespeare Project\\*](#)  
[American Repertory Theater \(ART\)](#)  
[Boston Playwrights' Theatre\\*](#)  
[Central Square Theater\\*](#)  
[The Front Porch Arts Collective](#)  
[The Gamm Theatre\\*](#)  
[Gloucester Stage Company\\*](#)

[Greater Boston Stage Company\\*](#)  
[The Huntington](#)  
[Martha's Vineyard Playhouse\\*](#)  
[Merrimack Repertory Theatre](#)  
[Moonbox Productions](#)  
[SpeakEasy Stage Company\\*](#)  
[Wellesley Repertory Theatre\\*](#)

*\*Member of New England Area Theaters (NEAT), an association of midsize theatres*

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