

COVID-19 Guidance for Fitness Facilities

Under the State of California “Blueprint for a Safer Economy” counties are placed in a color coded tier based on several factors. As Sacramento County moves through different color tiers, the restrictions on gyms and fitness centers are adjusted. The following is a summary of the restrictions under each color tier. Please check to see which color tier Sacramento County is listed under before adjusting operations. Sacramento County’s status can be found at <https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

	Purple – Tier 1 Widespread	Red – Tier 2 Substantial	Orange – Tier 3 Moderate	Yellow – Tier 4 Minimal
Gyms and Fitness Centers	May only operate outdoors with modifications. Outdoor pools and *spas may be open. Indoor pools and spas at fitness facilities must remain closed.	Open indoors with modifications. Max 10% capacity. Outdoor pools and *spas may be open. Indoor pools and spas at fitness facilities must remain closed.	Open indoors with modifications. Max 25% capacity. Outdoor pools and *spas may be open. Indoor pools may be open. Indoor spas must remain closed.	Open indoors with modifications. Max 50% capacity. All outdoor and indoor pools and *spas may be open.
<small>* Spas may be open if facility staff are available to monitor compliance with distancing requirements. If it is not possible to consistently maintain distancing, the spa shall be kept closed.</small>				

- **Capacity is based on building occupancy.**
- **Modifications refers to the requirements for operation listed below.**
- **Outdoor pools/spas may be open in all tiers while following the [Pool Guidance](#).**

Background

COVID-19, also known as the novel coronavirus, is a respiratory illness that is spread through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces.

COVID-19 Guidance for Fitness Facilities

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the [COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Fitness Facilities \(includes Aquatic Facilities Guidance\)](#) must be followed. To assist fitness facilities, please see the checklist below that is derived from the state’s guidance document. For aquatic facilities, also review the Sacramento County EMD guidance and protocol document; [COVID-19 Guidance for Public Swimming Pools and Spas](#). Requirements may change. Please check the [EMD website](#) for the most current information.

COVID-19 Fitness Facility Protocols

Preventing the transmission of COVID-19 requires a combination of prevention measures including: physical distancing, wearing face coverings, sanitizing surfaces, and staying home when not feeling well. **PLEASE NOTE: Physical distancing alone is insufficient to prevent transmission of COVID-19.**

Keep a completed copy of this completed “COVID-19 General Checklist for Fitness Facilities” on site and available for review.

COVID-19 General Checklist for Fitness Facilities

This checklist assists fitness facilities with implementing a plan to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Workplace Specific Plan

- Establish a written, workplace-specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every facility, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas and work tasks, how these areas and tasks will incorporate the COVID-19 guidance. Name a specific person at each facility who will be in charge of implementing the plan.
- Incorporate the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#) into the Workplace Specific Plan and include a policy for handling exemptions.
- Identify the local health department’s contact information to communicate information about COVID-19 outbreaks among workers or patrons. In Sacramento County, call 3-1-1.
- Train and communicate with workers and worker representatives on the plan and make the plan available to workers and their representatives.
- Regularly evaluate the workplace for compliance with the plan and document and correct deficiencies identified.
- Investigate any COVID-19 illness and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. Update the plan as needed to prevent further cases.
- Implement the necessary processes and protocols when a workplace has an outbreak, in accordance with CDPH guidelines.
- Identify close contacts (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected worker and take steps to isolate COVID-19 positive worker(s) and close contacts.
- Adhere to the guidelines below. Failure to do so could result in workplace illnesses that may cause operations to be temporarily closed or limited.

