



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

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Fitness Facilities: COVID-19 Guidelines for Reopening/Reset

The following guidelines of good safe practices apply to fitness facilities reopening fully or partially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fitness facilities must follow all local requirements and guidance from a higher authority. Working with your local Preventive Medicine personnel is essential to ensure safe operation. The provided guidance serves as a blueprint for ensuring a safe fitness experience for workers and their customers.

Disinfection procedures are recommended if a fitness operation has been closed for an extended period for any reason. An extended period is considered 30 days or if closed for any period following an employee(s) having a confirmed case of COVID-19. Please collaborate with the local Preventive Medicine personnel for detailed guidance.

Before opening each day, the facility and equipment must be thoroughly cleaned, sanitized, and/or disinfected per the CDC guidelines. Focus on high-contact touch areas that would be frequently touched by employees and customers. It is strongly recommended to discontinue using any customer self-serve beverage machines or water fountains until further notice.

References

COVID-19 military resources are available through the following military public health websites:

- [NAVMED P-5010-2 \(Rev. 6-2019\), Section 6.](#)
- [CDC, Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [CDC, Cleaning, and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)
- [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

Employers: In preparation to reopening, fitness center operators should review all health and safety guidelines, [COVID-19 OSHA guidance](#), new responsibilities, higher authority policies, safe use of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection products, and requirements outlined in the [NAVMED P-5010-2 \(Rev. 6-2019\), Section 6](#).

Employees who are sick should remain at home. If an employee becomes ill or presents signs of illness, the person in charge should identify the signs during a pre-work screening and follow the established policies on when the ill employee is allowed to return to work. Contact your local Preventive Medicine personnel for detailed guidance.

- Employee health must be closely monitored, and employees must understand the requirement to report symptoms and illness immediately to the facility manager.
- **Temperature Checks:** Recommend using a touchless infrared thermometer to check the temperature of employees each day when they enter the facility. If an employee has a temperature above 100°F, the employee should be sent home immediately and not allowed to return to work until they have no fever and no evidence of COVID-19 symptoms. Also, if an employee reports a flu-like illness immediately contact your local Preventive Medicine personnel for guidance.



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Fitness Area: As these areas are reopened, the following are recommendations for ensuring a safe fitness experience for your employees and customers by implementing proper sanitary precautions.

- If possible, consider an exit from the facility separate from the entrance. Determine ingress/egress to and from restrooms to establish paths that mitigate proximity for guests and staff.
- Discontinue the use of electronic check-in/out monitors.
- Recommend installation of a plexiglas barrier at customer service counters.
- Provide hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) throughout the facility.
- Always reduce customers in lobby, ensuring 6-foot distancing. Organize or remove seating to allow for a 6-foot distance between seats.
- Do not forget cleaning and disinfection of customer waiting areas.
- Maintain a minimum of six feet between customers within the fitness area.
- Limit the number of high touch-free weights (e.g., dumbbells, bars, and plates) to reduce cleaning requirements.
- Discontinue providing towels to customers. Urge customers to use their own personal clean towels.
- Avoid lifting weights requiring a “spotter” which does not meet social distancing requirements.
- Eliminate or control group classes. If group classes are held, they must maintain a minimum of 6-foot distancing but due to the high aerobic nature of some of these classes, greater distancing is strongly encouraged.
- Recommend discontinue use of saunas, whirlpool baths, and other therapy type equipment until further notice due to the high potential of airborne particles.
- Consider reducing occupancy to allow sufficient social distancing and wait times for customer cleaning and disinfection contact time of equipment after their use.
- Remove individual foam mats from the floor. Advise patrons to avoid exercises that cause the hands to come in contact with the floor.
- Do not allow groups to gather.
- [DOD](#) currently mandates the use of face coverings. Face coverings are effective tools to mitigate risk from individuals who do not show symptoms, especially in close environments where it is hard for people to maintain social distancing recommendations of six feet. Coverings worn by employees should be kept clean in accordance with [CDC](#) and [NMCPHC guidance](#) (Face Covering Guidance). Train all employees on the importance of frequent hand washing, the use of hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol content, and give them clear instructions to avoid touching hands to face. Remind the employees that proper handwashing is always preferred over just using a hand sanitizer.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfection

