



2021 Season COVID-19 Safety Protocols

December 12, 2020

# General

- **Based on the latest guidance from the State of Ohio, ABL has developed a set of safety protocols for its teams during the 2021 season.**
  - These protocols were developed in conjunction with the City of Aurora and are based on the Responsible RestartOhio guidance for Baseball, Softball, and Batting Cages. More information can be found on the State of Ohio's coronavirus website here:  
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Sector-Specific-Operating-Requirements/>
  - It is ABL's intent that the governing protocols for the 2021 season meet or exceed the mandatory requirements from the State of Ohio.
  - Some changes from "usual" seasons are needed to comply with the State guidance. Help from each parent, player, and coach will be necessary for a successful season.
  - **These protocols are subject to change as state requirements and guidance are updated.**
- ***The safety protocols are our minimum requirements to be able to practice and play this season. If these are not followed, the ABL, City of Aurora, and/or State of Ohio may be forced to end the season.***
- **Responsibilities for parents, coaches, and players are summarized in the following slides. Additional details, including a comparison of State guidance and the ABL protocols are provided in the Appendix.**
- **This document cannot cover all potential situations that may arise. Flexibility, good judgment, and personal responsibility will be needed from all participants.**

# Prior to the Season

- All participant legal guardians must sign an additional liability waiver regarding COVID-19. **No player may participate in any team activity until the appropriate ABL League Director receives the waiver.**
- All participant legal guardians must read, agree to, and sign off on the safety protocols. **No player may participate in any team activity until the appropriate ABL League Director receives the signed form.**
- All teams must collect and maintain a roster including name, address, and contact information for each coach and player.
  - The coach will hold this list for the entire season and will provide the list to the local health department if requested.
  - If an ABL team will be playing a non-ABL team, the ABL coach must have a similar roster and contact information for the non-ABL team prior to the start of the game and upload it (photo is acceptable) to the following location:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=15QHWNdSWgXByoLScLr4NvEipzQM4wnjS>

# Parent Responsibilities - 1

- **Conduct a symptom assessment of your player(s) (including taking their temperature) prior to each practice or game and keep them home if they have any symptoms.**
  - Per the CDC, symptoms include cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headaches, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.
  - Notify the coach and the ABL if your player or someone they have been in contact with is confirmed to have COVID-19.
- **Perform a self-assessment prior to coming to the venue as a spectator and stay home if experiencing any symptoms.**
- **Perform an assessment of any siblings and keep them home from the field if they have any symptoms.**
- **Supply a mitt, bat, batting helmet, and water bottle for your player(s). It is also recommended that you provide a mask for your player(s).**
  - The State of Ohio protocols:
    - Recommend that players wear masks anytime they are not actively participating in the game/practice (not in the field defensively or at bat).
    - Do not permit athletes to share equipment.
  - An exception will be made for catcher's gear – ABL will supply an additional set for each team and it will be sanitized between users. Note that developmental leagues (Juniors and below) will not use a catcher this season to further minimize sharing.
  - ABL does have a limited number of these items to loan for the season in the event of financial hardship.

# Parent Responsibilities - 2

- **Adhere to social distancing guidelines when attending games as a spectator.**
  - Stay out of designated player areas and maintain a six foot distance from the field.
  - Spread out from other spectators and maintain a six foot distance from each other. Bleachers will likely either not be used or will need to be minimally used.
  - The State of Ohio protocols recommend that spectators also use masks.
- **Leave the field as quickly as reasonable after games/practices.**
  - ABL and the Parks and Rec Department is scheduling extra time between practices/games to minimize overlap to the extent practical.
  - Do not congregate in parking lots or other common areas.
  - State of Ohio protocols recommend not sharing vehicles with non-household member (discourage carpooling among teammates).
- **Review the protocols with your player and ensure they understand what is required to participate. Players who will not or are not able to adhere to the protocols will not be permitted to participate.**
- **Each coach will have one team representative to assure all safety protocols are in place during practice/game. They will be responsible for “policing” social distancing rules and guidelines. To include but not limited to, daily assessments, social distancing, proper protection equipment and sanitation.**
- **Coaches may add to the ABL required protocols as needed, or to follow more stringent league guidelines.**

