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PRESS RELEASE

6/12/20MORE

Rec Centers mandates masks starting June 13

Due to the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases throughout the state, the Recreation Centers of Sun City West will mandate masks be worn in shared spaces beginning Saturday, June 13.

Residents and employees inside Association facilities must wear a mask until further notice. This includes club rooms, fitness centers, pro shops, Member Services, the Village Store, Sports Pavilion, Library, etc. In outdoor areas where members can maintain 6 feet distancing, the masks are optional but encouraged.

The mandate is in place until further notice.

Additionally, the Rec Centers is blocking off some of its fitness equipment to allow for 6-foot distancing.

Employees who work outdoors and do not come into contact with other employees or residents may choose to wear masks at their discretion, but they will not be required due to their social distancing and the heat.

The number of COVID-19 cases in Arizona has climbed by nearly 300 percent since May 1 and have roughly doubled since Memorial Day, according to historical data from Johns Hopkins University. The state's seven-day average of daily new cases as of Wednesday was 1,071. A week ago, the state was averaging 720 daily new cases, according to Hopkins data. Today, the state hit a record high of new cases with 1,654.

In Arizona, hospitals have been told to prepare for the worst. There is no single reason for the surges. In some cases, more testing has revealed more cases. In others, local outbreaks are big enough to push statewide tallies higher. But experts think at least some are due to lifting stay-at-home orders. Medical experts expect to see another bump from the massive protests that have occurred in the state.

Maricopa County recently required use of face masks by its employees when they are not able to maintain 6 feet of social distance at work. State guidance has been less clear, so the Rec Centers will follow the Maricopa County model. There is [mounting evidence](#) that wearing a well-fitting cloth mask can help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

“Why we are pushing masks so hard is we know individuals don’t want to go back to a stay-at-home order. We’ve heard that loud and clear,” said Marcy Flanagan, executive director of Maricopa County Public Health.

“Until we have a vaccine, we cannot go back to the way things were pre-COVID-19. We have to create new habits,” Flanagan said. “I know this is not what people want to hear, but in order to keep our community safe and to protect our most vulnerable, we have to create a new normal.”

Aside from Sun City West, other age-restricted communities in Arizona are also mandating masks, and some Arizona restaurants are closing again due to the rising numbers. Arizona State University today announced it will require students, visitors and faculty to wear masks on campus.

“Mandating masks will allow us to keep our facilities open for now, unless this crisis worsens,” said General Manager Bill Schwind. “Compliance with this is critical to keeping our facilities available. And as we’ve said before, we will not tolerate any members taking their frustrations out on front-line staff. This is a difficult time for all of us.”

Adults 65 and older and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions — like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes — are at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 symptoms. In Sun City West, the average age is 74. People who live in congregate settings, such as nursing homes or long-term care facilities are at greater risk. There has been at least one outbreak at such a facility in Sun City West.

Social distancing means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. This is important to prevent spread of the virus through close contact with others. That’s why we are reducing the number of fitness equipment pieces in our facilities,” said Schwind.

Again, the recommended behavior is:

- Avoid large and small gatherings in private places and public spaces, such as a friend’s house, parks, health clubs, gyms, restaurants, shops, or any other place. This advice applies to people of any age.
- If possible, avoid using any kind of public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.
- Work from home when possible.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others, including when you have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or gym.
- Keep at least 6 feet between yourself and others, even when you wear a face covering.

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