

COVID-19 Organized Sports Practice and Games Guidance for Youth and Adults

3/14/2021

Executive Order 21-11 will begin Monday, March 15, 2021, at 12 p.m. (noon) and does not have an end date. Effective Wednesday, March 31, 2021, at 11:59 p.m., larger venues, restaurants, gyms, and pools will be able to expand their occupancy per the Stay Safe Guidance. Effective Wednesday, April 14, 2021, at 11:59 p.m., the requirement to work from home shifts to a strong recommendation.

The Stay Safe MN website may be updated with Frequently Asked Questions about the Governor's Executive Orders and related industry guidance. These Frequently Asked Questions may also include clarifications to the requirements and recommendations in Executive Orders and guidance. [Frequently Asked Questions about Stay Safe MN \(mn.gov/covid19/stay-safe/faq/index.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/covid19/stay-safe/faq/index.jsp) or [Stay Safe Guidance for Businesses and Organizations \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp) may have additional clarifications about requirements and recommendations.

Face coverings must be worn by all people at all times, including practices and games, with only a few exceptions (see "Follow Face Covering Requirements" section, below).

Please note: Counties experiencing increased activity or clusters of B117 should consider pausing sports for two weeks. If pausing sports isn't possible, then entire teams should be tested on at least a weekly basis, especially 72 hours prior to a game and then again the week after a game.

Updates to this document include:

- ✓ The definition of organized sports (page 2)
- ✓ A link to a report on masking in youth sports (page 7)
- ✓ Guidance for athletes on how to acclimate to wearing a face covering during practices and competitions (pages 7, 8)
- ✓ Promoting testing both for those athletes in K-12 and those participating in wrestling (page 8)
- ✓ Increased pod size for outdoors from 25 to 50 (page 9)
- ✓ Clarification of concession requirements (page 11)
- ✓ Guidance around contact tracing on buses and vans (page 15)

Organized adult and youth sports are any sports activity where participants are organized by entities, associations, clubs, or organizations providing for registration of participants and oversight on a regular basis for a defined period of time. This guidance does not apply to teams or athletes participating in professional or intercollegiate sports activities. Intercollegiate sports teams and athletes must follow the guidance for sports activities in *Recommendations for Different Levels of COVID-19 Transmission Among Higher Education Institutions*, available at [Institutes of Higher Education: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/ihe.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/ihe.html).

Decisions regarding sports and other activities in COVID-related Executive Orders and guidance take into account multiple considerations. These considerations include but are not limited to the factors that make an activity risky in terms of exposure to and spread of COVID-19; COVID-19 data and trends in Minnesota, surrounding states, and nationwide; and the well-being and economic health of Minnesotans.

The decision to participate in sports does not mean engaging in sports is without risk. **Any time you gather with other people, you are putting yourself and others at risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2**, the virus that causes COVID-19. COVID-19 can lead to serious medical conditions and even death for people of all ages. We cannot predict who will become severely ill, although we know that older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk. We do not yet know what the long-term effects of COVID-19 are; even people with mild cases may experience long-term complications. People with symptoms and without symptoms can spread COVID-19. The masking, distancing, and other guidance provided here is intended to reduce the risk of transmission but does not eliminate it.

This guidance document outlines requirements and prevention strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 during sports activities. This document is intended for organizers and participants of all ages, in sports activities organized by entities, associations, clubs, or organizations providing for registration of participants and oversight on a regular basis for a defined period of time.

Setting expectations

- ✓ Compliance with this guidance is necessary to prevent transmission of COVID-19 in sports practices and games.
- ✓ It is important to communicate to parents and players that face coverings will be required for all practices and games. For further information about face coverings and youth, see the below face covering requirements and the [American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Interim Guidance: Return to Sports \(services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/\)](https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/).
- ✓ Players, parents, and coaches should understand that social activities outside of practices and games are sources of transmission among teams. Social gatherings indoors should be discouraged. Permitted social gatherings must follow the [Stay Safe in Social Gatherings \(staysafe.mn.gov/individuals-families/social-gatherings.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/individuals-families/social-gatherings.jsp) guidance, including the requirement to maintain social distance between members of other households.

