

Reopening Recreation Facilities During COVID-19

Industry Survey & Assessment by ePACT
(May-June 2020)

Introduction

As recreation, camps and childcare activities begin again, organizations providing this service are being called to make extensive changes to their day-to-day operations for the short and long term. With COVID-19 a part of our new normal, facilities and programming are tasked to remain engaging for members and staff, while meeting new and changing health and safety requirements set out by governments.

To encourage the safe, effective delivery of programming as states lift stay-at-home orders and rollout phased reopening strategies, ePACT conducted a sector-wide survey of community organizations that provide recreation and childcare programs to find out how the sector is preparing facilities, staffing, programs, and members for the reopening of their facilities and launching of new programs.



142

organizations providing recreation and childcare programs participated in a sector-wide survey from May 15 to June 3. Participants included supervisors, managers, directors, and CEOs of recreation & childcare facilities across North America.





Organizations that serve local communities have needs that are unique to the region, city, or town that they serve. Because of this, it's important for programs to reflect the socioeconomic fabric and cultural spirit of the community.

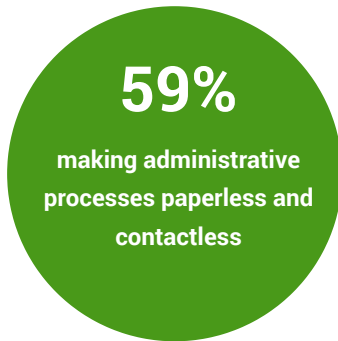
Right now, however, there are needs consistent across the sector. This includes the need to develop and implement a safe, effective plan to prepare facilities, protect members and staff, and provide enjoyable, engaging programming during COVID-19.

With an inside look at how other organizations are considering or implementing new measures, and which ones, the industry can create the new normal together.

The following four charts provide a snapshot of new measures being considered or implemented now and in the months ahead by community recreation leaders.



