

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Guideline for Recreation & Athletics Facilities

May 29, 2020

Key Principles Going Forward



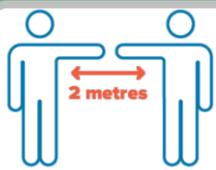
STAY HOME if you are SICK

Stay away from others if you are feeling ill, isolate at home, do not go to work.



PRATICE GOOD HYGIENE

Wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, cough/sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.



MAKE SPACE between PEOPLE

Maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from others and replace close contact greetings like handshakes, hugs or high fives with waves and smiles.



LEARN how to use PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT as an ADDITIONAL control

Learn how to choose and use PPE correctly, know the limitations of PPE, and always have other controls in place.



MODIFY the ENVIRONMENT

Make your environment safer for interacting with others by reducing common touch surfaces, using non-porous barriers, or by changing room design.



INCREASE SANITATION

Disinfect common touch surfaces frequently using a chemical that will destroy the Coronavirus.



MANAGE INFORMATION

Stay informed, follow public health advice, keep records, and make sure information you communicate is clear, accurate and easy to find.

CAN Recreation & Athletics Facilities in Vancouver Coastal Health operate?

Yes. A letter issued on May 7, 2020 by the Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer of Vancouver Coastal Health states: “the Provincial Health Officer has not issued any orders requiring the closure of indoor arts, culture and recreation facilities such as community centres, libraries, theatres and rehearsal spaces, museums, art galleries and studios, gyms, fitness centres, swimming pools and ice rinks as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vancouver Coastal Health believes that the risk of COVID-19 transmission in these environments can be mitigated and consistent with BC’s Restart Plan, that it is possible to safely operate these facilities at this time.” A full copy of the letter can be accessed [here](#).

In all cases, it remains important for everyone to stay home if you are sick, to wash your hands often, to keep your distance, and to disinfect high touch surfaces often.

For recreation and athletics facilities that include food services (e.g. juice bars, concessions), personal services (massage, tanning), and retail areas, separate guidance documents have been prepared for these spaces; owners/operators are encouraged to read the applicable guidelines, available at <http://www.vch.ca/public-health/environmental-health-inspections>

COVID-19 Safety Plan

You will need to develop and implement a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#), post a copy on your website (if you have one) and at your workplace so that it is readily available for review by anyone who may attend the site, including the public. A copy must also be available to Environmental Health Officers or WorkSafe BC Officers, upon request.

This document provides guidance for preventing transmission of COVID-19 to operators and customers of recreation and athletics facilities, and will support you when preparing your COVID-19 Safety Plan. It is based upon current knowledge and it should be understood that the guidance is subject to change as new data becomes available and developments arise with this new virus; furthermore, unique situations may require some discretion in adjusting these guidelines which are meant to be supportive, not prescriptive.

WHO should read this Guideline?

Owners and operators of all recreation and athletics facilities should read this guideline. It may also be of interest to members of the public who enter these facilities. The following are some examples of recreation and athletics facilities. The list is not exhaustive.

- Fitness Centres
- Yoga Studios
- Weight Training Facilities
- CrossFit Affiliates
- Martial Arts Clubs
- Dance Studios
- Climbing Centres
- Indoor Courts & Racket Clubs
- Ice Rinks & Curling Clubs
- Batting Cages

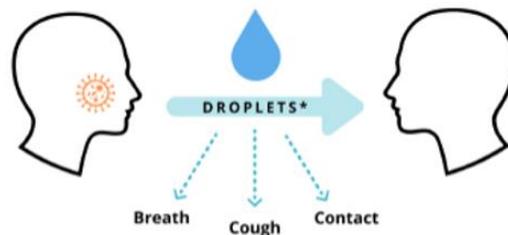
COVID-19 General Information

WHAT is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection caused by a newly identified virus (SARS-CoV-2). The infection has symptoms similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold: cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing. Other symptoms can include fatigue, muscle aches, diarrhea, headache or lost sense of smell. While most people infected with COVID-19 experience only mild illness, severe illness can occur in some people, especially in those with weaker immune systems, the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions.

HOW COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is spread through liquid droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus in these droplets can enter the body directly through the eyes, nose or mouth of another person if they are in close contact with the person who coughed or sneezed. COVID-19 is not transmitted through viral particles floating in the air and is not something that can enter the body through the skin.



Resources:

- Video: [Transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus](#)
- Video: [Cough & sneeze etiquette](#)

WHERE can I get more Information about COVID-19?