# Coach Responsibilities - 1

- **Conduct a self-assessment (including a temperature check) prior to each practice or game and stay home if you experience any symptoms.**
  - Per the CDC, symptoms include cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headaches, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.
  - If any player or coach becomes sick or shows symptoms during a practice or game, they should stop participation and be sent home.
- **Understand and adhere to social distancing guidelines to the extent practical when running practices and games.**
- **It is recommended that coaches supply their own masks and wear them at all times.**
- **Review the requirements for players, coaches, and umpires in detail (see Appendix).  
General player requirements include:**
  - No sharing of equipment, water bottles, etc. For teams with catchers, ABL will supply two sets of gear and they must be cleaned (ABL will supply disinfectant) between users.
  - Players should use hand sanitizer when coming off the field (ABL will supply to each team).
  - No spitting, seeds, gum, or similar products are permitted.
  - It is recommended that players wear masks when not actively participating.
  - No contact between players/coaches/umpires. This means no high-fives, post-game handshake lines, etc. Coming up with alternate celebrations for your team is encouraged!

# Coach Responsibilities - 2

- **The number of players permitted in the dugout will be limited – there will be designated areas outside the dugout for most. ABL and the Parks and Rec Department will be working to establish these areas.**
  - Note that the setup required may be different based on the specific layout of each field.
  - The coach may determine whether participants will remain with their family or have an assigned seat when not actively participating.
- **Coaches must maintain a roster of participants including contact information and obtain similar information for any non-ABL participant (including umpires and non-ABL opponents) prior to the start of each game.**
  - Coaches will provide this information to the local health department upon request.
  - ABL will provide coaches with local health department contact information to allow quick access as needed.
- **Minimize in-person team meetings and have your team leave the field promptly when your practice/game ends.**
- **Each coach will have one team representative to assure all safety protocols are in place during practice/game. They will be responsible for “policing” social distancing rules and guidelines. To include but not limited to, daily assessments, social distancing, proper protection equipment and sanitation.**
- **Specific leagues may have additional changes for this season that will be shared by your league director.**
- **Coaches may add to the ABL required protocols as needed, or to follow more stringent league guidelines.**



# Player Responsibilities

- Understand and adhere to social distancing guidelines during practices and games.
- If you feel sick before a practice or game, tell a parent right away.
- If you feel sick during a practice or game, tell your coach right away.
- Follow your coach's instructions for where to sit and where to put your equipment. Each coach will have a team representative to assure all safety protocols are in place during practice/game. They will be responsible for "policing" social distancing rules and guidelines, to include but not limited to, daily assessments, social distancing, proper protection equipment and sanitation.
- When you're not on the field:
  - Use the hand sanitizer when you come off the field/into the dugout.
  - It's recommended to wear your mask.
  - Stay six feet away from others (stay in your designated spot).
  - Keep your drinks and equipment separate from your teammates. Do not use their equipment or let them use yours.
  - No spitting, seeds, gum, or similar products are allowed.
- No touching other players (or coaches, or umpires). No shaking hands, high-fives, chest bumps... No handshake lines after the game. Coming up with alternative celebrations is encouraged!
- **It's a little different than usual, but we need your help to follow these rules so we can all have a great baseball season!**





# Appendix

Detailed List of State of Ohio Protocols and  
Corresponding Aurora Baseball Requirements

# Arrival to Venue



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## Mandatory

- **All participants, spectators, and employees must adhere to six-foot physical distancing while at the facility/course.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.\*
- No team water coolers or shared drinking stations.
- Compliant game balls must be designated to each team for use while that team is playing defense.
- Prior to competitive tournaments, event owners must alert the local health department of the event.
- These requirements must be shared prior to the event with all players, coaches, spectators, officials, and employees prior to their arrival at the venue.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Digital check-in and registration for all events.
- Lineups should be entered online or by spoken word and recorded by officials/umpires without exchanging any physical documents with coaches or players.
- Athletes are strongly recommended to travel to the venue alone or with a member of their immediate household.

