Health Advice on Prevention of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) for Fitness Centre (Interim)

I. Disease information

Please visit the following website for disease information, affected areas and updated information related to COVID-19:

2. The Department of Health advises staff / users of fitness centre should take the following precautionary measures to minimize the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.

II. Preventive measures

Vigorous exercise in confined indoor spaces should be minimized during COVID-19 pandemic

A. Maintain Good Personal Hygiene and Immunity

(a) Avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose.

(b) Maintain hand hygiene

i. Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching mouth, nose or eyes; after using the toilet; before entering fitness centre; after touching public installations such as fitness stations, machine or equipment; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing.
ii. Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds, then dry with a disposable paper towel. When the hands are cleaned, do not touch the water tap directly again (for example, using a paper towel to wrap the faucet before turning it off). If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, hand hygiene with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative.

(c) **Check body temperature** regularly. Those with fever or respiratory symptoms or sudden loss of taste/smell should refrain from work / using the fitness centre, wear a surgical mask, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

(d) Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose the soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.

(e) **All must wear surgical mask** within a fitness centre especially in group exercise / training (group exercise / training is strongly discouraged), except when having a shower or consuming food / drink at designated area.

(f) N95 respirators are generally not recommended for use by the general public in community settings as surgical mask can protect against COVID-19 which is mainly transmitted by droplet and contact route. Special training is required for proper wearing and removal of N95 respirator. Otherwise the infective risk due to inadequate protection and contamination may be increased.

(g) No sharing of personal items.


(i) Build up good body immunity by having a balanced diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption.

(j) Use the “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile app to record your whereabouts and check whether you have visited any venue as with a COVID-19 patient at about the same time.
B. Staff

(a) Staff are advised to stagger their meal time and keep social distancing when having meals.
   i. Keep distancing of at least 1.5 metres and avoid sitting direct face-to-face with others when having meals or having meals at designated areas with effective partitions.
   ii. Perform hand hygiene before meal, removing or putting on mask.
   iii. Avoid talking without mask while having meals. Talk only after finishing meals and after putting on masks.
   iv. Perform environmental cleaning and disinfection of the catering area after meal time.
   v. The dining place should be well-ventilated with adequate fresh air supply.

(b) Fitness centres should arrange for all staff to undergo a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test for COVID-19 once at least every 14 days, and ensure that the staff keep records of every SMS notification containing the result of the test for 31 days.

(c) Keep a list of staff duty list, which include their personal particulars and contact information to facilitate contact tracing when necessary.

C. Users

(a) Bring their own personal equipment such as yoga mats and boxing gloves.

(b) Keep social distancing all the time in the fitness centre. A distance of at least 1.5 metres needs to be kept for mask off activities e.g. when having a shower or consuming food / drink at designated area.

(c) Users should check their temperature before visiting. Those with fever, respiratory symptoms or sudden loss of taste/smell should cancel their visit, wear surgical mask and seek medical attention promptly.

(d) Clean and disinfect the storage cabinet before and after each use.

(e) Take a shower or bath and wash hair when return home, and wash clothes properly.

D. Premises Setting

(a) Set up temperature screening equipment at the entrance. Staff should check temperature for users upon entry to the fitness centre and deny entry
of those with fever.

(b) Provide adequate **hand hygiene** facilities, such as 70 to 80% alcohol-based handrub at the entrance, and every fitness station, machine or equipment.

(c) Provide **surgical mask** to user if needed.

(d) Consider to offer or continue the virtual classes.

(e) Used equipment should be cleaned and disinfected before next use.
   i. Prohibit the use of shared equipment unless able to clean and disinfected between users.
   ii. Used equipment can be put aside in a designated area before cleaning and disinfection.
   iii. Provide “ready to clean” tags for users to place on equipment after use, to ensure equipment is disinfected before the next use.
   iv. Provide disposal disinfecting wipes e.g. alcohol (≥70%) wipes to users for disinfection of fitness equipment e.g. weight lifting equipment, yoga mats and boxing gloves before and after use
   v. Consider removing hard-to-clean items and equipment such as bands, foam rollers, and yoga blocks
   vi. Remind users to bring their own personal equipment such as yoga mats and boxing gloves.

(f) **Keep social distancing** by
   i. Adequate distance or effective partition (i.e. there is some form of partition which could serve as effective barrier between the two) between fitness stations, machines or equipment
   ii. Group exercise / training is strongly discouraged. If deems necessary, limit the size per training group or class according to the latest directions under Cap. 599F.
   iii. Suspend activities where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

(g) Food / drink should be consumed in designated areas with adequate social distancing or effective barriers (e.g. partition with sufficient height i.e. above head level)

(h) Avoid overcrowding in changing rooms.
   i. Keep appropriate social distancing.
   ii. Wear mask properly. If mask has to be taken off temporarily during changing, do not talk without the mask and put on the mask as soon as possible after changing.
iii. Avoid sharing of personal items such as towel.
iv. Avoid sharing of the same storage cabinet by different person at the same time.
v. Carry out regular environmental cleaning and disinfection of the place including storage cabinet at least daily.

(i) Avoid overcrowding in shower rooms:
i. Keep social distancing between users of at least 1.5 metres. If necessary, use alternate shower heads or cubicles if they are not within enclosed individual cubicles.
ii. The shower cubicles need to be cleaned and disinfected least once every 4 hours.
iii. Avoid sharing of personal items such as towel.

(j) The shower and changing rooms should be adequately ventilated.
(k) Where possible, encourage users to use their own mobile device for electronic payment to minimize physical contact.
(l) Follow directions under Cap. 599F applicable to catering premises if such service is available in the fitness centre.

