

## COVID-19 Guidance for Gyms and Fitness Centres

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### Introduction

Gyms and fitness centres were ordered to close on April 2, 2020 by our Chief Medical Health Officer. On May 6, 2020 BC Premier Horgan announced the BC Restart Plan Phase 2 and as such we are rescinding the Order effective May 19, 2020. Any facility wishing to resume operation needs to develop a plan based on the attached guidance and have it available for public and enforcement agency review. We have attached a template plan for your optional use. Your individualized plan must cover all services provided. Additional guidance from WorkSafe will be released in the future and your plan may require updating based on that information.

**These guidelines are current at the time of writing but may be revised or rescinded at any time. [Orders and recommendations issued by the Provincial Health Officer](#) supersede these guidelines - specifically; the **Mass Gatherings Order** remains in place and prohibits 50 or more people to be present, for any event. Additionally, these guidelines only apply to gyms and fitness centres located in the [Interior Health Authority](#).**

### 1. Control access

Gyms and fitness centres should only be open when at least one staff member is present. If patrons have uncontrolled access, then it may not be possible to ensure physical distancing rules are followed or that disinfection of equipment is being performed after each use. 24-hour unrestricted access without staff present on site should be suspended (if a gym or fitness centre offers this service).

### 2. Limit occupancy

The number of patrons allowed into the facility at any one time should be limited to:

- a) Ensuring there's sufficient space to allow patrons to remain two metres from one another,
- b) Preventing large gatherings, and
- c) Allowing staff sufficient time to clean and disinfect equipment and other surfaces frequently.

Consider using a booking system that allows a limited number of patrons to book and attend a specified time slot. Ensure there is sufficient time between time slots to allow for cleaning and disinfection of the facility and equipment and to reduce crowding (e.g. at check-in counter).

### 3. Post signs

Place signs at entrances to notify patrons that they should not enter if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (see #4 below). Post signs throughout the facility to make patrons aware of the physical distancing requirements, enhanced sanitation procedures (including reminders for members to wipe equipment before and after each use), and any other instructions and limitations, as applicable.

Some links to example signs to use:

- [Do Not Enter If You Are Sick Or Required to Self-Isolate](#)
- [Physical Distancing Poster](#)
- [Hand Hygiene Poster](#)

#### **4. Screen arriving patrons**

Ask patrons the following question when they arrive:

- Do you have any of the following symptoms: coughing, fever, sore throat or difficulty breathing?

Any patron who answers yes to the question above should not be permitted to enter. Anyone who has the symptoms of COVID-19 is recommended to call go straight home, and consult the self-assessment app [BC COVID 19](#), or contact 8-1-1 for further guidance related to testing and self-isolation. If a patron is severely sick (e.g. difficulty breathing, chest pain etc.), **call 9-1-1**.

#### **5. Manage customer entry points**

Place markers such as tape or cones every two metres at entrances to provide patrons with visible queues that encourage physical distancing.

#### **6. Require staff to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19**

Staff experiencing symptoms of the illness (a fever, cough or difficulty breathing) must not work.

#### **7. Whenever possible, use contactless forms of payment and check-in**

#### **8. Provide hand sanitizer stations or handwashing stations for patrons and encourage their use**

#### **9. Use appropriate disinfectants**

Gyms and fitness centres must verify that the disinfectant(s) they use are effective against SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). To do this, either:

- a) Use the [list on Health Canada's website](#) to identify if a disinfectant has been reviewed and confirmed to be effective against SARS-CoV-2.
- b) Use the [list on the EPA's website](#) to identify if a disinfectant has been reviewed and confirmed to be effective.
- c) Contact the disinfectant supplier or manufacturer to identify if the disinfectant has been confirmed to be effective and, follow the manufacturer instructions for disinfection including contact times.
- d) Make a 500 parts per million chlorine disinfectant solution using bleach and water. To make a solution of this concentration: mix 1 part bleach to 100 parts water (e.g. mix 10 ml bleach (5.25%) with 990 ml water). When the solution is applied do not wipe it off, instead, allow it to air dry.

#### **10. Provide patrons with either disinfectant wipes or disinfectant in a spray bottle and paper towels for disinfecting equipment and surfaces**

Disinfectants for patrons should be conveniently located. Patrons should be required to wipe down the equipment before and after use. Discontinue use of re-usable towels and cloths.

**11. Where possible, increase the space between cardio machines to achieve adequate distancing between users**

Note: If it is not possible to space cardio machines far enough apart, other measures should be considered, such as only allowing patrons to use every other machine (i.e. not allowing two machines next to each other to be used at the same time).

**12. Encourage physical distancing and discourage congregating**

Patrons should be encouraged to conduct their workout and exit the facility without unnecessary delay. Equipment should not be shared or used simultaneously (e.g. working in sets).

**13. Do not offer group classes unless patrons are able to remain two metres from one another at all times during a class**

If group classes are offered, they should also be scheduled to allow staff adequate time to disinfect equipment and surfaces before each class.

**14. Close the following facilities and equipment within a gym or fitness centre: basketball courts and other group sport areas, saunas, and steam rooms**

**15. Limit locker room use and avoid use if possible**

Encourage patrons to arrive at the gym or fitness centre in workout clothes and to avoid using locker rooms on site. When locker rooms are used, a disinfectant spray or wipes should be available for patrons to disinfect locker contact surfaces before and after use. Site plan must include enhanced cleaning and disinfection for locker rooms and bathroom facilities.

**16. Do not offer food service.**

**17. Close drinking fountains. Water bottle filling stations are acceptable if appropriately sanitized.**

**18. Consider developing online fitness participation, if practical, until such time that physical distancing recommendations are suspended**

**Questions?**

If you have any questions about meeting these guidelines, please [contact your local environmental health officer](#) or visit <https://news.interiorhealth.ca/covid-19/> for more information.