



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

Dana Olzenak McGuire, PhD ▪ Public Health Director
80 State Highway 310, Suite 2 ▪ Canton, New York 13617-1476
Phone: (315) 386-2325 ▪ Fax: (315) 386-2203

Press Release

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Contact: 315-386-2325

Public Health Inspects Gyms and Fitness Centers for Reopening

CANTON—Governor Cuomo has allowed gyms and fitness centers to open under Phase 4 guidance starting August 24, 2020. The guidance applies to fitness activities and facilities, including, but not limited to, standalone, hotel, residential, and office gyms and fitness centers, gyms and fitness centers in higher education institutions, yoga/Pilates/barre studios, boxing/kickboxing gyms, fitness boot camps, CrossFit or other plyometric box classes, and other group fitness classes. The guidance documents can be accessed at the NY Forward website under Phase 4 industries at <https://forward.ny.gov/phase-four-industries>.

For gyms and fitness centers to reopen in St. Lawrence County, an application is required. Please send an email to slccovid19sharedmailbox@stlawco.org with the following attachments:

1. Proof that you have read and affirmed the New York 'Interim Guidance for Gyms and Fitness Centers' at:
https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/gyms_and_fitness_centers_detail_guidelines.pdf. You will need to click the link at the end of the document to fill out the form at:
<https://forms.ny.gov/s3/ny-forward-affirmation>. Once the affirmation is complete, you can screenshot it or print the screen to save it as an attachment.
2. Business safety plan. A template provided by New York State is available here:
https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYS_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf. The safety plan must include the required certification of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system by a professional as identified in the guidance. Please include details of your facility's air handling system(s) or air handling plans in the "other" section of the reopening safety plan. If your facility does not have an HVAC system or one under operator control, you will need to submit that information and a description of the ventilation procedures being taken in accordance with the guidance.
3. Inspection request form. The form can be found at:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdeioQ7tgCEfM43YI4MhrJDFZZw2Ovk6M-iWItNHzhYajLlvA/viewform?usp=sf_link. Facilities must pass inspection by St. Lawrence County Public Health Department (SLCPHD) within 14 days of opening.

After the affirmation, business safety plan with HVAC certification, and inspection request form have been received, the SLCPHD will contact you to schedule the inspection or request additional information.

Please refer to the detailed guidance for more information as well as these requirements that are specific to gyms and fitness facilities:

- **Capacity:** 33% occupancy limit.
- **PPE:** There are special requirements for face coverings at gyms and fitness centers.

- **Classes:** By appointment/reservation only; maximum class capacity limited by the 6-foot social distancing rules, but in no case more than 33% of the typical class size; cleaning and disinfection required between each session.
- **Air Handling Systems:** Gyms should operate with MERV-13 or greater filtration. If they are unable to operate at that level, they must have a HVAC professional document their inability to do so and adopt additional ventilation and mitigation protocols. Documentation from a HVAC professional is required for all facilities with HVAC systems.

While delayed, gyms and fitness facilities are now part of the NYS Phase 4 reopening process and can open within the recently posted NYS guidelines, including indoor classes. “Exercise is important for our health and mental well-being during this challenging time. We ask that facility operators and the public be patient as the Public Health Department conducts the required inspections and as gyms put in place the necessary precautions to limit exposure and prevent the spread of the virus,” said Dana McGuire, St. Lawrence County Director of Public Health.

Everyone in the community can continue to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by following these recommendations:

- Wear a mask at all times in public spaces, especially when 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained.
- Keep 6 feet of distance between yourself and others when in public.
- Wash hands well and often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Cover coughs and sneezes—stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid close and continued contact with other people not in your household. Non-essential gatherings continue to be limited to 50 people.
- Stay local, refrain from traveling to states listed in the New York Travel Advisory (<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>).

For more information, please contact the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department at (315) 386-2325.

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