

# COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS COVID-19 SAFETY GUIDELINES



As state and local governments lift stay-at-home restrictions and measures to ban large groups from congregating, the various boards of directors of community associations – from HOAs, condo associations, and co-ops to planned unit developments and others – are getting their properties ready for residents to be able to resume certain activities and enjoy the use of various facilities and amenities.

Following are guidelines for community associations to implement to help mitigate the exposure to COVID-19, courtesy of Community Associations Institute (CAI), HOA Resources, CDC, and WHO.

## General Guidelines

- Advise residents to continue to follow state and local guidelines and recommendations regarding social distancing and face masks/coverings. Clearly communicate any property requirements and recommendations that may be in place for residents to wear face masks/coverings in common areas.
- Recommend residents limit the number of guests/visitors as the property adjusts to re-entry.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations in lobbies, elevator lobbies, mailrooms, parking facilities, laundry rooms and other common areas.
- Provide covered trash containers for face masks near entrances/exits, elevators, and other common areas; empty and disinfect containers at least daily and more often if warranted.
- Continue to schedule virtual rather than in-person property tours whenever possible.

## Protocols for Cleaning Staff

- Be sure the cleaning staff (in-house or third-party vendor) is trained on appropriate use of cleaning and disinfection chemicals. The list of surface disinfectants the CDC recommends can be found [here](#).
- Staff should wear masks and disposable gloves for all tasks during the cleaning process, including handling trash.
- Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
- Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds; always wash hands after removing gloves.
- Make hand sanitizer available for cleaning staff.

## Common Areas

- Ensure all common areas are frequently cleaned and disinfected to help slow person-to-person spread of COVID-19.
- Pay particular attention to cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, stairway railings, and elevator buttons.
- Vacuum common spaces (hallways, lobbies, etc.) with a vacuum that's equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.
- Do not vacuum an occupied room or space. Wait until the room is empty to vacuum; for example, at night when no one is around.
- Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system servicing the room or space so that particles escaping during vacuuming don't circulate throughout the area and facility.

## Swimming Pool

- Follow state and federal orders when considering whether the association can and should open the community pool.
- The CDC states that there is no evidence that "COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools and hot tubs. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection of pools and hot tubs (with chlorine and bromine) should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19." According to the WHO, controlling water quality is necessary to prevent the transmission of not only coronavirus but other infectious diseases as well. "COVID-19 is deactivated quickly following proper chlorine or bromine concentrations in pools and hot tubs."
- Before re-opening the pool, drain, disinfect and refill water. A pool sitting unused, especially if the chemicals were not being maintained on a regular basis, could lead to bacteria such as Legionella to proliferate.
- Ensure pool operators maintain proper cleaning practices and disinfectant levels to prevent bacteria from growing and causing illnesses in swimmers.
- For the 2020 swim season, experts recommend implementing a no-guest policy, as well as eliminating pool parties, games, swim lessons, etc.
- Regulate how many people can use the pool with appointments; for example only allow X number people to use the pool for a set period of time.
- After the established set period of time, have all residents leave the area for the pool to be cleaned.
- Reduce pool hours to allow for extra time to clean the pool.
- Consider marking the waiting line to enter the pool area in 6-foot increments to comply with social distancing.
- Remove at least half of the pool furniture.

For additional guidance on COVID-19 pool safety, please visit the CDC.



## Fitness Facility

- If the gym reopens, increase space between or restrict use of some equipment (e.g. every other stationary bike or treadmill) to maintain distance between guests, and implement social distancing protocols.
- Clean and disinfect fitness facility and equipment frequently.

## Playground

The CDC provides the following guidelines:

- Do not spray disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds, as it is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19 to the public.
- Routinely clean high-touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings.
- Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.

Have an emergency plan in place should there be a resurgence of COVID-19 later in the year. Adjust your emergency preparedness plan to incorporate the appropriate pandemic response. Review all risk management protocols with an attorney and an insurance professional, including contracts and insurance policies (General Liability, Property, Excess Umbrella, D&O, Workers Compensation, etc.).



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**Sources: Community Associations Institute (CAI), HOA Resources, CDC, and WHO**

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