



Re-Opening Plan for NJ Movie Theatres

June 18, 2020

About NATO



National Association
of Theatre Owners

Advancing the Moviegoing Experience

National Association of Theatre Owners
1705 N Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

The National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) is the largest exhibition trade organization in the world, representing over 35,700 movie screens in the USA, and cinemas in 100 countries worldwide.

NATO STATEMENT ON EARLY STATE RE-OPENINGS

April 22, 2020 - "While some states and localities are beginning to authorize the opening of movie theaters under certain conditions, the movie theater industry is also a national one. Until the majority of markets in the U.S. are open, and major markets in particular, new wide release movies are unlikely to be available.

As a result, some theaters in some areas that are authorized to open may be able *economically* to reopen with repertory product; however, many theaters will not be able to *feasibly* open."

About NATO-NJ



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Robert Piechota, President
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NATO-NJ is an independent regional group of National NATO representing approximately 100 movie theaters with nearly 800 individual screens statewide. We are the source of more than 5,000 jobs in New Jersey.



Re-opening Plan

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NATO-NJ is committed to re-opening movie theaters in New Jersey with an abundance of caution while making health and safety our top priority.

Experts* categorize Covid-19 exposure risk in a managed cinema environment to be equivalent to hair salons and barbershops that can implement reasonable and effective social distancing and related safety protocols, and safer than houses of worship.

*"Johns Hopkins Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors," April 17, 2020.

Re-opening Plan

The Re-opening Plan presented here has been designed to be adaptable to suit both larger chains and independent theaters. Our members' facilities in New Jersey range from single screen cinemas to multiplexes with more than 20 auditoriums.

Main Elements of the Re-opening Plan

- Employee Requirements
- Patrons Requirements
- Ticket Sales
- Concessions Sales
- Seating
- Security
- Training
- General Items

Employee Requirements (1 of 3)

- Masks and gloves will be required for all employees.
- Employees will not be allowed to begin work without this gear.
- Each employee will sign a document each day upon the start of their shift certifying they do not have any symptoms associated with Covid-19 and that they do not have a fever.
- Employees will be monitored regularly during the period the theater is open. If an employee becomes sick, they will be sent home immediately.
- Employees will be required to maintain social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.

Employee Requirements (2 of 3)

- Employees and/or third party contractors will clean, sanitize and disinfect public spaces, bathrooms and food preparation areas in accordance with options for consideration from NATO as well as guidance addressed to businesses including, but not limited to:
- Various state and municipal DOH requirements
- National Association of Theatre Owners - Reopening Operations Resources
- CDC – Covid-19 Reopening Guidance
- FDA – Food Safety During Emergencies/best practices retail food stores, restaurants...during Covid-19
- OSHA – Publication 3990. Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for Covid-19

Employee Requirements (3 of 3)

- Employees or third party contractors will provide continual cleaning of the relevant areas and surfaces during the hours the theater is open and after the theater closes.
- During breaks, staff will maintain social distancing guidelines. Staff breaks will be staggered.
- Hiring will be conditioned on applicants signing a certification document acknowledging that they have been symptom-free for 14 days prior to their start date.
- Training will be provided to all employees on all Covid-19 policies being implemented prior to re-opening and when updates or changes are announced.

Patron Requirements

- All patrons must wear masks as required by NJ Executive Order.
- Seating patterns will be adjusted in accordance with social distancing.
- Queue lines will maintain social distancing requirements.
- Restrooms will be cleaned frequently during theater opening hours.
- Signs will be posted to indicate that social distancing guidelines and other safety rules must be maintained.

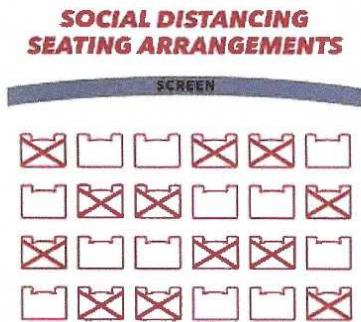
Ticket Sales

- Ticket sales will be conducted in compliance with any state mandates or guidance which may limit occupancy of each theater venue.
- When possible, touchless purchasing technology will be employed and patrons will be able to enjoy a contactless experience.
- For theaters lacking touchless capability, tickets will be purchased at designated locations where the employee and the patron will not have any direct physical contact and maintain a proper social distance.
- Plexiglass contact partitions will be employed at all customer service contact areas.
- Queues will be marked with measured 6-foot increments that patrons must adhere to while waiting to conduct transactions.

Concessions Sales

- Queue lines will maintain physical distancing standards, patrons and employees will wear masks, and food service workers will wear gloves.
- Where possible, apps enabling pre-purchase of concessions will be employed and purchases will be delivered to patrons' seats, thus avoiding queue lines.
- Plexiglass contact partitions will be employed at all customer service contact areas.
- In addition to customer service contact areas, staff will maintain standards of sanitization at all self-service and courtesy areas and other contact points.

Seating



Auditorium seating layouts vary significantly. Seats will be “blocked out” to accommodate 6 feet of spacing between non-household patrons. Household patron seating will be restricted.

- Seating patterns will be arranged to maintain social distancing between households on all sides (see example of potential seating pattern to the left).
- Reserved seating ticketing systems will be updated to require empty seats on either side of a household’s ticket purchase.
- If a theater does not have a reserved seating policy, an usher or theater manager will direct compliance with seating rules and monitor guests at routine intervals.
- Auditoriums will be cleaned between showtimes.

Security

Theater staff will direct, monitor and enforce physical distancing guidelines in the auditoriums before and at certain intervals during the show as well as in other public areas of facilities.

Training

- Management will ensure all employees are trained properly on safety and sanitizing procedures.
- Signs and placards will be placed in appropriate public areas reminding staff and patrons to adhere to safety policies. Proper markings on floors will be installed to assist in maintaining mandated physical distance levels.
- Signs will be posted outlining the policies and that if not followed the patron will be asked to leave the theater. Further, all safety policies will be posted on the theater's website.

General

- Showtimes will be staggered to ensure capacity is controlled and enough time is allotted for entry and exit as well as cleaning the theatres
- Extra hand sanitizer stations will be located throughout facilities.
- Facility HVAC system air exchangers will be calibrated to maximize replacement of indoor air with fresh air.
- Independent theaters with smaller lobby areas and other limited space, and limited technology, will make every effort to adhere to the guidelines outlined above.
- Theaters and patrons will be required to follow the CDC Coronavirus Prevention Guidelines, NJ DOH requirements, and all social distancing requirements established by the Governor in the delivery of these services.

Conclusion

The movie theater industry knows it has to re-establish the love of the communal experience of going out and sharing the event that so many of us cherish. It can only return if patrons feel safe.

We recognize the importance of giving people a place to once again “escape” their homes, even for just a couple of hours, and feel part of a community, but with safeguards in place to address the “new normal.” We believe we can provide this entertainment outlet safely by limiting capacity and ensuring the safety of our employees and the public health at the same time.

For questions and clarifications on
the NATO-NJ Reopening Plan,
please contact:

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