Requirements for holding athletic events

Create a preparedness plan

- ✓ Adopt and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan as required by [Executive Orders issued by Governor Tim Walz \(mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp\)](#). An organization’s COVID-19 Preparedness Plan must address the requirements listed below and should consider the recommendations in this document. The plan should be updated when there are changes to public health official guidelines regarding group gatherings or sports activities.
 - All businesses (sports facilities, gyms, associations, sports clubs/teams, etc.) are required to develop a program-specific plan. Templates for developing a program-specific plan can be found at [Stay Safe MN \(staysafe.mn.gov\)](#).
 - All youth sports programs must also develop a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and follow the parameters outlined in the COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth and Student Programs found at [Stay Safe Guidance for Schools, Colleges, and Universities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp\)](#). “Youth programs” are programs providing care or enrichment to children or adolescents such as day camps, summer activities, and recreational or educational classes that require registration and have on-site supervision. “Youth programs” does not include licensed child care facilities or school district summer learning programs.
 - The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan must be available and accessible to participants, volunteers, and employees.
- ✓ Identify a plan administrator for your organization’s COVID-19 plan.
 - Communicate your COVID-19 plan to officials, umpires, and trainers.
 - This should include expectations around screening, face coverings, and other prevention efforts.
 - Plan templates are available at [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](#).
- ✓ Whenever possible, identify a COVID-19 Coordinator (which can also be the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan administrator).
 - This person will be the point person for any cases or outbreaks in the team/association.
 - This person will report COVID-19 cases to MDH, and work with LPH, MDH, and school health professionals to ensure close contacts are quickly identified and that isolation and quarantine are followed, as well as prompt communication with parents and athletes.
- ✓ Create protocols that are considerate of coaches, staff, players, volunteers, and participants at highest risk of complications from COVID-19.
 - [CDC: People at Increased Risk \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html\)](#)
 - [Executive Order 20-55, Protecting the Rights and Health of At-Risk Populations during the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency \(www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-55.pdf\)](#)

Follow physical distancing

- ✓ Maintain at least 6 feet between participants when they are not playing (on the bench, in the dugout, on the sideline, etc.).
- ✓ Maintain 6 feet between spectators or household groups.
- ✓ It is strongly recommended that spectators remain at least 12 feet away from the closest participant—meaning, at least 12 feet from the field, the bench, or the court, whichever is closest.

Follow guidance for the venue/event setting (e.g., gymnasium, rinks)

- ✓ Do not exceed the number of people allowed in the venue/event setting.
 - Facility and venue guidance is available at [Stay Safe Guidance for Businesses & Organizations \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp). Guidance that may apply includes the following:
 - [Stay Safe Guidance for Outdoor Recreation Entities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/outdoor-recreation.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/outdoor-recreation.jsp)
 - [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp)
 - [2020-21 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools \(education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE032934&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary\)](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE032934&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary) – Updated 1/8/21
 - An overview of occupancy limits can be found at [Minnesota’s Stay Safe Plan \(mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/stay-safe-mn/stay-safe-plan.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/stay-safe-mn/stay-safe-plan.jsp).
 - The following requirements apply to games:
 - For competitions held indoor, if 12 feet can’t be maintained between the participants in the game (athletes, coaches, student managers, time keepers) and the spectators, participants must be included in the total occupancy count.
 - If spectators and participants can be clearly separated by at least 12 feet, then participants do not need to be included in the total occupancy count.
 - For practices, spectators and participants all contribute to the total occupancy limit of the event space, regardless of spacing between spectators and participants.
 - Additionally, follow guidance outlined in sections below for spectators at practices and games.
- ✓ Stagger game and practice times to avoid crowding and congestion when participants are arriving, playing, and leaving.
- ✓ Post instructions for patrons throughout the venue/event setting and at entrances that inform patrons of the following:
 - Not to enter if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
 - The venue’s attendance limits.
 - That they are required to adhere to hygiene and social distancing instructions, should not cluster at entry/exit points, observe signage and markings that promote social distancing.

- That they are required to follow the venue’s requirements for wearing face coverings.
- ✓ Encourage patrons to review a COVID-19 self-screening survey that asks about close contacts with confirmed cases and quarantined cases and out-of-state travel before entering venue. See the Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist on [Businesses and Employers: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html).
- ✓ Consider limiting or not allowing concessions to minimize opportunities for crowding.
- ✓ Consider limiting the size of or not allowing bands, cheer squads, and other entertainment groups at the competition.
 - It is strongly recommended that any bands, cheer squads, or other entertainment groups present at a competition remain at least 12 feet away from the spectators and participants in the game.
 - If bands, cheer squads or other entertainment groups cannot maintain 12 feet of distance from spectators and participants in the game, then members of the band, cheer squads, and other entertainment groups must be included in the total spectator count.

