

## Guidelines for Ringing Safely during COVID-19

The Handbell Industry Council recently released educational materials with regard to ringing safety during the pandemic. Malmark was pleased to collaborate on this project and we are very grateful to Linnette Rodriguez-Figueroa, PhD, an Epidemiologist at the University of Puerto Rico and an avid handbell ringer herself for sharing her expertise in how we may continue to ring safely during this time. Further information may be found on HIC's [website](#) with regard to resources and suggestions for using handbells and handchimes. We are pleased to offer the Quick Guide to Ringing Safety, below. Feel free to download a copy [here](#).

### **A Quick Guide to Handbells and Handchimes during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

*Special thanks to Linnette Rodriguez-Figueroa, PhD for her collaboration with the Handbell Industry Council in offering guidelines for good health and safety while ringing.*

### **Caring for your Ringers**

#### **Before Rehearsal**

- Try to limit the number of ringers present at rehearsal. Consider sectionals or rehearsing music for smaller ensembles.
- Encourage ringers to stay at home if they are feeling unwell.
- If possible, ringers should be tested for COVID-19 before resuming rehearsals.
- Monitor each ringer's temperature before rehearsal.
- Each ringer should wash their hands for 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

#### **During Rehearsal**

- Rehearse in a large space or outdoors, if possible.
- Everyone should wear a mask.
- Maintain a six-foot distance from each other. Assign one ringer per table.
- Ringers should wear gloves at all times.
- Each ringer should stay on the same position for the entire rehearsal.
- Select repertoire that does not require shared or borrowed handbells or handchimes.
- Sneeze and cough into elbows.
- Ringers should behave as though they all might be infected with the virus.
- Try to limit special techniques which require touching the casting or clapperhead.

#### **After Rehearsal**

- Each ringer should wash their hands for 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Disinfect all equipment and surfaces.
- Gloves should be removed and put into a sealed plastic bag to carry home to launder after each use.
- Once home, disinfect or discard masks.
- If someone at the rehearsal is later identified as a suspected COVID-19 case, the Director/Conductor should inform all ringers. They should all quarantine themselves for 14 days before rejoining the rehearsals.

# **Guidelines for Ringing Safely during COVID-19**

## **Equipment**

### **Tables and Pads**

- Each ringer should be assigned to one table.
- Even if your foam is covered with fabric, it should be covered during rehearsal with additional fabric which can be laundered after each rehearsal (i.e., an old bed sheet) or a plastic table cover which will be disposed of after rehearsal. Fabric should be sealed in a plastic bag to carry home to launder.

### **Binders, Risers and Music Scores**

- Each ringer should be assigned to one binder and riser. The binder and riser should be disinfected with a disposable disinfectant wipe before and after rehearsal. If music must be shared, it should be covered with sheet protectors which should be disinfected before and after rehearsal.
- Ringers should wear gloves at all times while touching music.

### **Handbells and Handchimes**

- Disinfect instruments before and after rehearsal. Handchime tubes, aluminum handbell castings and handbell handles should be wiped with disposable disinfectant wipes. The outside of bronze handbell castings may be wiped with disposable disinfectant wipes and then dried with a clean, soft cloth like an old t-shirt or a microfiber cloth. These cloths should be sealed in a plastic bag to carry home to launder after each use. If bronze castings begin to stain or discolor, they should be polished immediately with handbell polish.
- Caution your ringers not to handle the clapperheads of the instruments if possible as they are difficult to disinfect.

### **Mallets and Singing Bell Sticks**

- Mallet shafts and singing bell sticks should be disinfected before and after rehearsal with disposable disinfectant wipes.
- Caution ringers not to touch the mallet head as the yarn will be difficult to disinfect.