Provide training for the following topics:

**Training should be provided to all employees including temporary or contract workers*

- Information on COVID-19, preventing spread, and who is especially vulnerable.
- Self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using CDC guidelines.
- The importance of not coming to work:
 - If experiencing [symptoms](#), or
 - If diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not yet been released from isolation, or
 - If within the past 10 days, had contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is considered potentially infectious (i.e. still on isolation).
- Workers who receive a COVID-19 diagnosis and experience symptoms, may return to work only:
 - 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **and**
 - Their symptoms have improved, **and**

- The worker has had no fevers (without the use of fever reducing medications) for the last 24 hours.
- A worker who was diagnosed with COVID-19, but never develops symptoms must isolate at home. They may return to work after 10 days since the date of the first positive COVID-19 test.
- A worker who had close contact with a person with COVID-19 must quarantine at home. If they do not develop symptoms and are not tested, they may return to work after 10 days from the last exposure and continue to self-monitor for symptoms through Day 14. They should continue to use face coverings at all times during work and when outside the home through Day 14 after the last close contact. If they develop symptoms, these workers must self-isolate and contact their healthcare provider. Immunocompromised individuals should quarantine for 14 days as per existing recommendations.
- To seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Updates and further details are available on CDC's webpage.
- The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water, including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol (preferred) or 70% isopropanol (if the product is inaccessible to unsupervised children) when workers cannot get to a sink or handwashing station, per CDC guidelines).
- The importance of physical distancing, both at work and off work time (see Physical Distancing section below). State/County guidelines that require face coverings and the proper use of face coverings.
 - Face coverings do not protect the wearer, but contribute to a reduced potential for virus transmission.
 - Face coverings can help protect the people near the wearer, but do not replace the need for 6ft. social distancing.
 - Face coverings must cover the nose and mouth.
 - Hands should be washed after touching or adjusting the face covering.
 - Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth
 - Face coverings should be washed or discarded after each shift.
- Information contained in the CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings, which mandates the circumstances in which face coverings must be worn and the exemptions, as well as any policies, work rules, and practices the employer has adopted to ensure the use of face coverings. Training should also include the employer's policies on how people who are exempted from wearing a face covering will be handled.
- Ensure independent contractors, temporary, or contract workers at the facility are also properly trained in COVID-19 prevention policies and have necessary supplies and PPE. Discuss these responsibilities ahead of time with organizations supplying temporary and/or contract workers.
- Information on paid leave benefits the worker may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home. See additional information on government programs supporting sick leave and workers' compensation for COVID-19, including workers' sick leave rights under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and workers' rights to workers' compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID-19 pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-62-20 while that Order is in effect.

Health Screening

- Provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and any vendors, contractors, or other workers entering the facility. Make sure the temperature/symptom screener avoids close contact with workers to the extent possible. Both screeners and workers should wear face coverings for the screening.
- Request that workers or patrons who are ill with symptoms of COVID-19, have a positive test result for COVID-19, live with or have close contact with someone who is sick or has a positive test result for COVID-19 remain home and not come to work. See [CDC guidance on staying home and when it is safe to return to work](#).
- If possible, implement a reservation system for the facility. Utilize the reservation system to contact patrons with reservations 24 hours before their scheduled arrival to confirm their reservation and ask if they or someone in their household is exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms. If the patron answers in the affirmative the patron should be reminded that they should only utilize the fitness facility if they do not pose a health risk to other patrons or fitness facility staff. Such communication can be done via app, email, or text, if possible.
- Patrons should be temperature and/or symptom screened upon arrival and asked to use hand sanitizer and to wear face coverings to the extent possible while in the facility, particularly when physical distancing is difficult.

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer, and Face Coverings

- Require frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer. Workers should wash hands on arrival at work, after working with each fitness facility member, after touching their face covering, after using the restroom, and when leaving work.
- Ensure that restrooms and hand sinks stay operational and are stocked with soap and paper towels at all times.
- Assign staff to regularly check that soap and paper towel dispensers are stocked and functional. Keep extra batteries available for motion sensing dispensers.
- Ensure that hand sanitizer containing at least 60% ethyl alcohol is available to all workers and patrons.
- Employers should provide and ensure workers have access to, and use, all required protective equipment, including eye protection and gloves where necessary.

Face Coverings

- If indoors, workers and patrons must wear face coverings at all times except when showering.
- If exercising outdoors, workers and patrons are exempted from wearing face coverings as long as they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others.
- Face coverings must not be shared. Employers are generally encouraged to provide face coverings but must provide them when required by employer rules or these guidelines.
- Remind patrons in advance to bring a face covering and make them available to anyone who arrives without one.