New Measures for Staffing

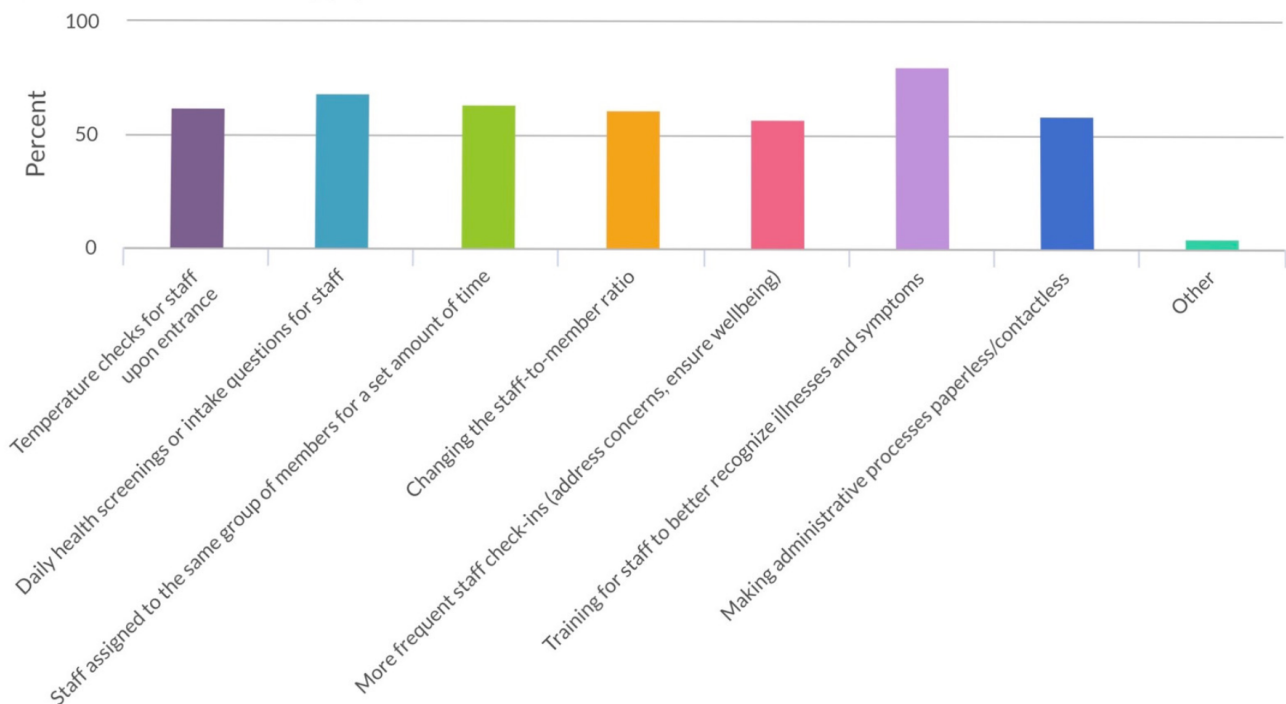


Summary

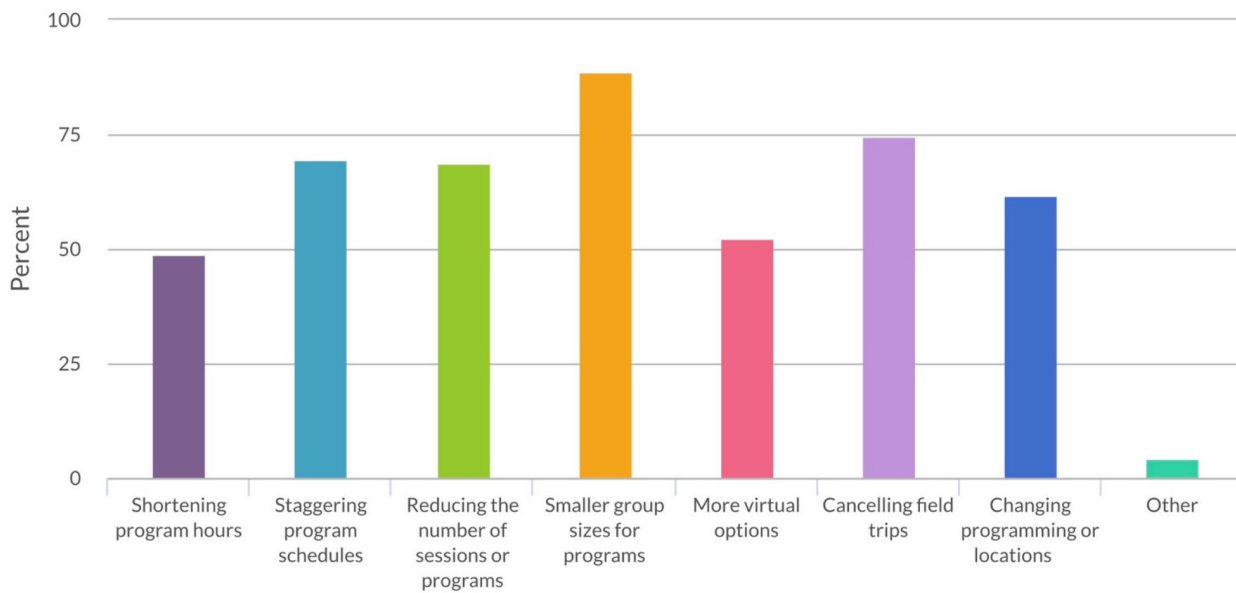
Importantly, new measures that organizations are considering or implementing among staff include 56% conducting daily health screenings or intake questions and 59% re-formatting administrative processes to be paperless and contactless.

Interestingly, the highest-ranking new measure among organizations is training staff to better recognize illness and symptoms, with 81% considering or implementing this measure.

Other measures being considered or implemented among staff include everyone helping to clean and sanitize, having members swiping in instead of staff, and requiring or encouraging masks on-site.



New Measures for Programming



Summary

A majority of organizations are planning on reducing program size and limiting excursions. New measures that organizations are considering or implementing with programming include 89% operating with smaller group sizes and 75% cancelling field trips.

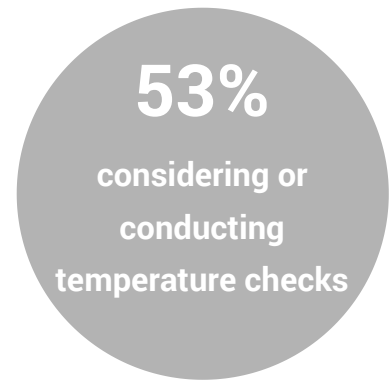
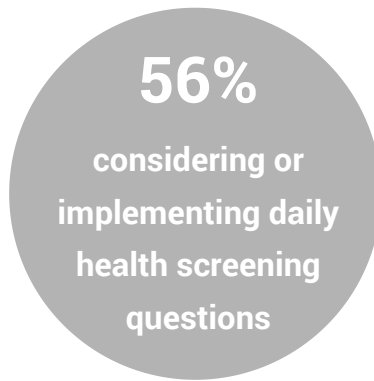
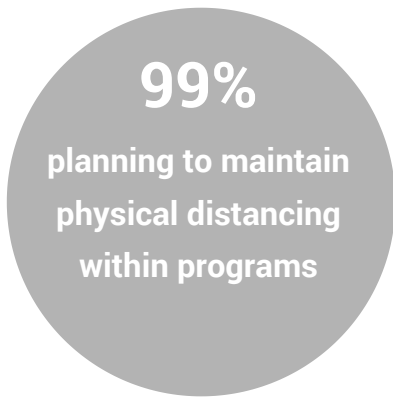
Other measures that organizations are considering or implementing include meeting all guidelines by the CDC and local health authorities, repurposing uncommonly used on-site locations to accommodate physical distancing, and avoiding/limiting high-contact programs and offsite travel.

