

Recommended Guidance¹ for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Hotels

I. Background

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus that has emerged and caused coronavirus disease (abbreviated as COVID-19). Public health experts continue to learn about SARS-CoV-2, but based on current data and similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contact (those within about six feet) via respiratory droplets. Transmission of SAR-CoV-2 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented yet, but current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of material. One primary measure discussed in this guidance will be cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection – a best practice for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in hotels.

II. Purpose

This guidance provides recommendations for Hotels. As well as hotels with fitness centers, gyms and health clubs within their Hotel. As we prepare for the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus, there are some precautions hotel managers and staff can take to improve guest and employee health and safety. Early evidence suggests that the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread more easily than the virus that causes seasonal influenza, and it appears that the COVID-19 disease is more deadly than seasonal influenza.

III. Symptoms

Clinical features are fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illnesses. Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Human coronaviruses can sometimes cause lower-respiratory tract illnesses, such as pneumonia or bronchitis.

IV. Transmission

Human coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- the air by coughing and sneezing;
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands;

¹ Source: Hospitality Net’s, “Tips for Hotel Managers”, for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Hotels.

- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands; and
- rarely, fecal contamination.

V. **Prevention**

The following can help prevent the spread of coronaviruses and protect yourself and your members from becoming infected:

- wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands; and
- avoid close contact with people who are sick.

There are currently no vaccines to protect against human coronavirus infection.

VI. **Preventative Actions to eliminate the spread of COVID-19**

- Switch to and use disinfectant products that have been pre-approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use against emerging viral pathogens.
- Disinfectants should be applied during routine cleaning of guestrooms, public spaces, health club areas and meeting rooms
- Linens may become contaminated with the virus, so it is also important to add disinfectant when washing laundry. Bed scarfs and bedspreads should be washed more frequently.
- Public spaces, and the front desk, need to be cleaned frequently. If possible, provide disposable disinfectant wipes to front-of-house staff to disinfect surfaces between guests. High touch areas in public spaces include tables in the lobby area, buttons on elevators, water fountains, and ice and vending machines. Pens at the front desk and room keys and key cards should also be cleaned with disinfectant.
- You should maintain records that will help you trace who has been in contact with any infected individuals that have been to your property. Review and implement a record keeping process to maintain records of guest and staff movement. These records should be kept for a minimum of 90 days. This includes maintaining guest registration records, employee work assignments, documentation of key control procedures including the electronic lock records, and security camera closed circuit tapes. This is especially important if someone in your hotel has been confirmed to have the virus.
- Consult with the local or county health department to determine appropriate actions if a guest or worker presents symptoms of COVID-19 disease, as well as how to respond if asked to quarantine guests. Public health officials at the state, federal, and local level have the legal authority to implement control measures to prevent the spread of communicable disease, such as isolation and quarantine, travel restrictions, and medical treatment.

VII. **Preventative Actions for Hotel Workers**

- Train housekeeping staff to use the disinfectants safely and correctly. Staff should wear gloves when cleaning. Many of these cleaning products need to remain on hard surfaces for several minutes in order to work. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use to get the most virus killing protection. Schedule and perform routine cleaning and disinfection of all contact surfaces in public areas, guestrooms, television remote controls, toilet flush handles, door handles, water faucet handles, and flooring.
- Train hotel staff and post signage to remind guests and workers to wash hands with soap and warm water frequently, for at least 20 seconds each time. If possible, provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol in all guest contact areas and to all staff. In addition, staff should be advised not to touch their faces and to practice "social distancing" by standing at least six feet away from guests and other workers.
- Educate staff on the most common signs and symptoms of coronavirus infection, which are fever, dry cough, and shortness of breath. Symptoms typically occur 1-14 days after exposure, though a small proportion of people who are infected don't have symptoms.

VIII. **Preventative Actions for the introduction of respiratory germs INTO your fitness center at the facility**

- Post signs at the entrance instructing members not to visit if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Assess members' symptoms of respiratory infection upon entering the facility.

IX. **Preventative Actions for the spread of respiratory germs WITHIN your facility²**

- Monitor members as they enter and monitor employees at least once prior to starting their shift for fever or respiratory symptoms.
- Restrict members with fever or acute respiratory symptoms.
- Gym and Health Club personnel should monitor their local and state public health sources to understand COVID-19 activity in their community to help inform their evaluation of individuals with unknown respiratory illness. If there is transmission of COVID-19 in the community, in addition to implementing the precautions described above for members with acute respiratory infection, facilities should also consult with public health authorities for additional guidance.
- Post signs throughout the facility describing ways to prevent the spread of germs.
- Avoid shaking hands as a social greeting.
- Support hand and respiratory hygiene as well as cough etiquette by members, visitors, and employees.
- Ensure employees clean their hands according to CDC guidelines, including before and after contact with members, and after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment.

² Source: Stop the Spread of Germs - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

- Put alcohol-based hand rub in every rest room (ideally both inside and outside of the room), at each end of each row of exercise machines, and at least one in the free weight area.
- Position germicidal spray and paper towels at each end of each row of exercise machines, and at least one set in the free weight area. Include extra signage to ensure members are following standard self-cleaning protocol.
- Make sure tissues are available and every sink is well-stocked with soap and hand drying materials for hand washing.
- Position a trash can near the exit to make it easy for employees and members to discard tissues, paper towels, etc.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after cleaning workout rooms.

X. **Preventative Actions for Vulnerable Populations**

Social distancing actions are taken to restrict when and where people can gather to stop or slow the spread of COVID-19 or other infectious diseases in communities. Social distancing actions include limiting large groups of people coming together, closing buildings, or canceling events. Members with medical conditions may wish to avoid a congregate setting such as a gym or health club.

XI. **Contingency Planning**

Consider reducing open hours or maximum capacity. Check the IDPH and CDC websites daily for updated guidance to reduce spread of COVID-19.