Massachusetts Private Gym Reopening Plan

Purpose:
These sector-specific COVID-19 workplace safety standards for private gyms are issued to provide owners and operators of gyms and workers at these businesses with instructions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19 as gyms reopen. These standards are minimum requirements only and not exclusive or exhaustive. It is the responsibility of each facility to stay abreast of updates and best practices. Individual gyms are encouraged to take additional steps, where possible, to further enhance safety depending on their specific floor area, design, ventilation, etc.

Standards for Responsible Gyms in Massachusetts
No activity in gyms shall occur without meeting these sector specific COVID-19 workplace safety standards for gyms. The owners of the facility are responsible for meeting these standards.

The following workplace specific safety standards are organized around four distinct categories covering distancing, staffing and operations, hygiene protocols, and disinfecting. Additional supporting recommendations, references and best practices can be found at the end of this document.

Distancing

- Arrange equipment so training areas are spaced out at least 6 feet apart
- Install visual markers to encourage members to remain at least 6 feet apart
- No physical contact between workers and members
- Improve ventilation to spaces where possible (e.g. open doors and windows)
- Operate HVAC units continuously when the gyms are in use.
    - Additional information for best practice for air ventilation can be found below.
- Close or reconfigure worker common spaces and high density areas of facilities where workers are likely to congregate (e.g., break rooms, eating areas) to allow 6 feet of physical distancing.
- Workers will take breaks in a staggered fashion and will maintain at least 6 feed distancing when unmasked to eat or drink.
- Require face coverings for all workers, at all times (except as stated bove).
- Require face coverings for members during periods of non-activity or where 6 ft of spacing cannot be maintained.
- Contactless pre-registration and check-in will be required for all members.
- Contactless payment methods will be required.

Staffing and Operations

- Provide training for workers on safety standards, up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmissions using existing training materials and videos from OSHA and the CDC.
- Close waiting areas and ask customers to wait outside until it is time to come in for their appointments
- Close showers and reconfigure locker rooms to allow 6 feet of physical distancing
- Contactless pre-registration and check-in will be required for all members
- Contactless payment methods will be required
- Temperature Check for workers and members prior to entering the space will be strongly encouraged. Additionally, customers will perform a simple symptom screen at check in and be encouraged to not use the gym if they screen positive or are feeling unwell that day.
- Include signage for members and workers asking the following questions:
    - Have you been in close contact, within the last 14 days, with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?
    - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of smell or taste, or diarrhea?
    - Have you had a fever in the last 72 hours?
- Maintain a log of workers and customers to support contact tracing (name, date, time, contact info) if needed
- Remove all non-essential amenities, including reading materials, water cooler and cups, tissues, etc. Customers will be required to bring their own container of water for hydration.
- All workers must stay home if feeling ill, following the same criteria outlined above.
- Workers who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 are encouraged to stay home
- Encourage workers to self-identify symptoms or any close contact with a known or suspected COVID-19 case to the employer
- Encourage workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the workplace for purposes of cleaning / disinfecting and contact tracing. If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace, the employer shall notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located and work with them to trace

likely contacts in the workplace and advise workers to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and / or at the request of the LBOH measures as outlined in government guidelines

- Post notice to workers and customers of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in government guidelines
- Customers will be encouraged to wear a mask/face covering at the time of entry and exit from the gym. They will be educated to use hand hygiene before removing the mask or wearing it again (before and after exercise).

Hygiene Protocols

- Ensure access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative.
- Supply workers at workplace with adequate cleaning products
- Post visible signage throughout the facility to remind workers and clients of the hygiene and safety protocol
    - In addition, information regarding hygiene and safety protocols will be communicated via email and social media

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Facilities will be cleaned and disinfected regularly at least daily and more frequently if feasible
- Cleaning logs including date, time and scope will be kept
- In event of a case, facility will be shut down for deep cleaning and disinfecting of workplace in accordance with current CDC guidance
- High touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected regularly
- Equipment will not be shared amongst members and or staff without proper disinfecting between use
- Equipment will be disinfected after every use
- Facility will provide signage of proper cleaning techniques for equipment
- Additional information for best practice cleaning and sanitation can be read below

Additional Information Regarding Hygiene, Cleaning, and Sanitizing Protocols:

All protocols will be communicated to members and staff in multiple methods such as email and social media but will also be communicated throughout the facility using clear posted signage.

Hygiene protocols begin with having all persons entering the facility wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. All facilities will provide an appropriate location and supplies for members and staff to clean their hands.

Hand sanitizer or washing stations will be provided anywhere there are common high touch areas such as entrance door knobs or sign in locations. When feasible, doors will be propped open and a no-contact sign in or registry method must be utilized. Items that are common touch points such as a coffee maker or water fountain will be removed and made inaccessible.