Follow face covering requirements

- ✓ Face coverings must be worn by all people at all times, including practices and games, with only the following exceptions.
 - During wrestling contact, a cloth face covering could become a choking or visual hazard and is discouraged. For gymnastics and cheerleading, if there are concerns about safety in regards to choking or the face covering getting caught on objects, athletes may temporarily remove the face covering during activities such as tumbling/stunting/flying or on certain apparatuses. However, athletes must wear face coverings for all other practices and routines.
 - People who swim/dive/participate in water sports should not wear a cloth face covering while they are in the water.
 - Individual sports performed outside that allow people to maintain distance from others are lower risk for transmission of SARS-CoV-2. A cloth face covering is not necessary for athletes participating in outdoor individual sports if the athletes can stay at least 6 feet away from others. However, if social distancing cannot be maintained, athletes must wear face coverings.
 - Note that even outdoor individual sports often involve occasional close contact with others, so teams and athletes will often need to modify the activity to ensure that 6 feet of social distance can be maintained. In addition, individual outdoor athletes are still required to wear a face covering when they are around teammates, coaches, or others, and not actively participating in the distanced individual activity.
 - For example, at a track and field event, an athlete may remove their face covering for the duration of the competition if the competition is organized in a way that guarantees the athlete will not come within 6 feet of others on the course, including when starting and finishing. The athlete would still need to wear face coverings before and after the competition.

- If a sport requires a helmet that interferes with wearing a face covering safely or effectively), athletes may consider alternatives to face coverings that are specifically designed by helmet manufacturers to provide protection against the splashes, sprays, and aerosols that can lead to COVID-19 transmission (i.e., a full face shield).
 - A face covering is still the most protective option and should be used to the extent possible, but a full face shield may provide some protection.
 - Any face shield used as a face covering alternative must cover the entire face, extend to the ears and below the chin, and must not have exposed gaps or vents near the eyes, mouth, or nose.
 - For more information, please see [Frequently Asked Questions About the Requirement to Wear Face Coverings \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html).
- For further information on wearing face coverings during sports activities please see the following guidance: [American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Interim Guidance: Return to Sports \(services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/\)](https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/).
- ✓ Face coverings must be worn in accordance with MDH guidance and Executive Order 20-81.
 - For the best protection against COVID-19, a face covering must have at least two layers of tightly-woven fabric, cover the nose and mouth completely and fit snugly against the face without gaps.
 - Types of face coverings can include a cloth mask, a neck gaiter, a scarf, a bandanna, or a religious face covering. CDC recommends using two layers of fabric when making a cloth face covering. Face coverings that are made of thinner single-layer fabric such as certain types of masks, scarves, neck gaiters, or bandannas may not be as effective for blocking droplets that come out when speaking, coughing, or sneezing and should not be used unless there are no alternatives.
 - Any masks that incorporate a valve that is designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow droplets to be released from the mask.
 - [Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html)
- ✓ People are not permitted to remove their face coverings during activities that involve a high level of exertion. For guidance on when a person refuses to wear a face covering, or is unable to wear a face covering due to a disability, medical, or mental health condition, please see [Frequently Asked Questions About the Requirement to Wear Face Coverings \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html).
- ✓ The following people are exempt from the face covering requirement:
 - Children under age 2 years must not wear face coverings. Children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old are not required to wear face coverings but are encouraged to wear a face covering when in public if they can do so reliably in compliance with CDC guidance (i.e., without frequently touching or removing the face covering). See [CDC: How to Wear Masks](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s110520-wear-masks.html)

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html).

- People who have medical or other health conditions, disabilities, or mental health, developmental, or behavioral needs that make it difficult to tolerate wearing a face covering.
- ✓ For further information and background regarding the decision to require face coverings for most sports, please see Face Coverings in Organized Sports During COVID-19 ([Face Coverings in Organized Sports During COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsmask.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsmask.pdf)).
- ✓ MDH recognizes that it takes time for people to acclimate to face coverings. There are some key considerations to help athletes effectively wear face coverings during any sport:
 - Wear a face covering that fits snugly against the sides of the face. This will prevent it from slipping and interfering with vision. Athletes may have to try a variety of face coverings to find one that fits properly.
 - Before using a face covering in competition, athletes should acclimate to wearing a face covering during practices by starting out with less intense workouts and building intensity as they become comfortable wearing the face covering.
 - Bring extra face coverings to practice so athletes can replace wet or soiled face coverings.
 - Face-covering guidance does allow for people to remove their face covering if they are having trouble breathing. If an athlete needs to take their mask off, they should take a break from play, and find an area where they can sit down and be physically distanced before removing the face covering.
 - Athletes should stop activity if they are feeling overly fatigued, dizziness, headache, muscular weakness, or drowsiness.