The province of British Columbia has created a phone service to provide non-medical information about COVID-19 which is available from 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. at 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319) or via text message at 604-630-0300.

More information on COVID-19 can also be found online:

- BC Centre for Disease Control
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
- BC Provincial Health Officer – Orders, Notices, and Guidance
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>
- WorkSafe BC – Gyms and Fitness Centres
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/gyms-and-fitness-centres>

How to Use this Guideline

This guideline contains suggested protocols for reducing the risks of Covid-19 transmission for recreation and athletics facilities. Each business must assess and understand their own risks when developing their COVID-19 Safety Plan, and then implement their protocols accordingly.

Understanding the Risk

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

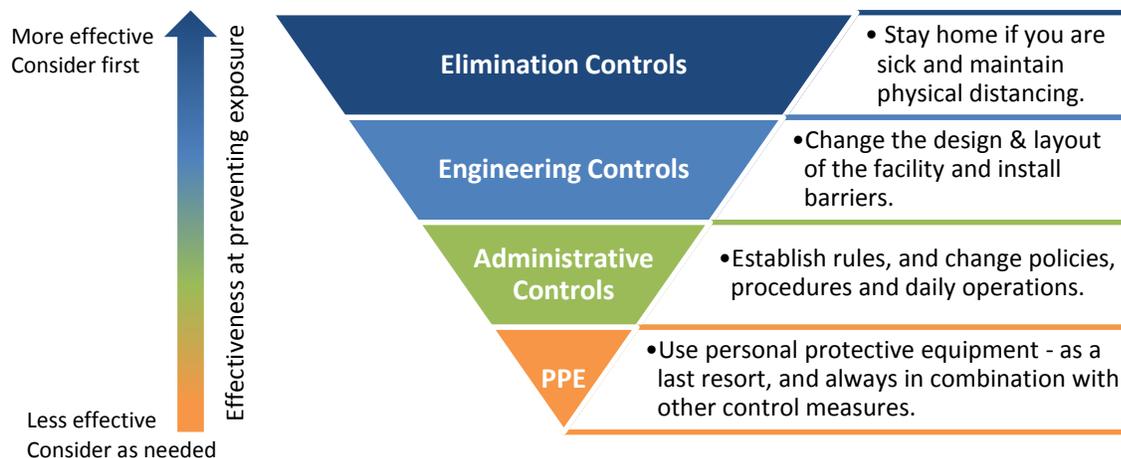
- The risk of person-to-person transmission can vary depending on the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.
- The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

Selecting Protocols for your Workplace

When selecting the appropriate combination of protocols for your workplace, it may be helpful to understand the relative impacts each can have on controlling the risk of transmission in your workplace. Some controls will be more difficult to implement but provide a greater level of protection, while other controls will be easier to implement but provide less overall protection.

Levels of Protection

Control measures throughout this document will be divided based on this model:



Elimination and engineering controls are designed to prevent people from coming into contact with an infectious person or contaminated surface in the first place and should be considered first. Following this model normally leads to the implementation of inherently safer systems, where the risk of illness exposure and/or transmission can be substantially reduced.

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Tip Sheet – Employee Sickness

Goal: To prevent sick employees from spreading the virus to the public by ensuring employees stay home if they are ill.

Elimination Controls

- Tell your employees if they are sick with any symptoms consistent with cold, influenza or COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, they must remain at home, and contact their family physician/primary care provider or Health Link BC at 8-1-1 for further assistance.

Administrative Controls

- Thoughtfully plan your sick leave policy to create an environment where employees feel supported in staying home when they are sick, and communicate the policy to all staff.
- Have operational contingency plans in cases where employees must remain home when sick (e.g. modifying systems to operate with fewer employees).
- Have employees declare they are symptom-free when signing in for the day.
- If while at work, an employee starts experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness consistent with COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, ask the employee to don a mask, to leave work immediately, go straight home, and contact their a family physician/primary care provider or Health Link BC at 8-1-1 for further guidance.
- Ensure that objects and surfaces touched by sick employees who have gone home are cleaned and disinfected before being used by others.
- Sick employees should use the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool.
- Anyone with symptoms can now be assessed and receive a COVID-19 test.
- Testing is not recommended for people who do not have symptoms.
- If an employee has a COVID-19 diagnosis, the local public health department will identify any co-workers who may have been exposed to the sick employee.
- The employer and employees should be reassured that if they haven't been contacted by public health then there is no issue or concern that was identified by public health.