89%
operating with
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75%
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New Measures for Members

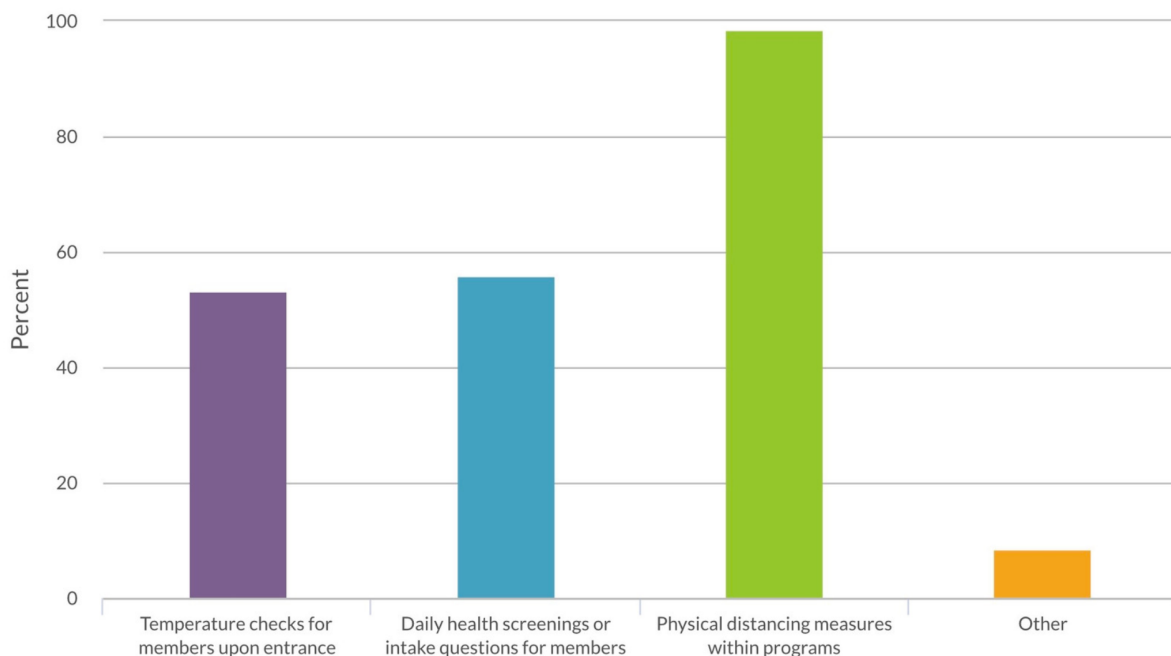


Summary

A new measure that organizations are considering for members and their families is temperature and symptom tracking with 56% considering or implementing daily health screening questions and 53% conducting temperature checks.

Overwhelming, 99% of organizations are planning to maintain physical distancing on-site and within programs.

Other measures being considered or implemented for members and their families include implementing 'social contracts' or waivers related to COVID-19, pre-enrolment for all spaces, and requiring members or staff to wear masks.



