

Thinking about an unstaffed, 24-hour access facility?

Remaining competitive in the fitness facility industry usually means offering 24-hour access. If you don't currently offer unstaffed, 24-hour access to your facility and are considering doing so, here are some things you need to consider:

Digital Surveillance and Video Retention

Nowadays, technology has made it easy to set up, record, and live stream video surveillance. You should make sure there are an adequate number of video cameras in place to capture any vandalism, incidents, injuries, and/or rule-breaking that may occur on your property. Ensure your surveillance system has the capability to record and store footage for a minimum of 60 days.



Security and Access Control

An access card or key fob system should be installed to control who has access to your facility. A camera should be installed in such a way that you can verify who's accessed the facility in case there's an incident or member dispute. Develop a standard operating procedure that governs unauthorized access violations. If it can be, equipment should be secured to the floor. Equipment that's not being used should be stored in a locked area.

Limit access ONLY to the fitness facility. If you can't secure areas, such as pools, spas, saunas, steam rooms, and/or locker rooms, you shouldn't be offering unstaffed hours of operation.

Minors

Access to minors should be limited to those who are under the direct supervision of an adult guardian. Minors must always have a parent or adult guardian with them.

Rules and Codes of Conduct

A specific member contract should be in place and enforced. It should include all the rules associated with 24-hour use and highlight services that aren't available during unstaffed hours. This might include snow removal and other groundskeeping measures. Members should have a good understanding of your access control and general safety rules and should also sign a waiver of liability.

Rules and Codes of Conduct should be explained during a new-member orientation, along with an introduction to all available training equipment.

Disciplinary Tracking and Member Concerns

A disciplinary program should be in place to address any member concerns or rule-breaking. This should include a plan to review, address, and follow up with any issues that arise.

Incidents, Accidents, and Injuries

Ensure there's a minimal number of environmental/moveable obstacles that could cause a slip, trip, and fall injury. Check for any lingering spills or liquids on the ground before leaving the area unstaffed. Members should have a way to report emergencies. Call buttons or phone systems should be installed or readily available so members can contact emergency services if necessary.

Offering an unstaffed, 24-hour facility comes with increased risk. However, if you implement appropriate safety measures and have a plan in place to address any issues, you can reduce your liability while offering a safe environment for your members.