Signs

- Post signs at each public entrance of the facility to inform workers and patrons that they must not enter the facility if they or a family member are sick with COVID-19 symptoms such as: fever, dry cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, etc.

- Post signage at all entrances and in strategic and highly-visible locations, to remind workers and patrons that face coverings are required to be worn and to practice 6 ft physical distancing.
- Place signage throughout the fitness facility emphasizing the importance of wearing face coverings, frequent handwashing, and disinfecting equipment after use.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

Cleaners and Disinfectants

- When choosing disinfecting chemicals, employers should use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-approved](#) list and follow product instructions. Diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons per gallon of water), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used if appropriate for the surface.
- Make sure all workers have been trained to use and have an adequate supply of cleaners and disinfectants. Follow the complete [CDC Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#). Follow Cal/OSHA requirements and manufacturer instructions for safe use and required personal protective equipment for cleaning products.

Facility Cleaning

- Evaluate the existing cleaning and disinfecting protocols for the fitness facility, including reception areas, locker rooms, restrooms, changing areas, and showers and update the cleaning protocols where necessary.
- Fitness facilities should develop a detailed schedule and adjust or modify operating hours to provide adequate time for regular, thorough cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day.
- Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices during their shift. Cleaning assignments should be assigned during working hours as part of the workers' job duties.
- Perform thorough cleaning throughout the day in high traffic areas, such as reception and lobby areas, changing rooms, locker rooms, break rooms, and entrance/exit areas including stairways, stairwells, escalators, handrails, and elevator controls.
- Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces, including personal exercise machines and equipment, countertops, vending machines, doorknobs, and hand washing facilities.
- Shared restroom facilities and locker rooms should be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day. High-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, doorknobs, and light switches must be frequently cleaned and disinfected.
- Create and post a cleaning schedule and checklist for the restroom facilities and locker rooms. Post the cleaning schedule on the front of the door so patrons know when they can/cannot use the restroom and/or locker room. Make sure to close the restroom during the cleaning and disinfecting process.
- Workers should have enough ventilation (air flow) in areas where they are disinfecting. If cleaning in a bathroom or other small space, make sure the door and windows are propped open.
- Where possible, do not clean floors by sweeping or other methods that can disperse pathogens into the air. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter wherever possible.
- Clean HVAC intakes and returns daily.

Cleaning and Disinfection of Equipment

- Equip entrances, exits, and areas throughout the facility with hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, paper towels and sanitizing wipes. Keep products stocked and readily available to workers and patrons.

- Require patrons to disinfect individual exercise equipment, mats, and machines before and after use with provided disinfecting wipes.
- Ensure that lined, non-touch trash receptacles are available throughout the fitness facility to dispose of used wipes.
- If members are unable or unwilling to wipe/disinfect equipment after exercise, provide “ready to clean” tags for members to place on equipment after use, to ensure equipment is disinfected before the next use.
- Consider implementing a check-out system for patrons to utilize any small equipment and accessories (i.e. exercise bands, ropes, mats, foam rollers, etc.). Develop a process to clean and disinfect these items upon return.
- Amenities, including magazines, books, self-serve water stations (unless touchless), and other items for patrons, must be removed from reception areas and elsewhere in the fitness facility. Non-essential vanity items should also be removed from locker rooms to help reduce touch points.

Water dispensers

- Wherever possible, install touchless, automatic water dispensers for use with personal, reusable water bottles or single-use, disposable paper cups.
- Display signage reminding workers and patrons that the bottle or cup should not touch the water dispenser.
- If a touchless water dispenser is not feasible, remind workers and patrons to wash their hands or use proper hand sanitizer before and after touching the water release button on drinking fountains.

Towels

- Encourage patrons to bring their own towels and mats and consider disbanding the provision of any facility-provided towels or personal hygiene products.
- For any towels, cloth wipes, or other laundered items that are used at the facility, follow [CDC guidelines](#) for those items. Provide a closed container where patrons can place used towels or other items. Ensure those items cannot be used again until properly laundered either by a commercial laundering service or a laundering process which includes immersion in water of at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 25 minutes. Store all clean linens in a clean, covered place. Ensure workers who handle dirty linens or laundry wear gloves.