Equipment must not be shared between members of the facility without being properly cleaned between use. This includes, but is not limited to, barbells, plates, platforms, kettlebells, dumbbells, bands, pull up bars, machines, machine accessories, and cardio equipment. The Facility will provide instructions on how and when to properly clean each type of equipment (to be done by their employees). Equipment should be removed from use if there is no practical way to clean the equipment between uses.

Examples of non-equipment frequently touched common surfaces and objects that will need routine disinfection following reopening are:

1. Tables
2. Doorknobs
3. Light switches
4. Countertops
5. Stereo systems
6. Handles
7. Desks
8. Phones
9. Keyboards
10. Toilets, faucets and sinks

Facilities will determine the most appropriate cleaners, disinfectants, and sanitizers for their facility but must ensure their effectiveness for the materials they will be applied to. The EPA has compiled a list of disinfectants effective against COVID-19:

https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

Commonly available disinfectants, that have been found to be effective against COVID-19 on hard surfaces, are bleach and alcohol solutions. To be effective 1/3 cup of household bleach can be added to a gallon of water. This bleach solution remains effective for up to 24 hours and must

be discarded after this time. Alcohol solutions with 70% or greater alcohol are effective for disinfecting hard surfaces. To effectively destroy the virus, disinfectants have an established contact time. In most cases disinfectants should be applied and not wiped off to maintain the most contact time possible. Equipment that has been disinfected should not be used by another member during this contact time.

Instruction must be provided to those who are completing the cleaning and disinfection of the Facility. Instruction should include but are not limited to:

- What must be cleaned.
- When it must be cleaned.
- What chemical must be used and how long it should remain, once applied i.e. contact time.
- Hazards of the chemicals, including that cleaners must not be mixed together to prevent unsafe chemical reactions, inhalational injury or fire hazard.

All existing OSHA Hazard Communication Standards must be followed such as proper container labeling.

All regular cleaning and disinfection of the facility should be increased beyond typical measures and recorded on a cleaning log. A cleaning log specific to the facility should be created to ensure all areas that require cleaning are addressed during the regular cleaning. All common high traffic areas such as all floors and bathrooms must be cleaned at least once daily on days that the facility is utilized. Depending on the volume and frequency of use it may be appropriate to complete this cleaning multiple times a day.

Ventilation:

According to the latest information from the CDC, the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes[1]. Droplets produced from an infected individual may land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. This is the theory behind distancing at least 6 feet from individuals to help reduce the spread of the virus[2]. Ventilation may provide another important way to combat the virus. Increasing the flow of fresh air through HVAC systems will help remove or dilute the virus-laden droplets from the indoor air.

Recently The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers released a statement[3]:

Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 through the air is sufficiently likely that airborne exposure to the virus should be controlled. Ventilation and filtration provided by heating, ventilating, and

air-conditioning systems can reduce the airborne concentration of SARS-CoV-2 and thus the risk of transmission through the air.

Below are some best practices and general concepts to potentially reduce viral load in the air of our facilities. Not all practices will be applicable to all facilities:

1. Control ventilation through HVAC e.g. run the air handler throughout the day regardless of occupancy.
2. Run any system exhaust fans throughout the day regardless of occupancy. Bathroom fans are direct exhaust systems.
3. Ensure HVAC filters are installed properly and changed regularly. Filters should be treated as potentially contaminated. When filters are changed the system should be shut off, filters sprayed with disinfectant, and then bagged for disposal.
4. Ensure HVAC exhaust filters are free and clear of storage and other items that might reduce their efficiency.
5. Open windows and doors to increase natural passive ventilation.
6. Setting up fans to increase the number of fresh air exchanges will reduce potential viral load. When setting up fans you want to consider exhaust and supply of air. If supply and exhaust fans are placed next to each other they will short change the system and not be as effective.
7. Ideally the space would be under negative pressure which is accomplished by having more active exhaust than supply. To have adequate negative pressure you do need appropriate supply of air or make-up air, else the system will be inefficient.
8. The primary focus of fans should be to exhaust from the nearest point of particle generation. This increases the effectiveness of the ventilation and removes the particles from the space.
9. Where feasible, best practice would be to place workstations near windows with fans blowing out to exhaust as close to the potential point of generation as possible.
10. Moving air around the space for the sake of moving air, without considering supply and exhaust is not effective at increasing fresh air exchanges and could keep droplets suspended for a greater amount of time.

Common and readily available methods to increase fresh air and/or flow would be:

1. Control ventilation through HVAC e.g. run AC throughout the day regardless of occupancy.
2. Open windows.

3. Use fans to ensure fresh air is cycling through the space.

References:

1. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html
2. Airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2: the world should face the reality https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7151430/
3. https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/technical%20resources/covid-19/eiband-airbornetransmission.pdf