Promote testing

- ✓ Those participating in sports programs and activities should consider routine testing, especially those in K-12. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Department of Education recommend that participants in extracurricular activities get tested for COVID-19 every other week for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.
- ✓ MDH also strongly recommends that those who participate in wrestling get tested prior to each competition.
 - Wrestling is a sport that confers high risk for transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 because of close proximity and contact with another person. In addition, it is difficult for masks to be worn without getting pulled off and tangled.
 - Minnesota and other states have identified multiple outbreaks associated with wrestling. Because the virus that causes COVID-19 can be transmitted by asymptomatic people, MDH strongly recommends that wrestlers test for COVID frequently, including 48 – 72 hours prior to a meet.
 - When planning, it is important to take into account the time needed for test results to be available prior to the match.

Promote a culture of honesty and health

- ✓ Create protocols to maintain health checks and screening of participants and staff/volunteers.
 - Any staff, volunteers, or participants who are sick must stay home.
 - Have policies in place outlining the process for those who become sick while participating in a sport.
 - Be aware that people can get a positive COVID-19 test even if they do not have symptoms.
- ✓ Recommend routine testing of athletes, coaches, and other participants, especially 72 hours prior to a game.

Requirements for holding practices

Follow the “Requirements for holding athletic events” in addition to the following:

Spectator requirements

- ✓ If necessary for spectators to be at practices, ensure that spectators maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing between households and that spectators are complying with venue/facility guidance—including applicable capacity limits.

Practice requirements

- ✓ Participants must maintain 6 feet of social distancing when not actively playing (team meetings, side lines, waiting for a turn).
- ✓ Keep practices small in size. For youth and adult organized sport practices or training (non-game or competition activities), create pods. Pod sizes cannot exceed 25 people indoors or 50 people outdoors per pod.
 - A “pod” is a group of people that only practice or play with members of their own pod, which limits the potential for transmission in the event of an exposure or outbreak. Teams and organizations are responsible for ensuring that members of different pods do not practice together, interact, or otherwise come into close contact while organized sports are occurring.
 - Pods must either practice in physically separate rooms, facilities, or areas, or steps must be taken to ensure that pods are kept separated by a distance of no less than 12 feet at all times.
 - Teams must also avoid reassigning athletes to different pods to the maximum extent possible.
 - The smaller the pod size, the more the team can minimize broader transmission of COVID-19 among teammates.

Additional practice recommendations

- ✓ Spectators at practices are strongly discouraged. If spectators must attend practices, consider limiting to one per participant.
- ✓ Host practices outdoors if possible.

- Outdoors is safer than indoors.
- If indoors, minimize the time spent indoors, as risk of transmission increases with the more time spent indoors. Consider keeping indoor practices to 30 minutes or less.
- ✓ Avoid using locker rooms and facility showers.
- ✓ Carpooling should be discouraged as much as possible.

Requirements for holding games, scrimmages, and competitions

Spectator requirements

- ✓ The total number of spectators at games must comply with the appropriate venue guidance and capacity limits (see “Follow guidance for the event setting” section above).
 - Strongly consider limiting spectators to one to two people per participant to minimize transmission and to comply with applicable venue guidance and capacity limits.
- ✓ Require reservations and/or ticketing (e.g., online, app-based, email, will-call) according to the requirements applicable to entertainment venues (<https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp>).
 - Names, phone number, and/or email should be collected as part of the reservations so that quick notification can be done if an individual develops COVID-19.

Spectator recommendations

- ✓ Schedule arrival times for longer than their typical duration to minimize the congregation of patrons waiting. Establish staggered admission or entry times and durations to minimize overlap and congregating of patrons at choke points (e.g., access points, security check points, admission areas, concession areas).