- Appropriate locations (such as along the first and third baseline fences) will be designated for players not on the field to sit with a six-foot distance between them. Spectators will not be permitted in these areas. An additional coach or “dugout parent” volunteer will monitor athletes.
- Parents must conduct a daily symptom assessment, including temperature check, of their player(s) and keep them home if they have symptoms. All others (coaches, spectators) must perform a self-assessment and stay home if they have symptoms.
- No team water coolers will be permitted.
- Designated game balls will be supplied for each team (rec) or by each team (travel). Foul balls must be sanitized by a coach prior to being returned to play.
- Aurora Tournament is cancelled.
- All guidelines will be distributed to each team and participant prior to starting the season (rec/Aurora travel) or provided to a visiting non-Aurora team prior to the scheduled game.
- Lineups shall be communicated without exchanging documents, either online (when GameChanger is used) or via text. No written lineup card shall be used.
- Carpooling between team members will be discouraged.

# Team Practices - 1



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## Mandatory

- **Coaches and players must adhere to physical six-foot distancing except when the ball is in play.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.
- No team water coolers or shared drinking stations.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Coaches should wear face coverings at all times.
- Athletes should wear face coverings at all times while not actively participating in the field of play.
- Face coverings are strongly recommended for any spectators.
- For each practice session, it is recommended that coaches divide players into groups and establish rotating shifts when possible.
- Athletes should bring individual water containers.
- Virtual meetings should be considered when possible.
- Athletes are strongly recommended to travel to the venue alone or with a member(s) of their immediate household, if possible. Face coverings are strongly recommended for individuals traveling to and from the venue.
- Whenever possible, equipment and personal items should have proper separation and should not be shared. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation should be administered between users.

- Appropriate locations (such as along the first and third baseline fences) will be designated for players not on the field to sit with a six-foot distance between them. Spectators will not be permitted in these areas. An additional coach or “dugout parent” volunteer will monitor athletes.
- It is recommended that all coaches supply their own masks and wear them at all times.
- It is recommended that all players have and wear face coverings whenever they are not actively participating. Players may choose to wear face coverings at all times.
- Parents must conduct a daily symptom assessment, including temperature check, of their player(s) and keep them home if they have symptoms. All others (coaches, spectators) must perform a self-assessment and stay home if they have symptoms.
- No team water coolers will be permitted. Each player should supply their own water; sharing of individual water bottles will not be not permitted.

# Team Practices - 2



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## Mandatory

- **Coaches and players must adhere to physical six-foot distancing except when the ball is in play.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.
- No team water coolers or shared drinking stations.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Coaches should wear face coverings at all times.
- Athletes should wear face coverings at all times while not actively participating in the field of play.
- Face coverings are strongly recommended for any spectators.
- For each practice session, it is recommended that coaches divide players into groups and establish rotating shifts when possible.
- Athletes should bring individual water containers.
- Virtual meetings should be considered when possible.
- Athletes are strongly recommended to travel to the venue alone or with a member(s) of their immediate household, if possible. Face coverings are strongly recommended for individuals traveling to and from the venue.
- Whenever possible, equipment and personal items should have proper separation and should not be shared. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation should be administered between users.



- Spectators will be encouraged to minimize their presence at practices and will remain outside the field and at least six feet from the team at all times.
- Coaches will minimize close interaction among players during drills where possible (smaller groups, spacing out lines, etc.)
- Each player must have his own bat/helmet/mitt. This equipment will not be shared. ABL has a limited amount of this equipment to loan for the season in instances of financial hardship.
- Sharing of catcher's equipment will be minimized by replacing the catcher with a masked assistant coach in developmental leagues (Juniors and below) and providing a minimum of two sets for each Minor/Major/Senior league team. ABL will provide each team using catchers with disinfectant for equipment sanitation between users.
- ABL will provide each coach with hand sanitizer for use by their team during practices and games.



