



ALERT: Stay up to date on [Maine's COVID-19 Response](#)

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

- [About the Commissioner](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Reports & Publications](#)
- [News](#)
- [Live & Work](#)

[Bureaus & Offices](#)

- [Community Development](#)
- [Business Development](#)
- [ConnectME](#)
- [Maine Made](#)
- [Maine Office of Tourism](#)
- [Maine Film Office](#)
- [Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation](#)
- [Maine Technology Institute](#)
- [Maine International Trade Center](#)
- [Code Enforcement & Building Codes](#)

[Maine Economic Development Strategy](#)

- [Strategic Work Team Mission](#)

[Partners and Collaborators](#)

COVID19 Prevention Checklist Industry Guidance

Last updated: Nov 6, 2020

The State of Maine has adopted a staged approach, supported by science, public health expertise, and industry collaboration, to allow Maine businesses to safely open when the time is right. The plan is available at www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine.

This is one of many industry guidance documents the State is preparing for businesses so they can be prepared to meet health guidelines and reopen safely. Please make sure you pair this document with the general guidance document that applies to all industries, which is available on maine.gov/decd.

Please note: This document may be updated as additional information and resources become available.

Recommendations for Gyms and Exercise Facilities

As of June 12, 2020, Gyms and Fitness Centers are permitted to operate in these Maine counties: Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Sagadahoc, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington. They are permitted to open in Androscoggin, Cumberland, and York counties as of June 17, 2020.

Overview

Exercise and fitness activities for both youth and adults require unique consideration during the COVID-19 pandemic. Health experts recognize the role of exercise in promoting mental health, physical fitness, and cognitive development. Reducing exposure to respiratory droplets through physical distancing and face coverings, as well as increased hand hygiene and avoidance of shared and common touch items, remain the primary tools to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Because of the increased possibility of infection through droplets, vigorous exercise in closely confined spaces should be avoided.

Exercise and fitness activities present multiple challenges in the effective use of primary prevention strategies. These challenges include:

- Risk of exposure to the virus due to close physical proximity during exercise activities.
- Increased risk during intense and sustained physical contact whether purposeful or accidental.
- Projection of respiratory particles during cardiovascular activities (panting), yelling or shouting, or common sneezing or coughing. This increase in respiration expulsion of droplets can well exceed the typical physical distancing recommendation of 6 feet between individuals.

General Guidance

1. Require all staff, vendors, and patrons to maintain 6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.
2. Require all staff, vendors, and patrons to wear a face covering, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor. Because staff are in an enclosed space for a prolonged period, it is necessary to wear face coverings at all times even when physically distanced. (Updated 11/6/20)
 - a. Face coverings do not need to be worn while an individual is eating or drinking.
 - b. Additional information about proper use of face coverings is available from the CDC (see: [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)).
3. The number of individuals that can gather in a shared space must not exceed the limit established by the [Governor's Executive Order](#), currently set at 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors. Outdoor gym and fitness activities are encouraged. If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the distancing requirement, attendance must be limited to allow for such compliance.
4. Maintaining physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and limiting the duration of exposure are the primary tools to avoid transmission of respiratory droplets between individuals.

Cleaning and Disinfection

1. Refer to the following documents for guidance on general cleaning and disinfection:
 - a. [COVID-19 Prevention Checklist General Guidance](#) (State of Maine)
 - b. [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) (CDC)
 - c. [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#) (CDC)

Staff

1. Staff should consider whether they can work safely in a facility if they have any of these conditions and managers should discuss potential risks for individuals with the following:
 - a. People 65 or older
 - b. People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled including:
 - i. People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - ii. People who have serious heart conditions
 - iii. People who are immunocompromised: Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
 - iv. People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 - v. People with diabetes
 - vi. People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - vii. People with liver disease
2. Require employees to stay home if they are sick.
3. Require employees to practice good hand hygiene with frequent handwashing, especially after contact with visitors and high-touch surfaces.
4. Conduct business by phone or internet to the greatest extent practicable.

5. Limit in-person gatherings or meetings of employees to the greatest extent practicable.
6. Discourage employees from using colleagues' phones, desks, workstations, radios, handhelds/wearables, or other office tools and equipment.
7. Where possible, stagger employee shifts and meal breaks to avoid crowding.
8. Adjust seating in break rooms and other common areas to promote physical distancing practices.
9. Permit employees to take breaks and lunch outside, or in such other areas where physical distancing is attainable.
10. Limit interactions between employees and outside vendors or delivery drivers; implement touchless receiving practices if possible.
11. Request that vendors accessing the premises direct their employees to follow all physical distancing guidelines and health directives issued by the applicable public authorities.
12. Adjust training/onboarding practices to limit number of people involved and allow for 6 foot spacing; use virtual/video/audio training when possible.
13. Provide employees training on:
 - a. hand hygiene
 - b. physical distancing guidelines and expectations
 - c. monitoring personal health
 - d. proper wear, removal, and disposal of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - e. laundering of face coverings and uniforms: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, How to Disinfect: Laundry](#) (CDC)
 - f. cleaning protocols, including how to safely and effectively use cleaning supplies: [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#) (CDC)
14. Consider employee training in safe de-escalation techniques.