Physical Distancing Guidelines

- Implement measures to ensure physical distancing of at least six feet between and among workers and patrons. This can include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs to indicate to where workers and/or patrons should stand during check-in at reception areas or when waiting to use equipment).
- Space equipment at least six feet apart, with greater distancing for treadmills and other high-exertion aerobic fitness equipment. Physical barriers may also be used to minimize exposure between patrons or segregate exercise areas.
- Equip the front desk area with plexiglass or other impermeable barriers, if feasible, to minimize the interaction between reception workers and patrons. Implement virtual, touchless check-in tools, if possible, so that patrons do not have to utilize the reception space.

- Consider suspending non-core activities, including retail operations, spa services, childcare, family programming, and food service. If fitness facilities operate such amenities, they should review the related guidance for these services on the [COVID-19 Resilience Roadmap](#) website.
- Consider implementing special hours designated for high risk or medically-vulnerable populations, including seniors with admittance by reservation only.
- Evaluate maximum occupancy rules based on the size of the facility to develop a capacity plan that supports physical distancing and limits the number of patrons allowed in the facility at a given time to a number permitting such distancing. Other considerations to support physical distancing in the facility for patrons could include:
 - Implementing an online reservation-based system to avoid patrons queuing in the facility or outside and help maintain occupancy levels.
 - Limiting the number of patrons in the facility at one time. Only those patrons that are actually exercising should be inside the facility. Patrons should not wait in the reception area.
 - Using one-way foot traffic patterns throughout the fitness facility with visual cues and signs.
 - Removing communal furniture and/or cordoning off member lounge areas.
 - Staggering available lockers in locker rooms to maintain physical distancing.
 - Spacing all equipment and machines at least six feet apart or taking some out of service to achieve physical distancing.
 - Adjusting personal training so that the trainer maintains a minimum of six feet of physical distance.
 - Modifying group training classes to limit the class size to ensure a minimum of six feet of physical distance between patrons and/or move the classes outdoors or to larger spaces like full-sized basketball courts, if possible. Group exercise classes should only be offered if distancing requirements can be maintained and there is no person-to-person physical contact.
- High contact programs that require close contact less than six feet in distance should be suspended. This would include activities such as group sporting events, organized intermural activities, pick-up basketball, or organized races.
- Workers and patrons should avoid shaking hands, bumping fists or elbows, and other physical contact. Workers should also avoid sharing tools, phones, electronics, and office supplies as much as possible and, where feasible, ensure workers have dedicated workstations for their personal use.
- Stagger worker breaks, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, to maintain physical distancing protocols.
- Close breakrooms, use barriers, or increase distance between tables/chairs to separate workers and discourage congregating during breaks. Where possible, create outdoor break areas with shade covers and seating that ensures physical distancing.
- Only allow shower and locker room use if partitions are in place or signs have been posted to specify physical distancing requirements. If partitions or proper distancing are not possible, these facilities should remain closed.

Questions

Thank you for your efforts in keeping Sacramento County residents and visitors safe!

- For details, refer to the [State of CA COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Fitness Facilities](#).
- [California Department of Public Health - Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#)
- For questions or to update your contact information, call EMD: (916) 875-8440.
- For business assistance information, contact the [Sacramento Business Environmental Resource Center \(BERC\)](#).

Document was prepared by the Sacramento County [Environmental Management Department](#)

Summary of Revisions

7/7/20: Initial version

Latest revisions

8/26/20: Added guidance for outdoor activities per Public Health Order dated 7/14/2020. Updated links to recreational health guidance.

9/8/20: Updated wording on page one to “current Public Health Order”

9/30/20: Updated to include color tier restrictions in alignment with State of CA requirements

10/8/20: Updated capacity description.

12/2/20: Updated the link for the CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings.

12/10/20: Updated p.1 with Regional Stay at Home Order requirements. Updated Pool Spa requirements in p1 table. Added physical distancing warning.

1/5/21: Updated quarantine requirement to 10 days for asymptomatic individuals, both tested and untested.

1/13/21: Removed Regional Stay at Home Order requirements from p.1. to align with public health order dated 1/13/21.

PHO: 1//2021