



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 22, 2020

## New Jersey Gym Closed on Thursday, Opened Again on Friday

When paper towels were stuffed into toilets at the Atilis Gym on Wednesday, the owners were forced to close. It remained closed on Thursday. On Thursday night health officials attached a closure notice to the front door. On Friday the gym opened again.



A week ago the owners of Atilis Gym in Bellmawr, New Jersey, wrote a letter to Governor Phil Murphy telling him that they were going to open their gym in defiance of his edict. They also announced their plans to open publicly, and when Monday morning came, members entered while supporters outside the gym waved American flags and cheered.

Governor Murphy was asked about the gym's defiance of his orders on Monday afternoon and he warned the owners and their patrons, "If you show up at that gym tomorrow [Tuesday the 19th], there will be a different reality."

The gym opened on Tuesday, following strict safety measures implemented by the two owners, Ian Smith and Frank Trumbetti. There was no "different reality."

The gym opened again on Wednesday, following the safe measures. There was no "different reality" until Wednesday afternoon.

On Wednesday afternoon the gym's toilets were sabotaged. Someone had stuffed paper towels into the toilets, causing them to overflow. Trumbetti told the press: "Just so you know, we do not even have paper towels in our bathrooms."

Mediation teams worked on clearing the obstructions on Thursday. The gym remained closed for the day while the owners suggested members work out in the parking lot.

Late Thursday night, after the gym was closed, officials from the state health department taped a four-page notice to the front door. The notice said, in part, that although the gym "is purporting to take its own measures to address COVID-19 transmission," New Jersey cannot "simply allow business owners to set their own divergent health measures, done without the approval of the state and it's [sic] health officials."

The order went on to say that indoor gyms pose a "particularly high risk setting" because the members exercise there which "can increase the amount of respiratory droplets or aerosols in a confined setting."

Trumbetti said the health officials attached the order "overnight, like cowards" and vowed to reopen on Friday: "We're opening up tomorrow [Friday] morning, no matter what."

Trumbetti asked rhetorically: "How is it possible that they can actually shut [us] down? If there is a



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problem based on the coronavirus, how can they shut us down but no other businesses in the same building [as our gym]?”

In explaining why they are defying Governor Murphy’s edict and the state’s order, Trumbetti said:

According to our beliefs, we have been allowing our members in because of the wording of Governor Murphy’s executive order stating the gym had to remain closed to the public.

We have stood firm. As long as we let members in, we are not doing anything that’s against the law and criminal.

The paperwork that’s on the window, we don’t know if it’s actually deemed legal or not because they put it on in the middle of the night. We were not served with those papers.

An Internet search just before publication of this article at 2 p.m. EST revealed nothing untoward. The gym appears to be open to its members, who are following the owners’ strict safety and health protocols.

Just in case the state ramps up legal action against the owners, a GoFundMe page has been created, which, when last checked, had raised nearly \$70,000 to cover their legal costs.

Photo: Kanawa\_Studio / iStock / Getty Images Plus

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