General Building and Operational Considerations

1. Ensure adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissue) to support healthy hygiene practices, including increased cleaning and disinfection procedures.
2. Take steps to improve ventilation in the building.
3. Increase the percentage of outdoor air (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100% (first verify compatibility with HVAC system capabilities for both temperature and humidity control as well as compatibility with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations).
 - Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.
 - Disable demand-control ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
 - Consider using natural ventilation (i.e., opening windows if possible and safe to do so) to increase outdoor air dilution of indoor air when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
4. Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.
5. Inform patrons of your COVID-19 policies and procedures in advance.
6. Place signage at entrances and throughout buildings (particularly high traffic areas such as service counters) alerting staff and visitors (including unaccompanied minors) to required occupancy limits, physical distancing requirements, and face covering policies.
7. Consider installing non-porous physical barriers such as partitions or Plexiglas barriers to protect patrons and staff. Barriers should be placed at service counters and other similar locations where it is not possible to maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance.
8. Modify building traffic flow to minimize contact between staff and patrons. Use floor decals and/or signage to establish travel patterns.
 - a. Consider one-way entrances and exits, if possible.

- b. Consider establishing one-way travel patterns through the building.
 - c. Minimize traffic in enclosed spaces, such as elevators and stairwells and other spaces that do not allow for appropriate physical distancing. Consider limiting the number of individuals in an elevator at one time and designating one directional stairwells.
9. Stagger arrivals and departures to the extent practicable.
10. Consider restricting the use of water fountains to refill only with instruction for visitors to wash hands after use.
11. For contact tracing purposes, to the extent practicable, establishments should maintain a record including contact information for visitors and staff who have direct prolonged interaction.
- a. Based on current knowledge, a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated. Close contacts should stay home, maintain social distancing, and self-monitor until 14 days from the last date of exposure.
12. Gyms and fitness facilities should promptly notify the Maine DHHS, CDC or any local health official if a they learn an employee or other worker has tested positive for COVID-19 and assist all such officials as reasonably requested to trace likely contacts and advise contacts to isolate and self-quarantine.
13. Any retail spaces should follow state guidance on safe operation of [retail businesses](#).
14. If tanning services are offered at a facility, follow state guidance on safe operation of [tanning salons](#).
15. Ensure that staffing of facilities is sufficient to enable enhanced cleaning and disinfection measures.

Restrooms and Locker Rooms

- 1. Use of locker rooms should be restricted to allow for adequate physical distancing and frequent cleaning. Showers may be used as long as occupancy is limited to maintain physical distancing in the common areas. (Updated 6/24/20)
- 2. Limit restroom occupancy for group restrooms to incorporate physical distancing and avoid formation of waiting lines outside of restrooms.
- 3. Clean and disinfect restrooms on a regular and scheduled basis (see General Cleaning and Disinfecting section).
- 4. Remove any items that do not have to be in the restrooms (e.g., magazines, decor).
- 5. Post handwashing signs in all restrooms.
- 6. Hot tubs and hydrotherapy may be offered provided that clients are maintaining physical distancing at all times and using a face covering. Face coverings should not be worn if doing so would interfere with the safe operation of the hot tub or hydrotherapy tub/pool, or present a concern if clients are or may be fully immersed in water. When a face covering becomes wet or soiled, it should be changed. (Updated 6/24/20)
- 7. Steam rooms and saunas should remain closed at this time. (Updated 6/24/20)

Transactions

- 1. Limit cash and paper receipt transactions; Promote “contactless” payment options (e.g., online payments, pay by phone options, RFID credit and debit cards, Apple Pay, Google Pay, etc.)
- 2. Wash hands or use alcohol based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) after handling cash.
- 3. Where possible, card readers should be placed in front of physical barriers so visitors can swipe their own cards and enter their codes.
- 4. Card readers and keypads should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- 5. Hand sanitizer should be made available for staff and patrons before and after transactions.
- 6. Vending machine surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- 7. Any food sales should follow [food and drink service](#) or [retail](#) guidelines as appropriate.

Patrons

- 1. Screen for COVID-19 symptoms for all entrants, including employees, visitors, and customers upon arrival to the gym or fitness center. Facilities can choose from several strategies for screening.

