



Monroe County Health Department

Monroe County, Indiana

Health Department	Futures Family Planning Clinic	Public Health Clinic
119 W. 7th Street (812) 349-2543	119 W. 7th Street (812) 349-7343	333 E. Miller Drive (812) 353-3244

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

**UPDATED BY THE MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH, EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 2, 2021
AND IN EFFECT UNTIL FURTHER RESCINDED**

These Health Regulations were, originally, imposed because the Monroe County Health Officer, Dr. Thomas W. Sharp (“Dr. Sharp”), and the Monroe County Board of Health (“Board”) shared professional concerns about residential, communal living arrangements in Monroe County, Indiana. The original statement presented was as follows:

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-

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.





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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 (“Department”).

As of today – February 2, 2021 – the Board has several months’ worth of information and evidence to consider, and has incorporated that knowledge into the adjustment of its Regulations. Dr. Sharp, members of the Board, and Department personnel, including Department Administrator Penny Caudill (“Administrator Caudill”), have worked with and heard from members of the public, Indiana University representatives, Greek organization representatives, and members of other communal living organizations, who have shared vital feedback regarding the effectiveness of the Regulations. That feedback is appreciated, has been heard, and is factored into the following UPDATED Regulations, which shall continue until evidence shows that the restrictions may be safely lifted:

While these Regulations are issued for compliance on an organizational level, the Board stresses that INDIVIDUAL accountability is required to protect public health and to maintain compliance with these Regulations. The following regulations and guidance will continue to apply to each residential, communal living facility in Monroe County:

- 1. Occupancy/Capacity** – without an approved exception, as stated below, 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. Facilities may submit a written request for an exception to the above-stated maximum capacity, which must be supported by sufficient data to support the request. Facilities must have physical space and the appropriate infrastructure to support and manage expanding capacity, including proper internal controls. Requests shall be reviewed, approved, and authorized *only* as Monroe County Health Officer Dr. Sharp and Administrator Caudill deem appropriate, and may be subject to review by the Board.
- 2. Shared Dining and Living Facilities and Meal Plans** – shared dining and living facilities (dining rooms, living rooms, family and gathering rooms) may be used IF physical distancing of six (6) feet can be maintained between those individuals who are dining. This may require dining in shifts and the implementation of other safety protocols, depending upon unique facility arrangements. Depending upon COVID testing results of the members of a facility, the Board authorizes Dr. Sharp and Administrator Caudill to, if necessary, require facilities to re-implement a





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meal plan format, which provides for take-out or “to-go” meals, so that residents can consume food and drink in a separate, more isolated area, where physical distancing of six (6) or more feet between individuals may be maintained.

- 3. Shared Bathroom Facilities** – bathroom facilities shall continue to 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 still preferred. The Board 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. Sharp and Administrator Caudill deem appropriate.
- 5. Laundry Facilities** – each facility shall continue to maintain 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. Gathering Sizes and Guest Policies** – as of the time of adoption of these Regulations, the City of Bloomington has imposed a gathering size limit of no more than fifteen (15) people. Any communal living facility within the City of Bloomington is subject to that limitation on gathering size. Monroe County’s gathering size limit, which it shall enforce, is fifty (50) people. Evidence, including contract tracing, has proven that social gatherings and parties tend to increase





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the spread of COVID-19; therefore, the Board will continue to prohibit “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. 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 highly encouraged and recommended and must be used for any gathering exceeding a Regulation or Order.

- 7. Face Covering Policies** – each facility shall adhere to the face covering or mask Orders and Regulations previously adopted by Dr. Sharp and the Board.
- 8. Quarantine and Isolation Policies** – each facility shall adopt quarantine and isolation policies. It is recommended that each shall provide isolation space for any resident, who is infected by COVID-19 and who must isolate, with such space including separate sleeping and bathroom space. Quarantine practices also must be adopted for those who are exposed. If adequate isolation 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. The Department will work with individual facilities to recommend and develop plans, as needed, to ensure that public health is not impacted by infected residents who leave facilities lacking adequate space, proper infrastructure, or leadership.
- 9. 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.
- 10. Compliance with Affiliated Rules and Regulations** – the Board requires residents of any facility, who is subject to separate COVID-19 rules and regulations, because of their affiliation with that separate organization or institution, (for example: Indiana University students, who are subject to Indiana University rules and regulations regarding COVID-19 testing and reporting), to strictly abide by those rules and regulations, as long as those rules and regulations further the interests of the Board and public health.





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11. **Enforcement** – in order to enforce these Regulations, the Board, the Department, and Dr. Sharp shall utilize all authority delegated to them by the State of Indiana and all authority provided under the law including, *but not limited to*, Indiana Codes 16-19-3 et seq.; 16-10-1 et seq.; 16-41-9 et seq.; and Monroe County Code Chapter 305. To the extent allowed by law, the Indiana University and its representatives shall share any and all information in their possession which would show a violation of or a lack of compliance with these Regulations. To the extent that Indiana University requires an Order to comply with this Paragraph, Dr. 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 or any agent of the Board and/or Monroe County Health Department. 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. Sharp is authorized by the Board to implement Orders which deviate from these Regulations in a more stringent manner, if he deems it is immediately necessary for an individual’s or the public’s health.

Celinda Kay Leach, RN
Chair of the Monroe County Health Board of Directors