Resources:

- [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Poster: COVID-19 Testing for all who Need It](#)

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Tip Sheet – Personal Hygiene

GOAL: To limit spread of the virus by promoting good personal hygiene through hand washing, hand sanitizing, and cough/sneeze etiquette.

Elimination Controls

- Replace physical greetings such as handshakes and hugs with non-contact greetings.

Engineering Controls

- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer at entrances and posters reminding of the importance for handwashing/sanitizing following contact with common touch surfaces.
- All hand sinks, including those in washrooms and changing rooms, must have liquid soap, single-use paper towels and warm running water at all times.
- Additional portable hand washing stations in the premises may be appropriate.

Administrative Controls

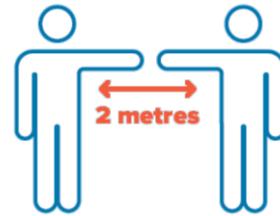
- If hand sanitization stations are limited in number or not possible, direct clients to the nearest hand washing sink to wash their hands, and encourage hand washing especially immediately upon arrival, and before they leave the premises.
- Employees must wash their hands with soap and water at the start and end of their shift, after using the bathroom, before eating, after returning from a break, and when hands are visibly soiled.
- Employees must practice good hygiene throughout their shift including proper hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Employees must avoid touching their face without washing hands first.
- There should be no sharing of cigarettes or vaping equipment.
- Educate employees about the virus so they know how to minimize its spread.
- Consider providing electronic COVID-19 resources to all employees.

Resources:

- Poster: [BCCDC Handwashing](#)
- Video: [Hand Washing](#)
- Video: [Cough and Sneeze Etiquette](#)
- Link: [BCCDC Vaping, Smoking and COVID-19](#)

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Tip Sheet – Make Space between People

Goal: To increase space between people and avoid unnecessary contact to eliminate transmission of the virus through respiratory droplets.

Elimination Controls

- Increase empty floor space by removing unnecessary materials, equipment, and merchandise displays, especially in hallways, high traffic areas, and other small spaces.
- Make clear divisions between different areas/rooms and cap the number of people allowed in each area/room to allow for physical distancing, mark with signage.
- Use visual markers or physical barriers to delineate different areas.
- Mark 2 metre (6 foot) increments on floors where crowds normally form (e.g. washrooms, line-up areas inside and outside, payment areas etc.).
- Where possible, increase the space between cardio machines and other stationary equipment to achieve adequate distancing between users, or block access to equipment if it cannot be moved so that 2 metre distances are maintained.
- Place markers on the floor so clients know where weight benches are to be positioned in case they are moved by clients.
- Consider marking out squares on the floor in rooms that conduct group classes.
- Monitor the number of customers and staff in the facility. Once the maximum number of persons is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.

Resources:

- Video: [Why do we need to socially distance?](#)

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TIP Sheet – Personal Protective Equipment

Goal: To understand the limitations of using personal protective equipment and to ensure that if used, PPE is selected and used appropriately.

Personal Protective Equipment

- While the use of masks for prevention of COVID-19 among people without symptoms in non-healthcare settings is generally not recommended by Vancouver Coastal Health, some people using the facility (including staff and customers) may prefer to wear masks. This may help prevent transmission from the person wearing the mask.
- Masks should never be relied upon as a sole protective measure.
- Employees who choose to wear a mask must be aware of the following:
 - Masks can become contaminated on the outside when touched by hands so employees should avoid touching or adjusting them often.
 - Masks that become wet, soiled or damaged are less effective and must be replaced immediately.
 - Masks must be put on and taken off correctly, including not touching the front of the mask, and washing hands.
 - Cloth masks must be washed every day using the warmest water setting, and stored in a clean dry place to prevent contamination.
 - Never share masks with others.
 - If a non-cloth mask is used (e.g. medical mask), ensure employees know these items are single-use. In addition to following safe procedures for putting them on and taking them off, they cannot be cleaned or reused.
- Clients who chose to wear masks should be aware that masks may hinder breathing during strenuous activity.
- Consider use of full face shields for sports that use helmets (hockey, lacrosse, etc.).
- Employees responsible for cleaning shall be equipped with any personal protective equipment deemed necessary, depending on the cleaning process and chemicals used.

