



July 18, 2020

Preventing the Spread of Covid-19 in Multifamily Buildings

When a virus with pandemic potential emerges, it is vitally important for citizens to take steps to help slow the transmission throughout our community. In multifamily buildings where residents encounter each other frequently in the elevators, corridors, and other common areas, the need to address preventative measures much more involved than in single-family homes that have limited common areas. This communal living presents a unique set of issues when dealing with the spread of a virus as dangerous as the Covid-19.

The following is a framework for actions that are recommended by Town of Palm Beach officials that highlight the best practices from the CDC, Florida Department of Health (FLDOH), and other reputable sources.

General Guidelines for Buildings and Associations

- Facial Coverings must be worn by everyone in public places where social distancing is not possible or being practiced. This includes common areas within private communities accessible to more than one housing unit.
- Common gathering areas such as, fitness areas, activity rooms, etc. can start to be opened but only if it is possible to maintain 6 feet of physical distance between occupants and everyone that does not live with them.
- If Swimming pools remain open, all persons should remain 6 ft. apart in the water and on the pool deck. Building staff and residents should disinfect any “touch points” such as pool ladders, pool railings, etc... Chairs on pool decks such be positioned in a manner to maintain the appropriate social distance.
- All preventative maintenance that has been scheduled, cancelled, or postponed can be triaged for necessity by the building management to proceed as needed.
- Residents (other than single family units) should take turns using elevators to ensure that social distancing is maintained at all times.
- Post signs urging residents to watch for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, cough, fatigue, body aches, headache, sore throat, diarrhea, new loss of smell or taste, runny nose, and shortness of breath.
- Post signs in the common areas with reminders to steps which owners can take to assist in mitigating the spread of infection (i.e. the reminders set out above) including wearing a face covering while in public areas, social distancing, frequent handwashing, and covering any coughs.
- Urge residents who have frequent visitors to limit or reduce guest visitation.
- Air BnB or frequent rental activities are not allowed by Palm Beach County Emergency Management until further notice.
- Residents who are sick should self-quarantine and contact their doctor as soon as possible.
- Advise staff to stay home when sick. Send home employees who become sick.

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- Make sure you have updated emergency contact information for all owners including any residents who may be particularly vulnerable.
- Let your residents know to contact the Florida Department of Health's 24-hour hotline at 1-866-779-6121 if they are feeling ill or have any questions or concerns. Place hand sanitizer in high traffic areas.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces with disinfectant such as flats surfaces, lobby desks, countertops, kitchen areas, electronics, elevator buttons, and doorknobs. If someone in your building becomes sick from COVID-19, inform people who might have been exposed (do not share the sick person's contact information), have them self-quarantine, and contact the local health department. Palm Beach County Department of Health can be reached at (561) 840-4500.
- Building managers should have a 24-hour responder listed for their building in case of an emergency. This person should contact Palm Beach Police Communication Unit at 561-838-5454 to register their name.
- Stay up to date on developments in your community by signing up for Town of Palm Beach Civic Alerts and refer to the Town of Palm Beach Covid-19 webpage.

General Guidelines for Building Occupants

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
 - 65 Years and Older
 - People who have serious underlying medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease
 - Cancer
 - Hypertension
- Residents should plan ahead to ensure they are able to stock up on supplies including food, over the counter medications, medical supplies, and a refill of all current prescription medications. There are many delivery services that have become available to fulfill this need.



- Residents that are alone should have a “buddy” with whom they speak frequently to ensure that they are both well. They should also have a person they will be able to contact in case of emergency.

Palm Beach Officials want to remind the public that this is a long-term event that will exist for many months to come. We understand that people are starting to get fatigued, but now is the time to remain diligent to defeat this virus sooner than later.

Now more than ever, every person must take personal responsibility for protecting themselves, their family, and their neighbors. This can be accomplished by wearing facial coverings, observing social distancing guidelines as outlined by the CDC, hand washing, and a thorough cleaning/disinfecting regimen.

There are many far too many scenarios to cover in this document as there are new discoveries surrounding Covid-19 daily. It is highly recommended that residents contact their individual health care providers if they have any questions or concerns over their own health or their involvement in any community activities. Building owners/managers can take advantage of Palm Beach Fire Rescue’s building assessment that can offer a review of your Covid-19 response plans free of charge. Contact Palm Beach Fire Rescue at 561-838-5420 for more information and to schedule an assessment.

This action plan/overview of best practices to combat the Covid-19 virus in multifamily residences is not to be construed as legal guidance, instead it is a starting point for your building specific plan. The Town of Palm Beach encourages building managers, employees, and residents to work together to develop a comprehensive plan that is suited for their individual needs. Educational materials and supporting material on the Covid-19 virus are available on the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>, the Florida Department of Health website <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/> and also by calling the Palm Beach County Department of Health at (561) 840-4500.