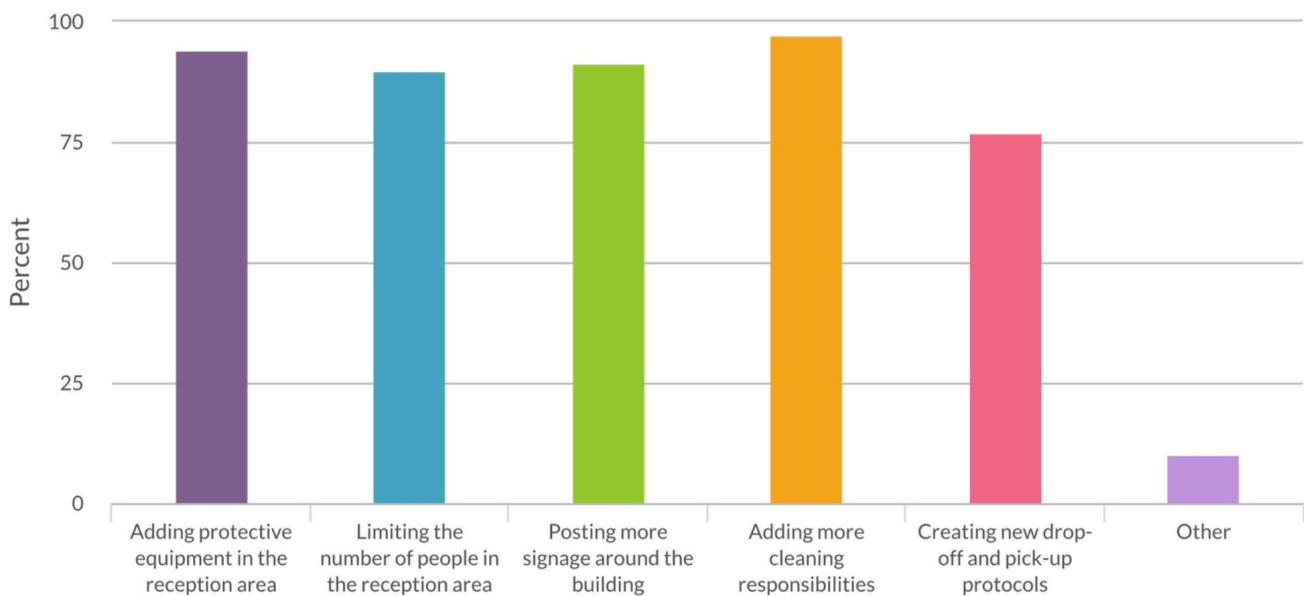
New Measures for Facilities

Summary

Unsurprisingly, new measures that organizations are considering or implementing at their facility include 97% increasing cleaning responsibilities and 94% installing protective equipment (PPE) in their reception areas.

Interestingly, **77% are considering or creating new drop-off and pick-up protocols** to maintain distance between members and parents or guardians.

Other measures being considered or implemented at facilities include staff training, having on-site educational materials, increasing the age requirement for minors to be accompanied by an adult, limiting capacity in building and programs, continuing or starting virtual programming, implementing a digital-payments system, allowing appointment-only rentals, temporarily removing locker rooms, and conducting temperature checks.





Mapping New Practices

New measures, such as increased cleaning responsibilities and maintained physical distancing, are being considered or implemented not only by the majority of recreation, camp and childcare organizations, but by most organizations and groups in our societies.

For organizations offering recreation or childcare programs, in particular, certain new measures are requiring a complete rethink of priorities, principles, and practices on-the-ground now and on a go-forward basis to maintain health & safety standards while providing communities with the services they depend on long-term.



Temperature & Health Checks

Youth Programs and Camps Decision Tool, by the CDC, was designed to assist administrators with making (re)opening decisions for youth programs and camps, and identifies three key actions that can be applied to any organization to safely open:

- preparing to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness
- screening children and staff upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure
- following guidelines established by state and local health officials and partners



Key Questions for Temperature & Health Checks

1. What are the reporting requirements for my state, if any?
2. What and how am I expected to report?
3. How will I collect, track, and store results?
4. Who will collect the information? Are members self-reporting or will staff do on-site temperature and symptom checks?
5. How will this affect my drop-off and pick-up procedures?

Staff-to-Member Ratios

Adjusting staff-to-member ratios means changing how we create, connect, and manage groups with a reduced number of members per activity.

With recommendations changing on a regular basis and suggestions varying by state, it can be challenging to plan for proper staffing and programming. One thing we know for sure is that staff-to-member ratios will need to be smaller.

At the federal level, the CDC recommends organizations running programs to consider small groups, limit mixing between groups, stagger drop off and pick up schedules, relocate programs to areas on-site that have more space, and allow local participants and members only.



Key Questions for Managing Staff-to-Member Ratios

1. If I have staff at high risk, how can I limit their chance of exposure?
2. For members at high risk, what is my protocol? Are they eligible to participate? If so, how am I managing the liability risk?
3. For sports programs, can players wear cloth face covers?
4. How can I make previously high-touch activities now socially distant?



