

New Mexico Gay Men's Chorus - Protocol for rehearsal and performance for the Fall 2021 Semester

Vaccination Policy | Frequently Asked Questions

Effective as of August 20, 2021

I'm excited about the possibility of returning to "normal" rehearsals, but I'm also a little bit nervous, too.

That's completely understandable. We have all been through one of the most extraordinary events of our lifetimes in the last year and a half. It's been a long time that we've been apart, but there's tremendous enthusiasm for being together and SINGING AGAIN! Remember, we are taking this one step at a time, following and monitoring the advice of medical professionals and health experts. We will adapt as necessary.

What do I need to do if I wish to participate with the New Mexico Gay Men's Chorus in Fall of 2021?

All participants (singers, orchestra musicians, soloists, and volunteers) are to be fully vaccinated before taking part in any NMGMC activity (rehearsal, concert, volunteer event). This means that your final vaccine dose was received at least 10 days prior to the date of your first activity.

Which vaccine do I need to receive?

Any of the three vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson/Janssen) available in the USA offer excellent protection and is recommended. Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the best Covid-19 vaccine is the first one available to you. The CDC does not recommend one vaccine over the other.

What will rehearsals and concerts look like for the Fall 2021 season?

Our goal is to return to as "normal" operational protocols for NMGMC rehearsals and concerts in the coming year while focusing on the health and safety of our members and audiences. To that end, the following protocols will be in place until further notice:

- **REHEARSALS**
 - Prior to attending rehearsals, members must provide proof of receiving a full dosage of COVID vaccinations (2 shots – Pfizer or Moderna, 1 shot – Johnson and Johnson) . A photo of your COVID Record Card must be emailed to Michel Leger, VP Membership.
 - All singers must wear a protective face mask over their nose and mouth for throughout rehearsal including breaks. Singers will initially be asked to provide their own masks and NMGMC leadership is looking into the purchase of professional "singers masks". Additional disposable masks will be provided at rehearsal by NMGMC leadership should a member forget theirs.
 - Regular rehearsals will take place on Monday nights from 6:30-8:30pm with a 15 minute break in the middle.
 - At all Chorus events, members shall social distance themselves by at least three (3) feet, whether standing or sitting - - consistent with and per CDC guidelines.
 - No food is to be brought into rehearsal space. No snacks will be provided or allowed.
 - Members may bring a covered water bottle into rehearsal. Closed-topped bottles with straws are recommended.

- If any members is not feeling well, they may attend rehearsals via ZOOM. Before rehearsing on ZOOM, please notify your Section Leader and Hans Pascal, VP of Communications.
- Seating will be wiped down with disinfectant before and after each rehearsal.
- **PERFORMANCES**
 - No less than two (2) weeks before performance dates, specific schedules and protocols will be discussed regarding performances.

I believe I had Covid-19, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. While it may be true that there is some resultant natural immunity after recovery from Covid-19, it is believed to be not as strong, nor as long lasting, as that provided by the available vaccines.

What should I do if I am not feeling well before rehearsal, concert, or other activities?

Please do not come to rehearsal if you are not feeling well (or running a fever) in order to keep the entire NMGMC safe.

Will our audience members need to be vaccinated too?

Decisions regarding protocols for audience members are made by venue owners/managers, not by NMGMC. We will share their protocols well in advance of performances.

Who will see and have access to my COVID Record Card

Your completed form will be kept in a secure file on Musetta and only Chorus President, VP of Membership and Artistic Director will have access. The form will not be shared outside of the organization.

If I am unvaccinated, may I still participate if I sing with my mask on?

No, unless you have received a vaccination exemption for medical or religious reasons from the NMGMC.

How long will the NMGMC require a Covid-19 vaccination as a condition of participation?

We are currently requiring a Covid-19 vaccination for the Fall 2021 Semester. We will be ready to adjust or amend our policy as new data comes to light and will revisit this in November for the Spring Semester.

Why Vaccines?

After considering the published guidelines of state and federal authorities and investigating the policies and practices being adopted by major choruses in the United States, we have concluded that: 1) vaccines are safe and are the best way to protect our members and those around them from serious illnesses; 2) the COVID-19 vaccine may keep you from getting COVID-19 and lessen symptoms if you do contract the virus; and 3) a fully vaccinated group is the safest, most direct way of resuming full, normal choral activities.