



Monroe County Health Department
Monroe County, Indiana

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

UPDATED BY THE MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH AND EFFECTIVE ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

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 this Public Health Regulation 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. Recommendations were put in place for these facilities after a Board meeting on August 4th; however, statistics show that the spread of COVID-19 in such facilities is greater than in other types of living arrangements, particularly for other types of non-communal, student living arrangements. In order to provide clear, uniform, and mandatory guidance to those such facilities, the Board met on August 28, 2020 and unanimously voted to adopt the following Regulations.

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, orders the following guidance and regulations be followed by all such facilities in Monroe County. These proactive regulations are made, upon recommendation 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 regulations are intended and meant to provide helpful, uniform, and mandatory 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. These regulations are also intended to be the least-restrictive means necessary to achieve these compelling and important public health objectives of the Monroe County Board and the Monroe County Health Department.

Effective September 15, 2020, the following regulations and guidance apply to each residential, communal living facility in Monroe County:

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

1. **Occupancy/Capacity** – occupancy shall not exceed seventy five (75) percent of the maximum number of residents that the facility is designed to and normally does accommodate. If lower capacity, such as no more than fifty (50) percent were achieved, that would be ideal; however, seventy five (75) percent shall be the maximum allowed;
2. **Shared Dining and Living Facilities and Meal Plans** – shared dining and living facilities (dining rooms, living rooms, family and gathering rooms) shall only be used if physical distancing of six (6) feet can be maintained and shall not be used for meal purposes, because of the inability to wear face coverings or masks while consuming food and drink and the risk that exists for the spread of COVID-19 while unmasked. Meal plans, which provide for take-out or “to-go” meals shall be implemented, so that residents can consume food and drink in a separate, more isolated area, where physical distancing of six (6) or more feet may be maintained.
3. **Shared Bathroom Facilities** – bathroom facilities shall 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** – single rooms are preferred. The Board of Health does NOT endorse dormitory-style sleeping rooms, as they increase the likelihood of transmission of COVID-19. To the extent that dormitory sleeping rooms are used, beds shall be spaced at least six (6) feet away from each other (in all directions). If bunk beds are utilized, the two persons sleeping in one bunk bed shall sleep in a “head-to-toe” arrangement, and only 1 bunk bed shall be used per standard, double room. Bedding shall not be shared, and it is recommended that bedding be washed weekly. Any deviations from this Paragraph, which may be required because of facility necessity, shall be reviewed, approved, and authorized **only** as Monroe County Health Officer Dr. Thomas W. Sharp and Health Administrator Penny Caudill deem appropriate.
5. **Laundry Facilities** – each facility shall adopt a schedule for individual use of shared laundry facilities. Laundry facilities shall 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 shall adopt and implement a policy, which prohibits “non-essential” guests, including members of the facility’s organization, who are not currently slated to live in the facility. Essential guests are those who are providing a professional

service to the facility, such as food preparation, cleaning, repairs, or a similar nature. Guest logs shall be maintained.

7. **Gathering Sizes** – each facility shall adhere to the gathering sizes in any/all of the Board's prior Regulations or any other local Orders issued within the facility's jurisdiction. Virtual gatherings are recommended and must be used for any gathering exceeding a Regulation or Order.
8. **Face Covering Policies** – each facility shall adhere to the face covering or mask Orders and Regulations previously adopted by Dr. Sharp and the Board.
9. **Quarantine and Isolation Policies** – each facility shall adopt quarantine and isolation policies. It is recommended that each facility send a resident who has been infected to the resident's private home or a private location, if possible. Alternatively, the facility shall provide isolation 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 must be located outside the facility for the resident during the isolation period, so that other residents are not exposed.
10. **Record keeping** – each facility shall maintain record-keeping so that adherence to this Public Health Regulation shall 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. In order to enforce these Regulations, the Monroe County Board of Health formally requests that Indiana University and its representatives share any and all information in their possession which would show a violation of these Regulations or a lack of compliance. To the extent that Indiana University requires an Order to comply with this Paragraph, Dr. Thomas W. Sharp shall issue such Order.
12. Violations of this Regulation are subject to penalties as provided by the Monroe County Code, including but not limited to Chapters 305 and 115, and may be enforced by any local or state law enforcement agency. Nothing in this Regulation gives individual residents the authority to intimidate or harass individuals who do not voluntarily comply or who are found out of compliance with this Regulation.
13. It is Monroe County's intent to educate and gain voluntary compliance by all persons in Monroe County. Notices of Ordinance Violations, with penalties as allowed by Monroe County Code, should be issued only as a last resort and if voluntary compliance may not be achieved. A Class C Ordinance Violation is subject to a fine of up to Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00), per violation, per day.
14. This Regulation supplements any existing regulations and shall be in effect until rescinded. Dr. Thomas W. Sharp is authorized by the Board to implement Orders which deviate from

these Regulations in a more stringent manner, if he deems it is necessary for an individual's or the public's health.

Celinda Kay Leach R.N., M.P.H.

Celinda Kay Leach, RN

Chair of the Monroe County Health Board of Directors