Paperless Administration

59%

of organizations are considering or in the process of implementing paperless, contactless administrative processes.

Collecting cash registration fees, signing waivers, filling out health and emergency information forms, signing participants and members in and out, and sending out permission slips are administrative processes that have been commonly done on paper. These processes are most likely to require a change.

According to the World Health Organization, the coronavirus can survive up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel surfaces and up to 24 hours on cardboard. While plastic and stainless steel can be cleaned and disinfected with alcohol-based cleaning products or soap and water, this is not possible with paper.

Key Questions for Managing Paperless Administration

1. Which paper processes remain in my organization?
2. Which processes are essential and which are the 'highest touch' (paper passed from members of the public to staff or vice versa)?
3. What systems are already in place that would allow me to go paperless?



Touchless Check In/Out



One of the most high-touch processes is checking-in/out participants at facilities requiring frequent interaction between staff and parents with shared pieces of paper, which are difficult to sanitize. Most organizations are looking at ways to make this contactless by having staff checking members in and out exclusively or by using digital tools to check-in/out process on a mobile device.

In a report by Reuters, Europe's banking watchdog made virtual transactions easier for organizations after the World Health Organization suggested that minimizing paper cash would help to limit the spread.

Key Questions For Managing Touchless Check In/Out

1. What are my local authorities mandating for tracking processes?
2. Do I have a way to electronically check participants and members in and out?
3. Can I allow staff to check in participants and members instead of parents?
4. Can I use paper if I need to and adhere to the CDC's guidelines?



Accessibility Roadblocks

Solutions might be on the table, but they're not always within reach. Most organizations are dealing within budgetary parameters due to major downgrading or cancellation of previous revenue-driving programs, making accessibility to funding the biggest barrier to adopting of health and safety tools.

As of June 2020, two legislative bills could bring increased funding to the industry, sending money to states directly under the Child Care and Development Block Grant. According to the First Five Years Fund (FFYF), an advocacy group for children under five to get equal access to affordable, comprehensive, high-quality care and education:

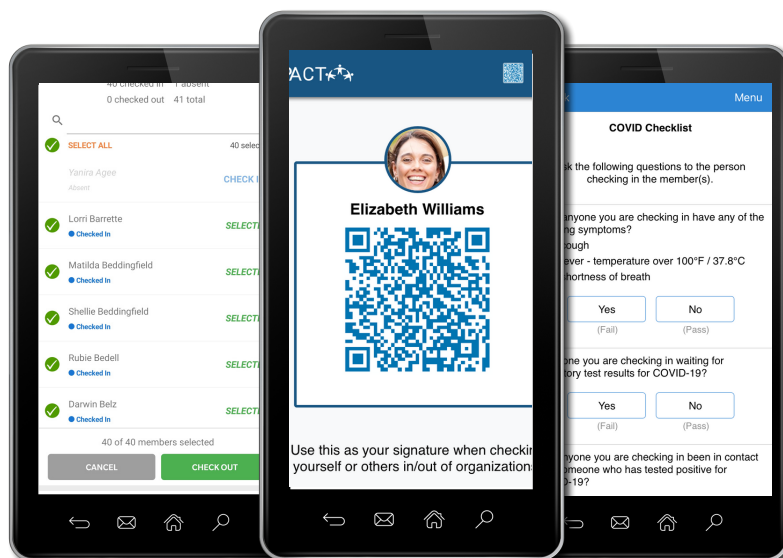


“\$50 billion would cover providers’ operating expenses, whether they were open or closed, to prevent permanent shutdowns.”

Thought Starters for New Opportunities

- Engage current partners and service providers to find out if they are offering special packages for organizations directly impacted by COVID-19 in 2020.
- While awaiting news from the federal government, contact state authorities to find out if funding is available and if you qualify. (For the fastest response, send an email and follow-up with a phone call – and leave a voice message!)
- Create a grassroots campaign to encourage local funding or standardized guidelines through a crowdsourcing platform and promote across your networks – citizens are eager to support local organizations.





ePACT is a health and safety network of community leaders, organizations, individuals, and families across North America. With paperless, real-time storage and communication tools accessible on any device, ePACT is used to collect, manage, and access the essential data needed to best support members in moments of uncertainty.

This summer, ePACT is offering special rates to make it easier to collect and manage essential health and safety information within your budget. For more information on survey results or summer rates, please email covid19@epactnetwork.com or call us at 1.855.773.7228 ext. 2.

Thank you to all participants for sharing insights and practices!