Number of participants allowed

- ✓ During a game, scrimmages, or competitions (played indoors or outdoors):
 - The number of participants allowed can include all of the people needed to make up the team.
 - A team is defined as the total number of players/athletes, coaches, referees, umpires, etc. needed to hold the game or competition as long as the total number of people does not exceed the total number allowed by the venue or facility (check capacity limits). This includes cross country and track teams.
- ✓ During a cross country or track event:
 - The “course maximum”—meaning the number of people allowed on the course at one time is the total square footage of the course divided by 113.
 - Participants must be divided into completely separated participant groups to ensure that the number of participants on the course at one time never exceeds the course maximum.

- Event participants must be further divided into “pods” and physically distanced (meaning 6 feet of distance is maintained between people from different households) within the pods.
 - Pod sizes cannot exceed 25 people indoors or 50 people outdoors per pod.

Multi-team (more than two teams) events and tournaments

MDH strongly recommends against holding tournaments or sporting events that will bring teams together from different states or from outside your local area. If teams choose to host multi-team events, the following guidelines apply.

Requirements

- ✓ The occupancy requirements that apply to the venue/event setting must be followed (refer to the “Follow guidance for the event setting” section above).
- ✓ People who are spectators can get food and eat either in designated food areas or at their seats, if allowed by the venue/event setting.
- ✓ Allow only one team in a locker room at any one time and limit the amount of time each team spends in the locker room.
- ✓ Teams must minimize the time they spend in the venue/event setting.
 - Teams should only arrive early enough to warm up before their competition, and teams should leave as soon as their game is over.
 - If athletes linger after a game to eat or watch games, they are considered spectators and must be counted toward the overall occupancy of the venue. They must also follow guidance requirements that apply to the venue/event (e.g., they must eat in designated seating areas, wear face coverings, be in an assigned seat as a spectator or some similar accommodation, etc.). The other option would be for the participants to get their food to-go.

Recommendations

- ✓ Consider limiting or not allowing entertainment (including bands, cheer squads, or dance teams) at this time.
- ✓ Strongly consider limiting spectators to one to two people per participant to minimize transmission and to comply with applicable venue guidance and capacity limits.
- ✓ Limit the number of participants as much as possible, as well as minimize the number of parents/chaperones that travel with the team.
 - Remember that if a person tests positive for COVID-19 and was traveling with others in a vehicle for greater than 30 minutes, it could result in quarantine of everyone who traveled with that person in the same vehicle (bus, van, SUV, etc.).
- ✓ Avoid overnight stays as much as possible. Consider hosting events at a central location that does not require teams to stay overnight.

- Remember that staying at hotels can create another environment where teammates gather in close proximity, which increases risk of transmission.

Requirements for outdoor recreational race events

Key information

- ✓ The guidance in this section is for outdoor organized recreational races or non-competitive similar events (e.g., running races, “fun runs”/walks, triathlons, bicycle races/rides, charity walks, or cross-country skiing events).
- ✓ This guidance is not applicable to motorized races. For these events, please use the Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues (<https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp>).
 - Unless this section imposes a different or additional requirement, any organized race event must also follow the requirements in other sections of this guidance document.
 - Spectators are allowed at race events that are held in a defined venue. Any such events must follow the requirements of the Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues (<https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp>) regarding limits on the number of spectators allowed and the steps that must be taken to protect the health and safety of spectators and workers or volunteers. The person or entity responsible for organizing the race must incorporate applicable requirements from both this guidance document and the Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues into the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for the event.

Key elements of an organized race plan

In order to prevent COVID-19 transmission at an organized race, to maintain control over the event, and to facilitate social distancing between participants, volunteers, and employees, all organized races must adhere to the following basic requirements:

- ✓ **Advance registration.** Registration must occur prior to the race through online or other contact-less methods. Any racing equipment, promotional products or handouts, bibs, etc. should be mailed to participants prior to race day.
- ✓ **Participant, employee and volunteer attendance.** The number of participants allowed on the race course at any one time depends on the size and structure of the course:
 - The “course maximum”—meaning the number of people allowed on the course at any time is 250 participants or the total square footage of the course divided by 113, whichever is less. Further, races that choose to exceed the course maximum must ensure an entire participant group has completely finished the race and vacated the course before releasing a new group of participants.
 - The design of the course must ensure that there is at least 113 square feet for each person on the course (113 square feet is the U.S. Fire Administration’s recommended space per person to ensure safe social distancing).

