



NEW JERSEY
GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH CLUBS/GYMS/FITNESS CENTERS
May 28, 2021

Per Executive Orders No. 181, 192, and 230, health clubs/gyms or other fitness centers, as well as recreational businesses that offer fitness classes and activities, must follow the criteria listed below.

This document presents best practices for health clubs/gyms and other fitness centers, as well as recreational businesses that offer fitness classes and activities.

These facilities are now permitted to operate at full capacity, per Executive Orders No. 239 and 242.

Executive Orders No. 241 and 242 also amended masking requirements. Individuals are no longer required to wear masks in these public settings, though unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to do so.

Entrance recommendations for facilities:

- Place signage at facility entrances to instruct patrons that they cannot enter if they have been diagnosed with or suspected to have had COVID-19 and are still within the required isolation period as defined by CDC at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>, if they have been told to quarantine by public health officials or currently have symptoms of COVID-19 as defined at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Provide safety reminders at the beginning of each authorized activity or session to reemphasize the protective measures in place, including maintaining physical distancing and cleaning protocols.
- Consider closing or limiting waiting areas and, for class-based indoor activities with distinct session times, encourage patrons to wait outside or in their cars until 10 minutes prior to class. Schedule 30-minute windows between classes to allow for appropriate ventilation and cleaning of the fitness room/equipment, and to discourage congestion.
- In accordance with Executive Order No. 192 (2020), a facility shall conduct health screening, including temperature or symptom screening, of staff upon entrance to the facility. Any individual who is found to have a temperature of 100.4 or above, or who answers yes to any of the following or similar questions, shall be denied entrance to the facility:
 - Within the last 10 days have you been diagnosed with COVID-19, had a test



confirming you have the virus, or been advised to self-isolate or quarantine by your doctor or a public health official?

- Have you had any one or more of the following symptoms today or within the past 24 hours, which is not new or not explained by another reason?
 - Fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?
- Contactless payment and sign-in methods are encouraged.

Physical Distancing and Face Coverings:

- Encourage unvaccinated patrons to wear face masks in the indoor premises of the facility at all times except when doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when in the water and in other situations where the presence of a mask would pose a risk to the individual's health, or where the individual is under two years of age. Facilities should also encourage unvaccinated individuals to wear masks in outdoor spaces.
- Encourage unvaccinated patrons and staff to maintain six feet of separation from others in the facility to the greatest extent possible.
- Facilities are encouraged to limit attendance for indoor group activities (e.g., classes) to a number that permits all participating individuals to remain 6 feet apart in the designated space. Classes are also subject to the indoor gathering limit, as established by Executive Order, which will be lifted effective June 4.
- Place signage at entrances, on floors, and throughout the facility to instruct patrons of the enhanced physical distancing requirements.
- Consider arranging equipment (weights, machines, treadmills, bikes, etc.) so exercise areas are spaced out at least 6 feet apart. Installation of barriers between machines should be considered where practicable. Install cleanable transparent shields or other barriers to physically separate staff and patrons where distancing is not an option (e.g., between pieces of equipment that cannot be moved). Use strip curtains, plastic barriers, or similar materials to create impermeable dividers or partitions.
- Encourage physical distancing in common spaces where patrons are likely to congregate, such as lobbies and waiting areas.

Cleaning:

- Ensure access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative. Encourage proper handwashing of all staff and patrons.
- Distribute hand sanitizer and disposable wipes abundantly throughout the facility for



staff and patrons to disinfect their hands and equipment before and after use, including next to each piece of large equipment (such as treadmills, bikes, rowing machines) and next to each area containing smaller equipment (such as free weights).

- Facility must post signage about proper procedures for sanitizing equipment.
- Ensure daily cleaning of high-touch surfaces, such as handrails, doorknobs, and restrooms.
- All equipment must be cleaned between use. Facilities must provide sanitization supplies at each piece of equipment for patrons to clean in between each use. Only equipment that can be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after use by patrons should be allowed.
- Clearly designate staff responsible for cleaning. Staff should maintain a cleaning log that includes date, time, and scope of cleaning.
- Perform enhanced [cleaning and disinfection](#) after anyone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the workplace.
 - a. Cleaning: Soaps/Detergents that reduce germs on surfaces
 - b. Disinfection: EPA approved products that kill germs on surfaces
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared equipment used by the sick person, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces or objects. If other staff do not have access to these areas or items, wait 24 hours (or as long as possible) before cleaning and disinfecting.

