



Monroe County Health Department

Monroe County, Indiana

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PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL, COMMUNAL LIVING FACILITIES PURSUANT TO STATE AND LOCAL LAW, INCLUDING INDIANA CODE § 16-20-1 et seq.

Monroe County Health Officer, Dr. Thomas W. Sharp (“Dr. Sharp”), and the Monroe County Board of Health (“Board”) share professional concerns about residential, communal living arrangements in Monroe County, Indiana. The communal living arrangements or facilities, which are the subject of these Public Health Recommendations are residences with shared dining, living, laundry, bathroom, and, in some cases, communal sleeping spaces, and where persons reside on a semi-permanent or permanent basis.¹ During the COVID-19 pandemic, residential, communal living arrangements – referred to, herein, as “facilities”, present unique and, potentially, dangerous conditions for public health and may result in the spread of COVID-19.

Because of the inherent disease-transmission risks that residential, communal living facilities present in terms of the spread of an infectious disease like COVID-19, because of their numbers of residents and shared, personal facilities, the Board, recommends the following guidance be followed by all such facilities in Monroe County. These proactive Recommendations are made, upon advice of Dr. Sharp and Monroe County Health Administrator Penny Caudill, and, in part, on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/shared-congregate-house/guidance-shared-congregate-housing.html>

These recommendations are intended and meant to provide helpful and uniform health guidance for these facilities, to reduce the likelihood that these facilities will experience concentrations of COVID-19 such that closure would be required, to prevent conditions likely to contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in Monroe County, and to protect the general public and public health in Monroe County.

Issued to be effective August 5, 2020 at 12:00 p.m./noon, the following recommendations and guidance apply to each residential, communal living facility in Monroe County:

1. **Occupancy/Capacity** – occupancy is recommended to be fifty (50) percent of the maximum number of residents that the facility is designed to and normally does accommodate, but in no circumstances should the occupancy exceed seventy five (75) percent. Facilities are strongly encouraged to adopt a “cohorting” or “pod” system/protocols to reduce the exposure of residents to one another;

¹ These Public Health Recommendations are not specifically intended to address state-owned or managed property, correctional centers, transient or homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, long-term health care facilities, addiction recovery centers, or group homes for developmentally disabled persons, which may be licensed and/or subject to other formal regulatory agencies or inspections.

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2. **Shared Dining and Living Facilities and Meal Plans** – shared dining and living facilities should only be used if physical distancing of six (6) feet can be maintained. Meal plans, which provide for take-out or “to-go” meals should be implemented, so that residents can consume food and drink in a separate area, where physical distancing of six (6) or more feet may be maintained.
3. **Shared Bathroom Facilities** – bathroom facilities should be divided among residents and limited to and assigned based on those divisions, so that general, common use of all bathrooms is not occurring. This assignment is also meant to ensure that identities of those sharing a particular bathroom may be easily determined, if and when contact-tracing by the Monroe County Health Department should be necessary. Bathrooms should be cleaned by facility staff no less than two (2) times per day. Each resident using shared bathroom facilities should wipe down the shared facility, with products provided by the facility, after each use.
4. **Shared Sleeping Rooms** – ideally, shared sleeping rooms will not be used; however, if shared sleeping rooms are used, beds should be spaced at least six (6) feet away from each other bed and only one bed in each bunk bed should be used. Bedding should not be shared, and it is recommended that bedding be washed weekly.
5. **Laundry Facilities** – each facility should adopt a schedule for individual use of shared laundry facilities. Laundry facilities should be cleaned and disinfected by facility staff no less than two (2) times per day. Each resident using shared laundry facilities should wipe down the shared facility, with products provided by the facility, after each use.
6. **Guest Policies** – each facility should adopt and implement a policy, which allows “essential” guests but prohibits “non-essential” guests. Essential guests include those who work in the facility, must be admitted to clean or repair the facility, or provide essential supplies, including food. Non-essential guests include members of the facility’s organization, who are not currently slated to live in the facility or any non-resident visiting for social reasons and not because the visitor’s presence in the facility is required for the facility’s operations. Guest logs, with accurate and reliable contact information for each guest (including a phone number and email address), should be maintained.
7. **Gathering Sizes** – each facility shall adhere to the gathering sizes in any/all of the Board’s prior Regulations. Virtual gatherings, rather than in-person meetings, are strongly encouraged. <https://www.co.monroe.in.us/department/?structureid=12>
8. **Face Covering Policies** – each facility shall, at a minimum, adhere to the face covering or mask Orders and Regulations previously adopted by Dr. Sharp and the Board. <https://www.co.monroe.in.us/department/?structureid=12> It is strongly encouraged that

facilities adopt more stringent guidelines for their "households" than is required by the current Monroe County Health Regulation, which was written with single-family households and not residential, communal living facilities in mind. It is strongly encouraged that facilities require members to wear face coverings when outside the company of their cohort or pod systems designed by the facility (referenced in Paragraph 1, above).

9. **Quarantine and Isolation Policies** – each facility should adopt quarantine and isolation policies. It is recommended that each facility provide isolation or quarantine space for any resident, who is infected by or exposed to COVID-19 and who must isolate, with such space including separate sleeping and bathroom space. If such space is not available in the facility, space should be located outside the facility for the resident during the isolation period, so that other residents are not exposed.
10. **Record keeping** – each facility should maintain record-keeping so that adherence to these Public Health Recommendations should be demonstrated. It is Dr. Sharp and the Board's goal to assist and help facilities, in order to maintain the health of the facility residents and that of the Monroe County residents, in general.
11. **Air Filtration and HVAC Systems** – each facility should examine their Heating, Ventilation, and Cooling (HVAC) and air-filtration systems to ensure that filters are upgraded for COVID purposes, cleaned regularly, and working properly in order to take all measures to prevent the transmission of disease.
12. It is the Monroe County Health Department's intent to educate and gain voluntary compliance by all persons in Monroe County with their Orders, Regulations, and Recommendations. Should these Recommendations not be followed and COVID outbreaks occur in residential, communal living facilities, the Monroe County Health Department, Health Officer and/or Board of Directors may adopt regulations or take any legal measures to stop the spread of disease, including requesting or requiring the closure of facilities.
13. These Recommendations supplement any existing Orders and Regulations and shall be in effect until rescinded.

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