Film and Television
Working Concept for Filming during the COVID-19 Crisis

3-Zone Model

The general COVID-19 measures as well as legal regulations shall be fully observed. Employee safety takes absolute priority.

The overall balance between safety and the necessary freedom of the artistic-creative process on set requires different and partially fully isolated work environments.

The unprotected collaboration between directing, camera and actors may only involve individuals from a protected as well as reliably and negatively tested pool (closed set). The conditions of a closed set are presented on Page 3. This approach is designed to minimise the risk of infection. However, infections cannot be fully excluded due to the risk of false test results.

Any other involved departments shall enable and facilitate the implementation of the general COVID-19 measures. The interplay between the various trades (extended set) should ideally resemble the average construction site of a house where bricklayers, roofers, electricians or gas and water fitters work in different areas of the same construction site while the carpenter is already fixing the kitchen.

Film projects realised by smaller teams of 5 to 10 individuals, such as for documentaries, commercials, editorial productions or smaller contributions, are exempted. Such smaller film projects should only observe the general COVID-19 measures (face masks, distance of one metre, frequent hand washing, regular disinfection).
General rules

Sick employees showing symptoms of fever, breathing difficulties, shortness of breath, sore throat, cough, sudden impaired sense of smell or taste, fatigue and limb pain may not enter the workplace premises.

General access to the workplace premises is only permitted in compliance with general COVID-19 measures:
- face mask
- minimum distance of 1 metre
- frequent hand washing
- regular disinfection

Setting up of a permanent hygiene station: general check of body temperature as well as distribution of face masks, disposable gloves and disinfectant.

Trained hygiene experts plan and monitor overall compliance with the hygiene plan for a specific setting and/or the individual zone in constant coordination with the management for production and filming.

Special attention is paid to Zone 3 (e.g. extras).

The different departments (units, trades) are organised as groups/pools. The staggered start of work and/or gradual, group-based set preparation by individual trades:
1. production design / art direction / equipment / props
2. film technology
3. sound technology

Surface disinfection of props and equipment for the closed set on the premises before rehearsing and recording by trained hygiene experts.
Access to Zone 1 (Closed Set):
- actors
- (extras/background actors, if needed)
- director
- camera
- assistant director
- camera assistant
- sound engineering
- props
- makeup and wardrobe

No COVID-19 measures or minimum distance. Reduced team inside the protective bubble – similar to shooting nude scenes.

Employees in Zone 1 are PCR tested (pools of about five) and isolated from the remaining team. In other words, transportation, catering and breaks take place in isolation; work and safety corridors without contact to the remaining team.

PCR tests are conducted as pool tests (testing of several samples, individual testing only if necessary).

Tests are repeated as necessary or in case of uncertainty (in the event, for example, of unforeseeable circumstances or private contact); otherwise pooled testing every other day.

The special protection of Zone 1 is based on the following procedures (negative test results) for PCR pool testing: all Zone 1 employees are tested twice every other day. In order to receive the first set of test results in time, the first test round should take place three days before the start of filming. In the event of a positive pool test, the pooled sample is tested individually and retested after two days.

In the event of positive test results, public health services are notified, and their instructions implemented.

These colleagues remain in self-isolation based on common sense and self-responsibility both before and after filming.
Access to Zone 2:
- directing crew
- camera crew
- lighting and grip crew
- sound crew
- set design / art direction / construction / props

The individual workstations of Zone 2 are arranged according to sets / premises. The minimum distance is fully observed, and face masks are used, if necessary.

The video village is divided up – all departments receive screening equipment for their individual and clearly separated workstations.

Individual trades, organised into groups, are managed as pools of individuals. Intersections between handling departments, e.g. equipment or props, are precisely defined and strictly protected by constant hygiene measures.

Workstations shall measure at least 20 square metres; a minimum of 5 square metres of space per employee on set shall be observed.
Access to Zone 3:
- makeup/wardrobe caravans
- production office
- trailer park
- car park
- vehicle fleet
- materials store
- extras
- catering
- deliveries

Extras / crowd scenes
The most sensitive aspect: film crews may currently only shoot scenes in which the general COVID-19 measures are explicitly observed.

Extras with unprotected contact to the closed set shall be tested; once again, as economically as possible based on pool testing.

Anonymous crowds may also be realised in post-production thanks to stock footage or crowd replication.

Catering
Staggered lunch breaks for individual pools. Particular compliance with hygiene and prevention measures with regard to the catering crew (chefs), serving counters at separate stations and dining facilities.

Transportation
Isolated for individuals on the closed set and/or within the protective bubble. Individual arrival and departure for the remaining team. Carpooling only if the vehicle is suitable for maintaining the safety distance or if passengers wear face masks.
Medical advice

Hans-Peter Hutter  
Department of Environmental Health  
Center for Public Health  
Medical University of Vienna

AAFP  
Association of Austrian Filmproducers  
aafp@austrian-film.com

Film Austria  
Association of Creative Film Producers  
office@filmaustria.com

Austrian Directors Guild  
office@austrian-directors.com

Younion – Die Daseinsgewerkschaft  
Union of Municipal Employees, Art, Media, Sport and Freelance Workers  
Austrian Trade Union Federation

Association of the Film and Music Industry  
Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

Austrian Filmmakers Association  
office@filmschaffende.at