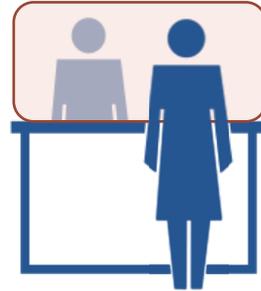
Resources:

- WorkSafe BC: [Selecting and Using Masks](#)

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TIP Sheet – Modify the Environment



Goal: Change the environment to reduce common touch points and make interacting with others safer.

Engineering Controls

- Make use of outdoor spaces as much as possible and prop doors open so people can pass through without having to touch handles.
- Increase ventilation whenever possible by opening windows, doors, and increasing the fresh air intake on air handling units.
- Eliminate communal storage areas and instead provide separate bins or lockers.
- Clearly demarcate employee-only areas and do not allow clients to enter these spaces.
- Install protective shields (rigid non-porous protective shields such as acrylic sheets or plexiglass) at customer service and client consultation spaces.

Administrative Controls

- Consider providing an on-line sign-up schedule with fixed blocks of time for the entire facility, rather than allowing staggered drop-ins throughout the day.
- Generally discourage activities that involve close contact with other people (e.g. spotters during weight training, sparring in martial arts studios, games in contact sports, etc.).
- As much as possible, coaching sessions should be conducted in a manner that avoids touching clients. Consider using verbal cues while coaching or using technology to share instructional material and practice plans.
- Where activities involving direct contact take place, ensure that hand hygiene is practiced using an alcohol-based hand rub or hand washing before and after contact.
- Facilities should only be open when at least one staff member is present to monitor control measures that are in place; facilities offering 24-hour unrestricted access without staff present may want to consider temporarily suspending this service.
- To avoid obstructing access to equipment, or requiring clients to handle/move each other's personal belongings, everyone should be encouraged contain their belongings in a gym bag when not in use (cell phones, clothing, water bottles, towels etc.).
- Encourage customers to use their own water bottles, or provide bottled water, rather than communal drinking fountains.
- Encourage use of pre-payment using online services, or touch-free payment.

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Tip Sheet – Sanitation

Goal: Increase cleaning and disinfection of common high touch points to prevent COVID-19 from spreading through contaminated surfaces.

Engineering Controls

- Place numerous bottles of disinfectant & single-use paper towel throughout premises.

Administrative Controls

- In addition to regular morning and end-of-day cleaning activities, create a list of high-touch surfaces, for example: weights, mats, blocks, balls, machines, hand holds, bars, door knobs, switches, touch screens, sales registers, counters, railings, faucets, etc.
- Using the list, make a schedule for cleaning and disinfection (this will depend on how the facility is used; disinfection may happen between classes or throughout the day).
- Post the schedule in a visible location, assign and train staff with specific disinfection responsibilities, and have them initial after completing each disinfection cycle.
- Allow staff extra time to clean and disinfect equipment.
- Some facilities may require a significant amount of time and effort to fully disinfect (e.g. rock climbing or gymnastic facilities), and it may not be possible to do this while open. These premises may need to consider modifying their operating hours (e.g. closing mid-day for a short time) to fully clean and disinfect all surfaces.

SELECTION and USE of DISINFECTANTS

- Disinfectants must have a DIN (drug identification number).
- Always follow the instructions on the label.
- Make sure the appropriate contact time is met. Surfaces must remain wet with disinfectant for the correct length of time in order to destroy any contamination).
- Surfaces that are dirty must be cleaned with soap and water first, before disinfecting.

Resources:

- [Health Canada approved disinfectants for COVID-19](#)
- [BCCDC Guideline for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

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Tip Sheet – Managing Information

GOAL: To stay informed, follow public health advice, keep records, and make sure information you share is clear, accurate and easy to find.

Engineering Controls

- Place signs on front doors to tell anyone entering (including delivery drivers/couriers) not to enter if they are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms potentially related to COVID-19.
- Determine and post [occupancy limits](#) to ensure maintenance of physical distancing.
- Post physical distancing signage in all common areas.
- Place posters near to all bathroom sinks, reminding users of good hand washing practice.

Administrative Controls

- Keep daily records of the people who worked together and if possible, of people who trained at the facility, and retain these records for at least 30 days in the event there is a need for contact tracing on the part of the Medical Health Officer.
- Maintain up-to-date and consistent messaging on websites, social media, emails, press releases, and when speaking with customers so details are aligned, timely and accurate.
- Encourage team members to provide regular feedback on any issues with COVID-19 prevention measures. Consider providing a means for employees to do this anonymously.