- a. At a minimum, place signage at the entrance to the building and in the check-in area that lists the symptoms of COVID-19 and requests that patrons not use the facility if they have had any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past three days or are at higher risk of having COVID-19.
 - i. A [list of COVID-19 symptoms](#) is available from the CDC.
 - ii. In addition to signage, facilities may consider using an electronic or app-based self-screening form, such as the Coronavirus Self-Checker available on the [federal CDC's homepage](#).
 - iii. The most effective screening method is to ask patrons the following questions to screen for illness:
 - i. Have you had a cough or sore throat?
 - ii. Have you had a fever or do you feel feverish?
 - iii. Do you have shortness of breath?
 - iv. Do you have loss of taste or smell?
 - v. Have you been around anyone exhibiting these symptoms within the past 14 days?
 - vi. Are you living with anyone who is sick or quarantined?
2. Face coverings are required (indoors and outdoors) in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order. (Updated 11/5/20)
 - a. Face coverings should be tight-fitting and have at least two layers of fabric.
 - b. When a face covering becomes wet or soiled, it should be changed.
3. Gyms and fitness centers are encouraged to hold hours exclusively for high-risk populations (or otherwise provide accommodations for these populations).
4. Members potentially at high risk for COVID-19 should work with their primary care provider to determine if utilizing a gym or fitness center is reasonably safe for them.
5. Persons at high-risk for COVID-19 include:
 - a. People 65 or older
 - b. People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled including:
 1. People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 2. People who have serious heart conditions
 3. People who are immunocompromised: Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
 4. People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 5. People with diabetes
 6. People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 7. People with liver disease

Specific Operational Considerations

1. COVID-19 transmission risk is elevated during cardiovascular exercise and increased respiration; forceful respiration when coughing, sneezing, and yelling; close physical contact; and sustained physical contact. Fitness centers and gyms should post notice to patrons about these elevated risks.
2. Close-contact activities are not recommended, especially in the case of one-on-one personal training, close-contact sports, and weight-lifting activities that require "spotters".
 - a. One-on-one personal training puts patrons and trainers at high risk of transmission. If fitness centers and gyms offer this service, face coverings are required for both trainer and patron. When physical distancing cannot be maintained, trainers are encouraged to wear a face shield in addition to a face covering.
3. Discourage members from lingering in common areas.
4. Encourage members to avoid touching other members' items or other recreational equipment.
5. Encourage members to bring their own personal equipment such as yoga mats, towels, rackets, and bring their own water.

6. Drop-in childcare is not recommended at this time.
7. Avoid use or sharing of items that are not easily cleaned or disinfected.
8. All facilities will have hand sanitizing stations easily accessible to patrons. Members will be required to sanitize their hands and disinfect the equipment before and after use.
9. Gyms floors should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
10. Disinfect high touch areas frequently throughout facility open periods.
 - a. Lobby high touch areas include door handles, railings, computer tablets, water fountains, front desk surfaces, tables, chairs, drink cooler doors and handles.
 - b. Exercise area high touch areas include all strength machine and cardio machine touch points, handles, seats, pins, remotes, cup holders, and consoles.
11. Adjust equipment layout and close or restrict access to equipment to maintain at least six feet of distance between equipment for equipment that can be used with face coverings. (Updated 11/6/20)
12. Encourage members to use only one piece of equipment at a time (i.e., no circuits or “super setting”) so that machines are cleaned after use.
13. Consider limiting workout length to avoid unnecessary exposure, decrease congestion, and allow for additional cleaning and disinfection time.
14. Activities where physical distancing cannot be easily and continuously maintained should not be allowed at this time. Additionally, activity involving physical contact between individuals is strongly discouraged.

Group Fitness Activities

1. Allow group fitness classes only if classes can be completed in accordance with physical distancing recommendations.
 - a. No shared equipment during the class.
 - b. Adjust class schedules to allow for deep cleaning between classes
2. Evaluate your entire check-in process to ensure there is no crowding and limited contact between patrons. Eliminate physical touch points as much as possible.
3. Make any necessary changes to the space layout and class structure or reduce capacity to allow for adequate physical distance between instructors and clients and between clients. (Updated 11/6/20)
4. Walk-in clients are discouraged at this time to ensure adequate physical distancing during classes and entryways. Pre-booking of classes also provides an opportunity for online or phone payments.
5. Allow adequate time between class sessions for clients to leave and to disinfect the space and equipment. This will also reduce potential crowding in entryways.

Swimming pools and other aquatic activities

1. While there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread through the water, steps must be taken to reduce the risk of person-to-person transmission by maintaining a physical distance of at least 6 feet from others.
2. Pools must continue to follow pertinent Executive Orders regarding gathering size from the Office of the Governor.
3. To facilitate physical distancing, swimmers should not share lanes.
4. Free/open swim times are not recommended for indoor pools at this time.
5. Keep swimming pools properly cleaned and disinfected. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (with chlorine or bromine) of swimming pools should kill the virus that causes COVID-19.
6. Swimming pool directors must plan for cleaning and disinfection of items that are typically shared between individuals.
7. Face coverings should not be worn while swimming in the pool.
8. Physical distancing must be maintained to the extent possible in the pool, on the pool deck, in diving board areas, and seating areas.
9. Common touch surfaces such as hand rails, ladders, and diving platforms, should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.

COVID-19 Prevention Form

In order to open, businesses must commit to complying with requirements of these checklists by [filling out this short online form](#). Please note that religious organizations and licensed health care providers are not required to use this form.

If you have questions, please contact us at business.answers@maine.gov or [1-800-872-3838](tel:1-800-872-3838).

Credit

Information

Business in Maine

DECD Offices

Connect with Us

 InforME logo
Copyright © 2019
All rights reserved.



Commemorating 200
Years of Statehood

