

A statement from Toronto Fringe regarding COVID-19

March 18, 2020

The Toronto Fringe is closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 and taking direction from the City of Toronto, the province, and the country's leaders as we all navigate our current collective reality. We are also engaging closely with TAPA, CAFF (Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals), and our fellow theatre and festival organizations in Toronto and abroad.

As of March 18, the Toronto Fringe is continuing all plans and preparations to present the 2020 Fringe Festival as scheduled from July 1-12, 2020. We will provide updates to participants, audiences and stakeholders if there are any changes to the current situation.

Following the recommendations of the City of Toronto and Province of Ontario, our administrative offices have shifted to remote working operations. The Canadian government is taking strong measures to flatten the curve and head off a potential rapid outbreak of COVID-19 in this country, and Toronto is taking these efforts seriously. We are operating in remote-work conditions until at least Monday April 6, when the city of Toronto has tentatively scheduled to resume all services as normal. All staff can be reached via email but may be limited in ability to receive voicemail messages. [Our staff email addresses can be found here.](#)

In light of these unprecedented times and the impact of these global events on all sectors and levels of stakeholders, the Toronto Fringe is amending the participant withdrawal policy for 2020:

Effective as of March 18, any company that withdraws from the festival between now and April 30, 2020 is eligible to receive 100% of its participant fee back. If a touring company withdraws after April 30 due to cancellation of other festivals of their tour, they are eligible to receive 100% of their participant fee back. All other companies that decide to withdraw from the festival after April 30 are eligible to receive 50% of their participant fee back. Touring companies are defined by the Festival as the following categories: CAFF, International, National.

If for any reason the Toronto Fringe must defer the scheduled dates for the 2020 festival, currently scheduled for July 1-12, 2020, to a later date in 2020:

If companies are unable to participate in deferred dates in 2020, they will be eligible receive 100% of their participant fee back.

If for any reason the Toronto Fringe must cancel the scheduled dates for the 2020 festival, currently scheduled for July 1-12, 2020:

If the 2020 festival is cancelled by the Toronto Fringe, ALL companies still in the festival will be eligible to receive 100% of their participant fee back.

Further conditions if cancellation occurs:

- All companies still in the festival will receive an offer for a spot in the 2021 Festival (June 30-July 11, 2021) before the lottery applications open in early October 2020. This is a first-right-of-refusal spot.

- All companies that were in the festival as of March 18, 2020 but withdrew after that date will receive an offer of a first-right-of-refusal spot in the 2021 festival, before lottery applications open in early October 2020.
- If any company that is eligible for a first-right-of-refusal spot in the 2021 festival chooses to accept it, they will be required to pay a new full participant fee for the slot at that time.

While we do not anticipate any changes to our scheduled events at this time, we do not know how travel restrictions will affect touring companies in the coming months. At this time, the Government of Canada has announced that it will close all borders to non-Canadian citizens travelling to the country for non-essential reasons, including from the US. The US border is anticipated to remain closed for at least 30 days. We advise our touring artists to **constantly** and **closely** monitor the travel advisories of all countries for updates on new or removed restrictions for travellers and visa-holders, and assess if they will have impact on their travel plans and ability to present and perform at all tour stops.

We will continue to monitor the local, provincial, national, and global situation and communicate further updates as times progress.

From all of us at the Fringe, we hope you stay safe, healthy, and connected (while still respecting social-distancing etiquette!) in this unusual time.

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Resources:

City of Toronto response and updates on COVID-19 in Toronto:

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/>

Updates from Canada Public Health on COVID-19 in Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Canadian travel advice specific to COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

Canadian travel health notices:

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice>

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