TIPS for EFFECTIVE SIGNAGE:

- Communicate information in multiple languages and use diagrams or pictures.
- Ensure the font size on signage is large enough for everyone to read from a distance (i.e. if the person was standing 2 metres away from the sign).
- Put posters in plastic sleeves to protect them from water damage in wet areas or outside.
- Place signage in conspicuous areas and away from other posted information so it is clearly visible (i.e. avoid posting signs by to product advertisements, coupon boards etc.).

Resources:

- Poster: [Physical Distancing](#)
- Poster: [Do Not Enter when Sick](#)
- Poster: [Hand Washing Poster](#)

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Tip Sheet – Handling Shared Equipment

Goal: To provide supplemental guidance for shared equipment.

Engineering Controls

- If you cannot disinfect shared equipment properly it should be removed from use.
- Organize shared equipment and non-stationary equipment so clients can easily pick-up the item they want without having to touch many others.
- Consider keeping all non-stationary equipment in one area to facilitate cleaning and disinfection in between uses. Station an employee there such that items could be wiped down by the employee after each use before being put back into circulation.
- Some examples of non-stationary equipment include balls, blocks, mats, resistance bands, paralleltes, skipping ropes, wobble boards, and foam rollers.
- Provide sanitizing wipes or spray bottles of disinfectant with single-use paper towels in all areas where shared equipment is kept, so clients can wipe down items themselves.

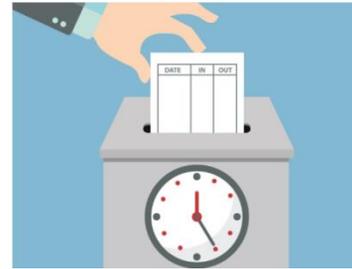
Administrative Controls

- Direct customers and athletes to handwashing stations after using equipment.
- Customers should be encouraged to wash hands or use sanitizer prior to renting/borrowing any equipment.
- Employees should wash their hands after touching anything that has been in the client's possession and before helping the next client.
- Extend times between rentals to allow for thorough cleaning and disinfection.
- Launder linens normally, using the hottest water possible, and dry thoroughly.

CUSTOMERS should be encouraged to bring their own gear for personal use whenever practical to reduce sharing of equipment

- Helmets
- Racquets
- Goggles
- Yoga mats and blocks
- Hockey sticks/baseball bats
- Gloves
- Shin/wrist/ankle guards
- Weight belts/wrist wraps

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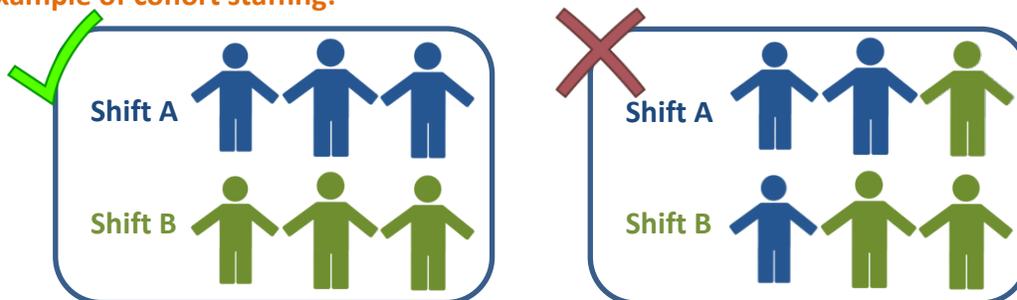
TIP Sheet – Scheduling

Goal: To adjust schedules, rotations and shift activities to limit contact between team members.

Elimination Controls

- Staff who can work from home should do so.
- Consider developing online fitness participation classes, if practical, until such time that physical distancing recommendations are suspended.
- Group classes should be scheduled with extra time between classes to allow time to disinfect equipment, and avoid interaction between incoming and outgoing clients.
- Try to keep staff in the same location as much as possible within larger facilities.
- Consider implementing ‘cohort staffing’ – this means forming small groups of staff who will consistently work together without crossover.

Example of cohort staffing:



- Stagger breaks for individuals or cohorts, and maintain a predictable break schedule.
- Staff training should be done in small groups with social distancing, or online.

Engineering Controls

- Designate additional rooms or areas for breaks, and encourage use of outdoor spaces.
- Use large rooms, outdoor spaces, or virtual options for meetings.

Administrative Controls

- If your company operates multiple facilities, identify staff that work at different locations and find a way to eliminate or reduce travel between sites.