- Example calculation for determining number of participants on a course:
 - It takes 28,250 square feet of space to socially distance 250 people (250 x 113sq. ft).
 - Using an 18 foot wide course it would take approximately 1600 feet of course to provide enough space to socially distance 250 people (28, 250 sq. feet ÷ 18 feet = 1569 feet ≈1600 feet).
 - 1 mile = 5280 feet (5280 ÷ 1600 = 3.3 or ≈ 1/3)
 - 1600 feet ≈ 1/3 of a mile
 - It would take approximately 1/3rd of a mile to socially distance 250 people on an 18 foot wide course.
- “Point to point” courses, where the start and finish areas are distinct from one another are preferred to discourage crowds and naturally spread out potential spectators.
- Workers are not counted toward the “course maximum” for purposes of this guidance.
- ✓ **Participant pods.** Event participants must be further divided into “pods” of no more than 25 people indoors or 50 outdoors, and socially distanced (meaning, 6 feet of distance is maintained between people from different households) within the pods.
 - Each pod must be released in a staggered manner to avoid clustering on the course and intermixing of pods.
 - As each pod is released, individual participants should also be released in a staggered manner or positioned to allow for proper social distancing within the pod.
- ✓ **Social distancing measures.** Participants must maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing from other participants, volunteers, and employees through the entire event, including at the starting line, throughout the race, and at the finish line. Staff and volunteers must also maintain social distancing from other staff, volunteers, and participants.
 - Social distancing measures should take into account the size and structure of the venue. For example, if the race takes place on a track, lanes should be designated according to pace (for example, with slower participants in outside lanes, and faster participants in inside lanes).
 - Markers such as tape, traffic cones, or stickers should be placed on the ground to aid participants in maintaining social distancing.
 - Participants should be given staggered arrival times, based on their pod’s start time, to avoid congregating at the starting line. Participants within the same pod should be spaced at the starting line in a manner that allows them to maintain social distancing from each other.
 - Participants must immediately leave the course after finishing the race, and employees and volunteers must ensure that participants do not loiter or gather in groups at the finish area. Face coverings. Face coverings must be worn by all people at all times in the start and finish line areas, and while in their participant pod (if applicable). Face coverings may be removed by participants while on the race course as long as social distancing can be maintained.
- ✓ **Communication and signage.** The event organizer should strongly promote the importance of social distancing and personal responsibility to all participants, volunteers and staff as part of the event’s

regular communication strategy (both pre-event and during the event). In event venue areas (particularly areas not enclosed), the event should post prominent signage throughout the area that informs participants of the following:

- Not to enter if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Hygiene, face covering and social distancing requirements and instructions.
 - Applicable venue attendance limits and instruction to avoid clustering.
- ✓ **Spectators.** Race courses should be designed to eliminate the potential of spectators if organizers cannot ensure the venue requirements (including spectator capacity) will be followed at all times.
- Secluded courses (roads or trails/parks in areas with low foot and road traffic congestion) are preferred to discourage attracting crowds.
 - Social gathering limits for social distancing apply when races occur in public roadways, trails, and other areas that are not a defined and controlled venue.
 - Organizers must take steps to discourage and limit spectator gatherings in key high traffic areas (e.g., posting signage, monitoring and disbanding unauthorized spectator areas, etc.). Organizers are responsible for unauthorized gathering of spectators around the race course if they do not take reasonable steps to prevent these gatherings.
 - Organizers may not set up seating or gathering areas, or otherwise encourage the gathering of spectators without following the [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp).
 - If the race is held in a defined outdoor venue (for example, at a track at a public school or in a stadium), spectators are permitted, but the venue must follow the occupancy limits and all other requirements outlined in the [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp).
- ✓ **Vendors and attractions.** If an event is not being held in a defined venue (for example, if a course is located on a public roadway, trail, or other public right of way), vendors or recreational/entertainment attractions coordinated by the event organizers are not permitted because they encourage the congregation of spectators.
- ✓ **Transportation.** If providing or organizing transportation associated with the race, race organizers must also consider limitations and all other requirements outlined in [COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Passenger Transportation \(http://dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_preparedness_plan_requirements_guidelines_passenger_transportation.pdf\)](http://dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_preparedness_plan_requirements_guidelines_passenger_transportation.pdf).
- ✓ **Event policies.** The event may apply additional, lawful policies that are more stringent than required by this or other guidance or executive orders at its discretion.

Important risk considerations

Level of contact in a sport

Consider the risk associated with that sport in terms of COVID-19 being spread between players.

