



COVID-19 Guidance for Gyms and Fitness Centres in Island Health's Region

Introduction

Gyms and fitness centres located in Island Health's region were ordered to close on April 2, 2020 by our Medical Health Officer. Based on the announcement from BC Premier Horgan on May 6, 2020 in regards to the BC Restart Plan Phase 2, this Order was rescinded on May 19, 2020. Any facility wishing to resume operation needs to develop a plan that will limit potential exposure of patrons and workers to COVID-19. The attached tool may be used as a guide. The completed COVID-19 Safety Plan must be available for the public and enforcement agencies upon request. Additional guidance from WorkSafeBC can also be found at:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/gyms-and-fitness-centres>

These guidelines are current at the time of writing but may be updated as we continue to learn more about this new virus For further information please refer to [Orders and recommendations issued by the Provincial Health Officer](#) and the [BCCDC COVID-19 Information page](#)

Guidelines

1. Control access.

Gyms and fitness centres should have at least one staff member present whenever possible. If patrons do have uncontrolled access, alternate methods of oversight need to be considered to ensure physical distancing rules are followed and that disinfection of equipment is being performed after each use.

2. Limit occupancy.

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

- a) Ensure there is sufficient space to allow patrons to remain two metres from one another.
- b) Prevent large gatherings.
- c) Allow 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.

3. Post signs.

Place signs at any entrance to notify patrons that they should not enter if they have the symptoms of COVID-19 (see #4 below). Signs should be posted throughout the facility to make patrons aware of the physical distancing requirements, enhanced sanitation procedures (including reminders for members to wipe equipment 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.

Patrons should be asked 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 Island Health's COVID-19 Call Centre: 1-844-901-8442 or visit www.islandhealth.ca/covid19 for more information.

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 who have 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.
- 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 (i.e. mix 10 ml bleach (5.25%) with 990 ml water).



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 (i.e. working in sets).

13. Do not offer group classes or group activities 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. *At no time should participants have any physical contact. i.e. Martial Arts*

14. Saunas and steam rooms may be used with posted occupancy limits that ensure physical distancing requirements can be met

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

Patrons should be encouraged to arrive at the gym or fitness centre in workout clothes and to avoid using locker rooms. When locker rooms are used, a disinfectant spray or wipes should be available for patrons to disinfect locker contact surfaces before and after use.

16. Do not offer food service.

17. Drinking water fountains and/or water bottle filling stations can be used. The following precautions and/or alternatives should be considered:

Ensure frequent cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day of fountains and/or filling stations
Set up a dispenser for disposable paper cone cups
Use a separate water cooler, with disposable cups

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 www.islandhealth.ca/covid19 for more information.