Staff Wellness and Safety:

- Encourage unvaccinated staff to wear masks/face coverings in indoor spaces, regardless of vaccination status, except when doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when in the water and in other situations where the presence of a mask would pose a risk to the individual's health.
- Ensure access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water, and allow enough break time for staff to wash hands frequently; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative.
- Staff responsible for towel service must wear gloves while collecting/handling used towels.
- Consider adjusting workplace hours and shifts (working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival / departure) to minimize contact across staff and reduce congestion, and staggering lunch and break times for staff to accommodate at least 6 feet of physical distancing between staff.
- Consider closing or reconfiguring common spaces and high-density areas of facilities where staff are likely to congregate (e.g., break rooms and eating areas) to allow 6 feet of physical distancing.
- Provide training to staff on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including:



- Physical distancing, handwashing, proper use of face coverings
- Self-screening at home, including temperature and symptom checks
- Reinforcing that staff should not come to work if sick. Employers should have flexible sick leave policies to encourage staff to stay home if sick.
- When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe
- Which underlying health conditions may make individuals at greater risk of severe COVID-19 disease
- Maintain a log of staff and patrons to support potential contact tracing (name, date, time in and out, contact information).
- If the employer is notified of a positive case of a staff or patron at the workplace, the employer shall notify the local health department (LHD) in the city or town where the workplace is located and assist the LHD as reasonably requested to advise likely contacts to self-quarantine. Staff who test positive for COVID-19 should immediately notify their employer; these staff should not return to work until they meet the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#).
- Operators/owners, staff and patrons should cooperate with the public health investigation of a suspected or confirmed case.

Indoor Air/Ventilation:

- Keep doors and windows open where possible and utilize fans to improve ventilation.
- Inspect and evaluate the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) unit to ensure that the system is operating within its design specifications.
- Conduct routine maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer or HVAC professional.
- Within the design specification of the HVAC unit:
 - Increase the volume of outdoor air to the maximum capacity while the gym is occupied.
 - Reduce the volume of recirculated air being returned to the indoor spaces
 - Increase the volume of air being delivered to the indoor spaces to the maximum capacity
 - Select maximum filtration levels for the HVAC unit.
 - Ensure that the HVAC unit runs continuously while the gym is occupied.
 - Ensure that the HVAC unit runs for at least two hours before and two hours after the gym is occupied.
- Consider installing portable air cleaners equipped with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to increase the amount of clean air within the gym.
- Review and follow the latest CDC guidance for ventilation requirements. Additional considerations for improving the building ventilation system can be found in the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).



Locker rooms and amenities:

- Facility-provided towel service may resume. Staff responsible for towel service must wear a mask and gloves while collecting/handling used towels.
- Individually partitioned showers or communal showers are permitted. Considering installing barriers/partitions in communal showers.
- Shared saunas and steam rooms are now permitted.
- Activities such as swimming in an indoor pool, tanning, outdoor dining, pick-up of food or beverage, and retail sales, which may be otherwise permitted but which are not governed by this document, remain subject to standards outlined in applicable/most current Executive Orders, Executive Directives and guidance.

Employee Requirements Pursuant to Executive Order No. 192

Establishments **must** follow the requirements of Executive Order No. 192 (2020), including the health and safety protocols outlined in Paragraph 1, to protect their employees, customers, and other visitors at the worksite, which require establishments to abide by the following requirements:

- Provide sanitization materials, such as hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and sanitizing wipes that are approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for SARS-CoV-2 virus to employees, customers, and visitors at no cost to those individuals;
- Ensure that employees practice regular hand hygiene, particularly when such employees are interacting with the public, and provide employees break time for repeated handwashing throughout the workday and access to adequate hand washing facilities. Employers may adopt policies that require employees to wear gloves in addition to regular hand hygiene. Where an employer requires its employees to wear gloves while at the worksite, the employer must provide such gloves to employees;
- Routinely clean and disinfect all high-touch areas in accordance with DOH and CDC guidelines, particularly in spaces that are accessible to employees, customers, or other individuals, including, but not limited to, restrooms, hand rails, door knobs, other common surfaces, safety equipment, and other frequently touched surfaces including employee used equipment, and ensure cleaning procedures following a known or potential exposure are in compliance with CDC recommendations;



- Prior to each shift, conduct daily health checks of employees, such as temperature screenings, visual symptom checking, self- assessment checklists, and/or health questionnaires, consistent with CDC guidance, including latest CDC guidance regarding COVID-19 symptoms, consistent with the confidentiality requirements of the ADA, NJLAD and any other applicable laws, and consistent with any guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) and the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights;
- Immediately separate and send home employees who appear to have symptoms, as defined by the CDC, consistent with COVID-19 illness upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day. Employers subject to the New Jersey Earned Sick Leave Law, New Jersey Family Leave Act, N.J.S.A. 34:11D-12 and/or federal leave laws must continue to follow the requirements of the law, including by allowing individuals to use accrued leave in the manner permitted by law and employer policy, when requiring employees to leave the workplace in accordance with the provisions of this subparagraph;
- Promptly notify all employees of any known exposure to COVID-19 at the worksite, consistent with the confidentiality requirements of the ADA and any other applicable laws, and consistent with guidance from the EEOC;
- Clean and disinfect the worksite in accordance with CDC guidelines when an employee at the site has been diagnosed with COVID-19 illness; and
- Continue to follow guidelines and directives issued by the New Jersey DOH, the CDC and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, as applicable, for maintaining a clean, safe and healthy work environment.