



Attention Gym Managers:

In recent weeks Porter County has seen a drastic uptick in COVID 19 cases. As many of you are aware, we have entered into the RED category of community spread. Many of these positive cases seem to be originating from small group gatherings which can happen in conjunction with sport activities. The CDC points out the lack of mask use by young adults directly leads to an increase in positive COVID cases which then leads to an increase of COVID cases in our vulnerable populations over 60 years old. Because of this, Porter County must tighten up precautions to ensure everyone is following COVID safety protocols and helping to decrease the spread of the virus.

In order to keep our most at risk populations healthy, we must take measures to ensure all gym patrons are following CDC guidelines of mask use, social distancing, hand hygiene and staying home when ill.

Follow these steps to ensure you are protecting *all* populations:

Face Coverings:

All patrons must wear a face covering when not actively engaged in strenuous physical activity. This includes, walking through the facility, utilizing locker rooms and restrooms, waiting for equipment to open up, when exercising on low intensity equipment and participating in low intensity exercise. This would include shooting around in the gym and waiting on sidelines for play in a group activity such as pick-up basketball games.

- It is the responsibility of the facility to ensure all patrons are aware of when face covering are required. It is essential to complete routine checks to ensure masks are worn at appropriate times.

Social Distancing:

Continue to modify cardio equipment, free weight areas, weight training equipment, and fitness classrooms to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet between patrons and employees.

- If rearranging is not an option, place “do not use” signage and turn-off/unplug select equipment to allow for proper social distancing.

Use visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, and signs to remind workers and patrons to maintain distance of at least 6 feet from others.

- This should be used at sign in/out desks, payment terminals, outside of fitness rooms or anywhere a line may form.
- Consider using floor decals in gyms to ensure social distancing where people may be waiting to play a game. This is especially important in basketball gyms or indoor soccer.

Limit the number of people in the facility at one time. Ensure those participating and waiting to participate can all maintain 6 feet distance. Gathering cannot exceed 25 people.

- Consider implementing limited online reservation and check-in/check-out systems that will limit the number of people in the facility at one time (employees should be included in the count).
- Have the same players play together regularly. Pick-up games need to be coordinated to keep the same players together.

- Sports with a large number of players on a team may increase the likelihood of spread compared to sports with fewer team members.
- Limit your team to a core group of participants, by restricting non-team players from joining when your team is short players and not adding new members during the season.

Consider opening sections of the facility in phases.

- Keep areas where social distancing is particularly challenging (e.g., locker rooms, courts/fields, and childcare areas) closed until conditions improve and infection risks are lowered.
- Develop plans to determine what conditions are necessary to open additional areas of the facility.
- Post signs and reminders at entrances and in strategic places providing instruction on social distancing, hand hygiene, use of cloth face coverings or masks, and cough and sneeze etiquette.

Hygiene

Players should clean their hands before and after practices, games, and sharing equipment.

- Ensure hand sanitizer or hand wash sinks are provided in areas where equipment may be shared, such as a basketball, soccer ball or football.
- Disinfect high touch areas every two hours or in between groups. Include door handles, hand rails, counters, doors, restroom counters, sinks, door knobs, toilet flushers, etc.

Illness Protocol

Ensure employees are informed to stay home when ill and screened prior to beginning work.

Post signage reminding patrons no to enter if ill or exposed to an ill person.

Following CDC recommendations and specifically the points listed above will help to slow the spread of the virus. It is up to you, the gym manager, to ensure employees and patrons are following these safe practices. COVID Safety Inspectors will be out in the community conducting complaint and spot checks. If you have any questions or need assistance with your facility, please contact the health department at 219-465-3525.