

Cinema halls can operate at 100% capacity, Shri Prakash Javadekar releases SOP for film screening

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Union Minister Shri Prakash Javadekar today released a standard operating procedure on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19 for cinema halls and theatres. Announcing the decision the Minister said now Cinema halls can operate with full capacity. He added that sanitisation and COVID protocols will have to be adhered to but people can buy food from the stalls inside the theatres. He added that the restrictions put in place due to COVID are on the verge of ending.

The SOP comes in the backdrop of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India permitting the opening of cinema halls and theatres vide their order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 27th January, 2021.

At the onset, the SOP states that no Exhibition of Film shall be allowed in containment zones and that States/UTs may consider proposing additional measures as per their field assessment. The SOP states that hundred percent seating capacity is allowed inside cinema halls.

The SOP clarifies that all COVID related safety measures must be adhered to inside the premises. The General Guidelines specify that respiratory etiquettes must be followed including usage of face masks, adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet to be followed outside the auditoriums, common areas and waiting areas at all times, spitting will be prohibited and usage of Aarogya Setu app will be encouraged.

Thermal screening of visitors would be carried out at entry and exit should be done in a staggered row-wise manner to avoid crowding. e. Sufficient time interval between successive screenings on a single screen as well as on various screens in a multiplex shall be provided to ensure row-wise staggered entry and exit of the audience. Staggered show timings shall be followed for multiple screens to avoid crowding.

The SOP promotes usage of contactless digital transactions for payments for tickets, food, and beverages etc. Sufficient number of box office counters shall be opened and purchase of tickets at the box office shall be open throughout the day and advance booking shall be allowed to avoid crowding at the sale counters.

Stressing on the sanitisation of the entire premises, the SOP calls for frequent sanitization of the entire premises, common facilities, and all points which come into human contact, e.g. handles, railings, etc. shall be ensured and auditorium shall be sanitized after every screening.

The SOP has laid down specific measures for creation of public awareness against COVID by display of Do's and Don'ts throughout the premises by way of announcements, standees, posters etc.

The detailed SOP can be read the link below:

<https://mib.gov.in/sites/default/files/FINAL%20SOP%20for%20Exhibition%20of%20Films%20%281%29.pdf>