Use EPA-registered disinfectants on *List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV2* (the virus that causes COVID-19), available at: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>. If a listed product is **not** available, prepare a chlorine bleach disinfecting solution at a dilution of 1,000 ppm ([See formulation table at the end of this document](#)). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends chlorine bleach dilutions at 1,000 ppm with a 1-minute wet contact time. Surfaces disinfected using chlorine bleach must be wiped with clean water after the 1-minute wet contact time to remove any residuals. When using other EPA-registered products for disinfection, you must follow the manufacturer’s label information



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regarding preparation of a diluted concentration, wet contact time to achieve disinfection, and rinsing requirements after treatment.

Understand the difference between cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. The CDC defines as follows:

Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process works by either cleaning or disinfecting surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

If a surface is not visibly dirty, you can clean it with an EPA-registered product that both cleans (removes germs) and disinfects (kills germs) instead. Be sure to read the label directions carefully, as there may be a separate procedure for using the product as a cleaner or as a disinfectant. Disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a certain period of time (e.g., letting it stand for 3-5 minutes).

Using disinfecting wipes is acceptable however, pay close attention to the directions for using them. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of contact time.

Ensure you always have sufficient cleaning and disinfection product on hand. Including hand sanitizer, hand soap, paper towels, toilet paper, and disinfectant wipes.

- Provide disinfecting wipes for individuals to wipe down equipment that are in direct contact with hands after each use. (e.g., free weights, weight bars, hand grips on cardio equipment such as treadmills, bicycles, ellipticals, pads/cushions on bike seats, lifting benches, and other cushioned components of strength training machines, fitness balls, rope handles, and other fitness accessories).
- Strongly recommend closely monitoring of fitness area by operators to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of equipment by customers.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered antimicrobial (disinfecting) wipe is appropriate for conducting individual wipe-down between uses.
- If disposable wipes or other disinfecting products are not available, prepare a sanitizing chlorine dilution that is between 100-200 parts per million (ppm) ([See formulation table at the end of this document](#)).
 - Use bleach solutions guidance described below when preparing a solution at your facility. Chlorine is corrosive to metal and at higher concentrations can present a skin hazard. Dilutions greater than 200 ppm will require a clear water rinse. The act of cleaning and wiping a surface will remove soils where germs can hide, which also removes some of the germs from the surface.



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- Chlorine solutions must be prepared fresh each day and replenish throughout the day to ensure it works. The free available chlorine [FAC] concentration of the prepared solution should be verified using an appropriate test strip or paper. Bleach solutions and other disinfectants should be applied using a spray bottle and disposable paper towels. Treated surfaces must be allowed to air dry before the next use.
- Disinfect all nonporous frequently touched **fitness equipment** such as weight bars, aerobic equipment, and benches, and other similar surfaces at least once during the day and at the end of each day.
- Disinfect high-touch surfaces in **customer areas** every 2-3 hours. (e.g., entrance, exit, and restroom door handles, tabletops, chairs, service counters, credit card machines (keypad, digital touchpad), restroom light switches, handicap rails, hand wash sink fixtures, soap dispensing levers, paper towel dispensing levers, forced air hand drying control button, and door latches for toilet stalls).

Bleach Solutions Guidance

(DO NOT USE CHLORINE INTENDED FOR POOL/SPAS AS IT MAY CONTAIN A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF CHLORINE)

Concentration	Bleach with 5 to 6% Sodium Hypochlorite	Bleach with 8.25% Sodium Hypochlorite
1,000 ppm	1/3 cup bleach per 1 gallon of water	3 Tablespoons bleach per 1 gallon of water

WHEN MIXING BLEACH SOLUTIONS ALWAYS ADHERE TO ALL SAFETY PROCEDURE INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO GOOD VENTILATION, AND PROPER PROTECTIVE GEAR (GLOVES, MASKS, GOGGLES)