(m) Water Dispenser
i. Forbid use of drinking fountains during the COVID-19 pandemic because of risk of cross-contamination (e.g. container and mouth inadvertently contacting the nozzle/ protective guard).
ii. As an alternative, users are advised to use a container (e.g. cup or bottle) to collect water from bottle-filling water dispensers while observing proper personal hygiene.
iii. Do not use bottle-filling water dispensers to wash hands/ personal items.
iv. Water dispensers should be regularly cleaned and properly maintained.


E. Arrangement of Training Activities

(a) Encourage outdoor exercise as indoor exercise carries higher risk of
disease transmission, especially for workouts with high intensity.

(b) Wear mask at all times while in the fitness centre especially in group exercise / training (group exercise / training is strongly discouraged), except when having a shower or consuming food / drink at designated area.

(c) Suspend activities where social distancing is difficult to maintain

(d) Limit the size per training group or class according to the latest directions under Cap. 599F.

(e) Avoid sharing of fitness equipment and disinfect after use. Sharing is strictly forbidden for equipment which cannot be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use e.g. yoga mat, boxing gloves.

(f) Clean and disinfect fitness stations, machines or equipment before and after each use.

F. Maintain Environmental Hygiene

(a) Maintain good ventilation
   i. Keep windows open as appropriate and where possible to increase fresh air supply.
   ii. Use of fans (e.g. wall, circulating or exhaust fan) in indoor spaces should be accompanied by means to increase outdoor air changes (e.g. opening windows or maximizing fresh air intake of air conditioners) at the same time. Minimize air blowing directly from one person (or group of people) to another;
   iii. Ensure the air-conditioning system is functioning well with sufficient fresh air supply, clean the air filter and ducting regularly.
   iv. Turn on air-conditioning system two hours before opening and after closure and maximize fresh air intake.

(b) Keep environment clean. Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, commonly shared items and floor with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 – 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.

(c) If places are contaminated by respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, use absorbent disposable towels to wipe them away. Then disinfect the
surface and neighbouring areas with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 – 30 minutes and then rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.

(d) Spraying disinfectants is not recommended as this practice could be harmful and would not reduce the risk of viral transmission.

(e) Special attention to following areas

i. Fitness stations, machines or equipment: clean and disinfect after each use.

ii. Storage cabinets: clean and disinfect at least daily.

iii. Areas with frequent access by members of the public (e.g. lifts, escalators, lobby entrance, waiting areas, corridors, and information counter): Clean and wipe at least twice daily.

iv. Frequently touched surfaces (e.g. buttons, handrails, handle and chairs): Clean and wipe at least twice daily and when visibly soiled.

v. Garbage room: Properly clean up rubbish and waste stored in the garbage room every day. Clean and wipe related facilities at least twice daily.

G. Maintain Toilet Hygiene

(a) Keep toilets clean and dry.

(b) Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection.

(c) Provide liquid soap and disposable paper towels for hand washing.

(d) Ensure the flushing system of the toilet, and hands drying machines are in proper function at all times.

(e) After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.

(f) Ensure the water traps must be filled with water (including U-shaped water trap, bottled trap or anti-syphonage trap) to prevent foul odour and insects in the soil pipe from entering the premises. Pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet once a week.

(g) Do not alter the drain and pipes without prior authorization.

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/make_sure_the_trap_is_not_dry.pdf
III. Cleaning and Disinfection of Environment when a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 is Encountered

A. Cleaning staff should wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including:

(a) Surgical mask
(b) Latex gloves
(c) Disposable gown
(d) Eye protection (goggles/face shield) and
(e) Cap (optional)

B. Staff training

(a) Ensure the frontline cleaning staff received training with environmental disinfection procedures and supervising staff should have read and familiar with the disinfection guidelines.

C. Enhanced environmental disinfection

(a) Disinfect all potentially contaminated surfaces or items by using 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water).

D. If there is blood, secretions, vomitus or excreta spillage, take enhanced measures:

(a) Cleaning staff should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) including surgical mask, gloves, disposable gown, eye protection (goggles/face shield) and cap (optional).

(b) Use forceps to hold the strong absorbent disposable towels to wipe away the blood, secretions, vomitus or excreta during a preliminary clean up.
(c) Then put the forceps and used absorbent disposable towels in a garbage bag carefully without contaminating oneself/the environment.

(d) Disinfect with 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 4 parts of water), wipe from the outside inward, leave for 10 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry afterwards.

(e) After the procedure, put all the wastes and cleaning tools (e.g. forceps, cloth, mop head) in the garbage bag.

(f) Carefully remove PPE, put them in the garbage bag, and then perform hand hygiene.

(When hands are not visibly soiled, use 70-80% alcohol-based handrub. Wash hands with soap and water when hands are visibly dirty or visible soiled with blood, body fluid.)

(g) Wear a pair of new gloves, seal the waste bag tight and dispose it properly in covered rubbish bin. Then, label the rubbish bin and put it in a safe undisturbed place until collection.

(h) Remove gloves carefully. Wash hands with liquid soap and water.
IV. Guidelines and Educational Material for Fitness Centre

A. Proper Use of Bleach

B. Proper Use of Mask
   https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/460/19731.html

C. Basic Infection Control for Property Management (Video)

D. Health Advice on Prevention of COVID-19 for Properties Management (Interim)

E. Health Advice on Prevention of COVID-19 in Workplace (Interim)

Gentle Reminder:
Operators are advised to refer to the latest requirements and restrictions which are set out in the Directions in Relation to Schedule Premises (Directions) published in the Gazette which may be updated from time to time depending on the development of the epidemic. In case of any discrepancies between this advice and the prevailing Directions, the latter shall prevail.

First edition: 23 April 2021

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