- ✓ The more physical or close contact that occurs the greater risk there is in spreading illness.
- ✓ A sport or training that takes place indoors is riskier than if the activity is done outdoors.
- ✓ Resources for risk categorization of sports:
 - [National Collegiate Athletic Association COVID-19 Coronavirus \(www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/coronavirus-covid-19\)](http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/coronavirus-covid-19)
 - [United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee Coronavirus Updates \(www.teamusa.org/Coronavirus\)](http://www.teamusa.org/Coronavirus)
Under the “Return to Training and Sport Event Planning” tab, select Sport Event Planning.
 - National Federation of State High School Association’s [Guidance for Opening up High School Athletics and Activities \(nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf\)](https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf).

Know before you play

There may be an increased risk of COVID-19 when participating in sports, and COVID-19 activity may be different in different regions of the state, also contributing to a possible increase in risk.

Traveling out of state or to different regions of the state to participate in sports activities is strongly discouraged. However, if people or teams are considering traveling to other regions or states to participate in sports, they should be aware of COVID-19 activity in that area to inform their decision. Additionally, the Governor’s Executive Order recommends people quarantine upon return from out of state travel. Effective Feb. 2, 2021, **masks are required** on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. For more information see [Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html).

- ✓ For Minnesota:
 - [Situation Update for COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html)
 - [Governor’s COVID-19 Dashboard \(mn.gov/covid19/data/covid-dashboard/index.jsp\)](http://mn.gov/covid19/data/covid-dashboard/index.jsp)
- ✓ For the broader United States:
 - [Johns Hopkins University of Medicine: COVID-19 United States Cases by County \(coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map\)](https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map)
 - [CDC: COVID Data Tracker \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html)

Take precautions with shared transportation (e.g., buses or vans)

- ✓ Those traveling on buses should have assigned and documented seating arrangements, remain at least 6 feet from the driver and the riders, and wear face coverings at all times.
- ✓ If the above precautions are followed:
 - Drivers would not be considered a close contact if they have been consistently spaced at least 6 feet away from all riders, including the ill person (with the exception of riders entering/exiting the bus).
 - Close contacts will only include those who are in the same row, two rows ahead, or two rows behind the positive person for 15 minutes or more over the course of the ride (or roundtrip, if applicable).
- ✓ If the above precautions are not followed, then the definition of close contacts is expanded to the entire bus if any of the following are true:
 - Riders are not in their assigned seat (i.e., moving about the bus to socialize with others) for the entire ride (or roundtrip, if applicable); or
 - There is no documentation or other ability to confirm seating assignments; or
 - Riders were engaged in activities that involved removal of face coverings (e.g., eating and drinking).

Recommendations for slowing the spread of COVID-19 during play

- ✓ Consider whether contact in the sport can be modified. For example, can contact be reduced among players during practice in order to limit close contact?
- ✓ Consider whether practices can occur outside, as in general, being outside reduces the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- ✓ Minimize sharing of objects.
 - Do not share individual water bottles, community snacks, or towels.
 - Encourage use of dedicated personal equipment such as bats, mitts, rackets, etc.

If a member of your team or organization has COVID-19

- ✓ If a case of COVID-19 is reported to you, notify MDH by email at health.sports.covid19@state.mn.us. MDH will be available to answer questions you have and can provide guidance. MDH also has template notification letters for close contacts or others on the team who may have questions about their risk of COVID-19.

- ✓ Once you hear of a case on your team, the team or association COVID-19 contact and/or coach must review whether or not the case was infectious while with their teammates and whether or not an exposure occurred. The COVID-19 contact and/or coach can consult with MDH or their affiliated association to discuss exposure assessment or any other concerns.
- ✓ It is important to keep rosters of who was at practices and, when allowed, games each day so contact tracing can be done quickly.
- ✓ A 14-day quarantine is recommended for people who have been exposed to COVID-19. In some circumstances, a shortened quarantine period may be possible.
 - If the exposure of the athlete occurs during sports and the athlete is unmasked, they are NOT eligible for shortened quarantine for sports.
 - If the exposure of the athlete occurs during sports and the athlete is masked, they ARE eligible for shortened quarantine for sports.
 - If the exposure of the athlete occurs during interactions/contact in non-sports settings (whether person was masked during the exposure or not), it needs to be assessed as usual (i.e., transient exposure vs. prolonged exposure).
 - You can find more information on what contacts need to do at [What to Do if You Have Had Close Contact With a Person With COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf).
- ✓ People who are sick with COVID-19 will need to stay out for 10 days from symptom onset. You can find most up to date information on these recommendations at [If You Are Sick \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html).
 - More information on what to do if you have a player who is symptomatic can be found at [Stay Safe Guidance for Schools, Colleges, and Universities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp\)](http://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp).

