

## COVID-19 Sample Reopening Plan

Imperial Valley Desert Museum  
Submitted by: David Breeckner, Executive Director  
June 2020

To help museums share thinking as they navigate the challenges and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alliance is compiling examples of reopening plans from individual institutions. These plans are specific to each museum's circumstances and are not meant to be definitive guidance for developing your own. Instead, they provide reference for what other museums are considering as they chart a course toward safely reopening. Check the Alliance's [reopening guide](#) frequently for updates, as we will be adding new examples as we receive them. If you have a plan or perspective on reopening you'd be interested in sharing with the broader museum field, please contact [content@aam-us.org](mailto:content@aam-us.org).

**Disclaimer:** This sample document serves as an example of how one museum addresses a particular issue. Museums should compose original materials based on their unique circumstances. Any document produced by the recipient should not substantially use the contents of this sample as the basis. Materials are provided "as is," without any guarantee or warranty of any kind, expressed or implied. Information shared here is not intended to supersede guidance from public health officials, medical experts, and federal/state/local governments. Museums are encouraged to seek legal and other expert advice on their specific circumstances.

### Support Free COVID-19 Resources for the Museum Field

AAM maintains an online collection of more than 1,000 sample policies, plans, and forms from museums of all types and sizes through the Alliance's [sample document library](#). Access is a benefit to staff of [Tier 3 member museums](#). Given the current crisis, this and other resources have been taken out from behind our member paywall to make them free and accessible for all. The current crisis is taking a distressing financial toll on cultural organizations, and AAM is no different. In these challenging times, we ask that if you can, consider supporting our [advocacy work](#) and making extensive [COVID-19 resources](#) freely available for our field, by [making a donation](#) or [becoming a member](#) of AAM. Thank you for your much-needed support.



June 10, 2020

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Executive Director

### CA Roadmap to Recovery: Definitions

At this time, Imperial Valley Desert Museum has no clear reopening date. According to the "Roadmap to Recovery" published by Governor Newsom, as an "Indoor Museum," IVDM is classified as a Stage 3 business. On Friday, June 5, it was announced that Indoor Museums in qualifying counties within the state of California will be permitted to re-open beginning Friday, June 12. IVDM is not one such museum. Before IVDM can even consider reopening, Imperial County will first have to complete both parts of its Stage 2 reopening review. Imperial County is currently in Stage 2 and continues to see new cases emerge on a daily basis. As such, it is unlikely IVDM will be able to face the issue of reopening until several more weeks at the earliest.

On Tuesday, May 26, 2020, Imperial County released new guidelines for reopening additional businesses under the Stage 2 classification. These new guidelines permit the reopening of "Outdoor Museums." This allows for the public opening of outdoor exhibit areas and trails, but expressly forbids the reopening of "indoor exhibits, gift shops, cafes, restaurants, convention spaces, etc." These latter will be included as part of the "Indoor Museums" reopening plan in Stage 3. The May 26 announcement has also provided for the reopening of Office Workspaces, though work-from-home is still heavily encouraged.

### Expectations

1. IVDM has and will continue to work directly with other regional museums and cultural institutions to determine the best policies for public health and safety moving forward.
2. IVDM recognizes that, despite the ongoing crisis, it will likely see extreme attendance numbers upon reopening.

People are hungry to go outside their homes and have experiences again. They are doing so in droves once that permission is given. This was observed at Yellowstone National Park, when thousands of out-of-state visitors descended on the park on opening weekend.

It will not be as simple as putting in spacing/social distancing limitations and expecting a low turnout. As summer approaches, as a desert museum it is equally inappropriate to ask or expect guests to queue outside in the extreme summer heat. IVDM plans to institute an online pre-booking system with slotted attendance time slots. This will help to balance high demand with ongoing safety concerns and attendance limitations. Bookings will be made directly through the IVDM website. In order to ensure the success of this system, advanced notice and advertising is essential – IVDM is readying multiple fliers and social media notifications to update its guests and membership of the new policy.

Recognizing that IVDM receives many visitors from out-of-region, additional slots will be left open every hour for “walk-ins.” Although restrictive, the alternative to this system could otherwise result in people being asked to queue outside in the desert's summer heat if/when there is a turnout that exceeds the institution's safety capacity.

### Policies and Procedures

1. IVDM staff are now permitted to work in-building as needed. Staff are encouraged to continue working from home. All requests to work in-building are subject to permission by their Department Head, following consultation with the Executive Director.
2. IVDM is preparing a public notice which will formally announce the re-opening of our grounds to visitors, but that the building itself will remain closed.
3. IVDM has consulted with Imperial County Public Health to re-open its indoor bathrooms as part of the outdoor service.

IVDM must first institute preventative measures, including clearly and physically closing off the rest of the Museum building, instituting regular cleaning of the affected areas, and staffing the front desk to enforce social distancing and face mask policies.

4. IVDM is working with signage companies to purchase window and floor signage providing information on social distancing and face mask use.
5. IVDM has purchased PPE gear for its staff, including masks, gloves, and face shields. Every member of staff in the building will be provided their own personal set of PPE. This gear is for use at IVDM only and is personal to each staff member. They are NOT to be shared. All relevant PPE are to be cleaned at the end of every shift using antiseptic wipes.
6. Acrylic shielding has been installed at the Front Desk for additional staff safety.
7. IVDM continues to stock up on its supply of cleaning agents, hand sanitizer, gloves, and masks.
8. IVDM has installed hands-free hand sanitizer stations around the Museum grounds and building, including at its front entrance.
9. IVDM has purchased hands-free infrared thermometers. All staff are subject to a temperature reading prior to the commencement of their shift. Any staff demonstrating a fever will be sent home.
10. As a community resource, IVDM will maintain the highest safety standards in the public trust and will be enforcing the use of face masks and taking temperature readings prior to permitting entry to the building.
11. All staff are reminded of the Museum's sick leave policy and their current hours. Any staff who are sick, exhibit symptoms, or have recently come into contact with an individual known to be infected with COVID-19 are instructed to remain home.

### Cleaning

1. All identified high-traffic surfaces are to be cleaned multiple times across the day. As guests rotate through their scheduled times, the staff member assigned to Front Desk shall perform a quick wipe-down of the Museum's 2 touch-screen surfaces, as well as door handles and counter tops.
2. IVDM will close an hour early, at 3pm, in order to provide staff additional time at the end of each day to perform a comprehensive cleaning of the Museum building.