

Since Dec. 17, all nine Bay Area counties have been under stay-at-home orders after capacity in intensive care units fell below 15% as coronavirus cases surged. Prior to the most recent mandate, gyms were allowed to operate indoors at 10% capacity.

The public health crisis has [decimated the fitness sector](#). Gyms reopened in September following six months of closure starting in mid-March and many have struggled to survive. San Ramon's 24 Hour Fitness [exited bankruptcy](#) in December after closing close to 130 gyms in the past year, and San Francisco gym owners regularly [hold rallies](#) outside City Hall in hopes of fully reopening.

The Fitness 19 location in San Mateo is open for drop-in sessions outdoors, as gyms are allowed to do, but Savy said the offering is much more costly and challenging to set up.

"Setting up outside takes time and it can be tough to do when (health orders) switch so much," he said. "It costs a lot of money to put up tents and turf and to hire security guards but we're doing our best to keep our staff and members safe and happy."

The Daly City Fitness 19's manager [told KRON4 last month](#) that it deliberately defied health orders and repeatedly paid fines to stay open. San Mateo County officials said they have not yet received any official appeals from any of the businesses fined.

Other fitness businesses fined in San Mateo County

include Pacifica Beach Yoga, which received two citations, a \$250 fine in November for allegedly advertising “mask free” hot yoga, and another \$500 fine in December for operating indoors. Evolution Performance in Belmont, another gym, was fined for \$250 for operating indoors. Neither business returned calls for comment.

A 76 gas station, a bar and a food business in Redwood City as well as a beauty salon in Menlo Park were fined once for \$250 each, for reasons ranging from employees not wearing masks, lack of proper social distancing and safety signage, and not enforcing customer limits. Businesses either declined to comment or did not return calls.

The county started tracking companies violating health orders by forming a business compliance unit in November, after the San Mateo Board of Supervisors approved a measure allowing for the creation of such a team in August. The compliance unit responds to public complaints and also performs spot checks. As of Jan. 5, it’s received 1,065 complaints, of which 72% were abated, and has issued 100 written warnings and 22 citations, county officials said.

Prior to this, enforcement of health orders was carried out by local police departments. It is unclear how many businesses were fined from March to November by the county’s [more than 20](#) police departments.

“The county created the centralized unit as a way to

build a comprehensive database of complaints and free local jurisdictions to focus on violations by individuals,” a San Mateo county spokesperson said. Neighboring Santa Clara County, which also has a business compliance unit, [recently penalized 18 stores](#) at Stanford Shopping Center with fines of \$250 to \$1,000, according to Palo Alto Online.

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