



March 20, 2020

**COVID-19 LANDLORD TENANT UPDATE #4**  
**APARTMENT OR COMMUNITY COMMON AREAS**

Friends:

Given the Covid-19 outbreak and various orders being issued by government agencies at the federal, state, and local level, we wanted to issue suggestions on how to best manage the common areas at your apartment complexes and communities across Knox and the surrounding counties. These suggestions are not meant to be medical guidance, but are intended to encourage you to look to various federal, state, and local resources, so you are able to implement the best guidelines to combat the spread of Covid-19 in your particular community. There are general steps that you can and should take to keep these areas clean and reduce the risk of transmission during this time.

**General Suggestions for Apartment Common Areas:** There are a lot of authorities you can look to during this time in order to formulate the best guidelines and practices for your community. Please visit the Paine Tarwater & Bickers Landlord Portal on our website which will be updated regularly for links to certain resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”), and other entities and agencies that have offered guidance on dealing with Covid-19.

- **Gyms or Fitness Facilities.** First and foremost, just today, Knoxville City Mayor Kincannon issued Emergency Executive Order # 1 directing that all gyms and fitness centers be closed by 8 p.m. on March 20, 2020, in order to reduce the risk for transmission of Covid-19. If you manage or operate a residential community within the Knoxville City limits, this Emergency Order applies to you, and you will be **required** to close any gym or fitness facility at your property beginning at 8 p.m. tonight. Complexes that are not within the City of Knoxville but are still in Knox County are not required to comply with this order at this point. If that changes, we will do our best to inform you as quickly as possible. For complexes or communities located outside of the City of Knoxville, we have not seen or been made aware of any orders from governments of the surrounding counties, but again, we will monitor the situation and keep you posted as we become aware of information.

If you are not within the City of Knoxville and are considering leaving your gym or fitness facilities open, you can consider and implement many of the suggestions provided below, such as social distancing, limiting the number of persons allowed within the facility, providing alcohol-based hand sanitizer at the entrance and within the facility, frequent disinfection of fitness equipment, etc. However, it is worth noting that even with the issuance of these suggested guidelines by various agencies, the President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America 15 Days to Slow the Spread dictates that in states with evidence of community transmission, gyms

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and other areas where groups of people congregate should be closed. This document is available on the Landlord Portal.

- **Do Something.** While these suggestions may not be practical or applicable to all common areas on premises, it is important that you take a moment to be proactive and implement measures and guidelines when possible to increase the safety of your residents and reduce transmission. You should not leave a common area on property open to residents with no preventative measures in place.
- **Close Common Areas Where Risk Cannot be Minimized.** Depending on the size of a common area or facility, you may be able to safely implement various guidelines to help minimize the risk of transmission of Covid-19 or other illnesses. However, if an area is not amenable to the implementation of precautionary measures, you can consider closing the area for a set or extended amount of time.
- **Social Distancing.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) has recommended the implementation of social distancing when it is practicable to do so. Depending on the size of a common area or room, you might consider implementing social distancing by reducing the maximum number of people allowed within the space. More information on social distancing is available on the CDC’s website which is available via link on the Paine Tarwater & Bickers online Landlord Portal.
- **Routine Cleaning of Frequently Touched Surfaces, Doorknobs, Elevator Buttons, Handrails, etc.** The CDC, as well as various other entities such as HUD or the New York City Health Department, have recommended repeated cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces throughout the day. This might include doorknobs, gate handles, elevator buttons, and more throughout the community.
- **Make Hand Sanitizer or Soap Readily Available Outside and Within Common Areas.** The New York City Health Department issued general guidance to commercial and residential buildings in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak that recommends that managers have alcohol-based hand sanitizer readily available for resident use outside of and within common areas of the premises. If there are restrooms on premises, you can also ensure that these facilities are stocked with hand soap and paper towels.
- **Sick Residents Should Stay Home and Out of Common Areas.** It is clear that during this time, sick residents should not be wandering around your property. The CDC has created various flyers and notices available on their website that you might consider posting throughout the property and especially within and outside the common areas that you plan to keep open during this time. Similarly, the President has issued directives on minimizing the spread of Covid-19, one of which is that sick residents, family members, or visitors should stay home away from other people. The President’s directives are also available on our Landlord Portal.

- **Laundry Rooms.** Communities that do not have in-unit laundry amenities likely operate community-wide laundry facilities. These facilities are necessary and enable residents to keep their clothes and other linen materials clean, which contributes to an overall healthier and cleaner community environment. While closing laundry facilities could negatively impact the health and safety of the residents, the above general guidelines – such as limiting the number of residents in the laundry room at one time - can be implemented to reduce traffic in these facilities and to prevent transmission of illness.

In the coming days, we anticipate that additional cities and counties will issue specific orders and directives that may impact your communities. As we are made aware of these directives and orders, we will send updates.

If you have a question concerning a specific facility or management of common areas that is not addressed herein, or if you have any additional questions regarding the Covid-19 outbreak and how it impacts your community, please do not hesitate to contact Barbara, Kendell, Cathi or me.

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Sincerely,



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