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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

- Common gathering areas such as, fitness areas, activity rooms, and etc. should be closed for public use until further notice to prevent person to person spread of Covid-19.
- 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 should postponed, or cancelled, restricting contractor access to emergency repairs only.
- Residents should take turn 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, malaise, diarrhea, and shortness of breath.
- Post signs in the common areas with reminders to owners of the steps which owners can take to assist in mitigating the spread of infection (i.e. the reminders set out above) including social distancing, frequent handwashing, and covering any coughs.
- Urge residents who have frequent visitors to limit or reduce guest visitation.
- Curb any potential AirBnB or frequent rental activities.
- Encourage residents to stay in their home when sick.
- Encourage staff to staff home when sick. Send home employees who becomes sick.
- Make sure you have updated emergency contact information for all owners including any residents who may be particularly vulnerable.
- Let your residents know that if they are feeling ill or have any questions or concerns that they can contact the Florida Department of Health’s 24-hour hotline that can be reached at 1-866-779-6121.
- Place hand sanitizer in high traffic areas.



- Clean surfaces that are frequently touched – things such as flats surfaces. Lobby desks, countertops, kitchen areas, electronics, elevator buttons, and doorknobs using a disinfectant.
- 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) and contact the local health departments. 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 stock up on supplies including food, over the counter medications, medical supplies, and a refill of all current prescription medications.
- Residents that are alone should have a person they will be able to contact in case of emergency.

There are many far too many scenarios to cover in this document as there are many factors that are still not know about Covid-19, so it is highly recommended that residents contact their individual health care provider if they have any questions or concerns over their own health or their involvement in any community activity or use of common areas.

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.