Team photography

- ✓ Standing close together is a high-risk activity, even when it is a shorter period of time. Consider taking individual photos and using editing software to combine them into a group photo.
- ✓ Consider using a longer lens to increase distance between the photography staff and the people being photographed.
- ✓ Group photos should be taken outside if at all possible.
- ✓ If indoors, use a space where people can be separated to allow for as much social distancing as possible.
- ✓ Prepare for the photos before people arrive. For example, identify the site (i.e., bleachers) and pre-mark the spots where people should stand for a group photo to minimize crowding together while coming into the area.
- ✓ People should face forward in the same direction.

- ✓ People should wear masks as they get into position and keep the mask on until the photographer provides a command to remove masks and take the picture. Time without masks should be very brief. People should replace their masks as soon as photos are done.
- ✓ When the photo has been taken, people should quickly separate from others.

Sport-specific resources for return to play

Note: MDH is not promoting any resources but is including links here for your reference.

- ✓ CDC guidance has considerations for youth sports. These principles can be applied to all ages: [Considerations for Youth Sports \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html)
- ✓ Strategies provided by the [National Collegiate Athletics Association: Core Principles of Resocialization of Collegiate Sport \(www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/core-principles-resocialization-collegiate-sport\)](https://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/core-principles-resocialization-collegiate-sport)
- ✓ Guidance and support at the [Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission \(www.mnsports.org/\)](https://www.mnsports.org/)
- ✓ [Minnesota State High School League \(www.mshsl.org\)](https://www.mshsl.org)
- ✓ [USA Wrestling COVID-19 Update \(www.teamusa.org/USA-Wrestling/Features/2020/March/14/COVID-19-Special-Section\)](https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Wrestling/Features/2020/March/14/COVID-19-Special-Section)
- ✓ [USA Wrestling Return to the Mat Guidelines \(content.themat.com/covid-19/USAW-Return-to-the-Mat-Guidelines.pdf\)](https://content.themat.com/covid-19/USAW-Return-to-the-Mat-Guidelines.pdf)
- ✓ [USA Hockey Player Safety & Health \(www.usahockey.com/playersafety\)](https://www.usahockey.com/playersafety)
- ✓ [Minnesota Ice Arena Managers Association COVID-19 Reference Page \(miama.org/members/covid-19-reference-page/\)](https://miama.org/members/covid-19-reference-page/)
- ✓ [Minnesota Hockey \(www.minnesotahockey.org\)](https://www.minnesotahockey.org)
- ✓ [US Lacrosse: Return-to-Play Recommendations for Lacrosse \(www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/return-to-play-final-1.pdf\)](https://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/return-to-play-final-1.pdf)
- ✓ [USATF Coronavirus 2019 \(COVID-19\) Information Page \(www.usatf.org/covid19\)](https://www.usatf.org/covid19)
- ✓ [USA Volleyball Return to Play Guidelines \(www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/features/-/media/A455B89BE0094BDC96EFEC89BFD324D6.ashx\)](https://www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/features/-/media/A455B89BE0094BDC96EFEC89BFD324D6.ashx)
- ✓ [USA Ultimate Return to Play Guidance \(usultimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ReturnToPlayGuidance-June2020.pdf\)](https://usultimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ReturnToPlayGuidance-June2020.pdf)
- ✓ [USA Swimming Coronavirus Resources \(www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/coronavirus\)](https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/coronavirus)
- ✓ [USTA Tennis Playing Tennis Safely \(www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/national/usta-statement-on-safety-of-playing-tennis-during-the-covid-19-v.html\)](https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/national/usta-statement-on-safety-of-playing-tennis-during-the-covid-19-v.html)
- ✓ [USA Soccer Recommendations Guides \(www.ussoccer.com/playon/guides/phase-1-grassroots\)](https://www.ussoccer.com/playon/guides/phase-1-grassroots)

- ✓ [USGA Guidance in Applying Golf's Rules and Posting Scores \(www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rulesarticles/covid-19-rules-and-handicapping-faqs.html\)](https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rulesarticles/covid-19-rules-and-handicapping-faqs.html)



Minnesota Department of Health | health.mn.gov | 651-201-5000
625 Robert Street North PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.