# Athletes - 1



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## Mandatory

- **Must adhere to six foot social distancing practices off the field of play.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.\*
- Must not share water or equipment. Belongings should be used only by the individual owner or operator including, but not limited to water bottles, gloves, bats, hats, and other on- and off-field gear.
- No touch rule – players should refrain from high fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with teammates, opposing players, coaches, umpires, and fans. A “tip the cap” can be used following the game in lieu of the handshake line.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Should wear face coverings at all times when not actively participating in the field of play.
- Hand washing or hand sanitizing, in the absence of soap and water, are strongly recommended for athletes during the games.
- Whenever possible, equipment and personal items should have proper separation and should not be shared. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation should be administered between users.
- Consider prohibiting spitting, eating seeds, gum, or other similar products.

- Parents must conduct a daily symptom assessment, including temperature check, of their player(s) and keep them home if they have symptoms.
- Appropriate locations (such as along the first and third baseline fences) will be designated for players not on the field to sit with a six-foot distance between them. Spectators will not be permitted in these areas. An additional coach or “dugout parent” volunteer will monitor athletes.
- It is recommended that all players have and wear face coverings whenever they are not actively participating. Players may choose to wear face coverings at all times.
- No team water coolers will be permitted. Each player should supply their own water; sharing of individual water bottles will not be permitted.
- Each player must have his own bat/helmet/mitt. This equipment will not be shared. ABL has a limited amount of this equipment to loan for the season in instances of financial hardship.

# Athletes - 2



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## Mandatory

- **Must adhere to six foot social distancing practices off the field of play.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.\*
- Must not share water or equipment. Belongings should be used only by the individual owner or operator including, but not limited to water bottles, gloves, bats, hats, and other on- and off-field gear.
- No touch rule – players should refrain from high fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with teammates, opposing players, coaches, umpires, and fans. A “tip the cap” can be used following the game in lieu of the handshake line.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Should wear face coverings at all times when not actively participating in the field of play.
- Hand washing or hand sanitizing, in the absence of soap and water, are strongly recommended for athletes during the games.
- Whenever possible, equipment and personal items should have proper separation and should not be shared. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation should be administered between users.
- Consider prohibiting spitting, eating seeds, gum, or other similar products.

- Sharing of catcher’s equipment will be minimized by replacing the catcher with a masked assistant coach in developmental leagues (Juniors and below) and providing a minimum of two sets for each Minor/Major/Senior league team. ABL will provide each team using catchers with disinfectant for equipment sanitation between users.
- ABL will provide each coach with hand sanitizer for use by their team during practices and games.
- Spitting, seeds, gum, and similar products will be prohibited.
- Players shall refrain from contact with others whenever possible. Teams will devise alternate celebrations and modify handshake lines.
- **Athletes who are not willing to comply with these guidelines will not be permitted to participate.**

# Spectators



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## Mandatory

- **Must adhere to six foot social distancing practices. This includes in and around bleachers for anyone not in the same family.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.\*
- Must not enter player areas (on the field of play or bench areas).
- Must keep six-feet or more distance from the backstop.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Strongly recommended to wear face coverings at all times.
- Hand washing or hand sanitizing, in the absence of soap and water, is recommended strongly during the games.



- Spectators should perform a self-assessment of symptoms prior to arriving to the venue and stay home if experiencing any symptoms. Parents should also assess any additional children who will be attending.
- A six foot distance from the field will be determined at each field in conjunction with the Aurora Parks and Rec Department. Spectators must comply with this distance from the field and may not enter the dugouts, designated player/coach areas, or field of play.
- Bleacher access (where applicable) will be limited.
- ABL will work with the Aurora Parks and Rec Department to ensure that hand sanitizer is available for restrooms without running water.
- Spectators should adhere to social distancing protocols. It is recommended that spectators have and wear masks at all times.



# Coaches



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## Mandatory

- **Must adhere to six-foot social distancing practices.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.
- No touch rule – coaches should refrain from high fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with teammates, opposing players, coaches, umpires, and fans. A “tip the cap” can be used following the game in lieu of the handshake line.
- Must ensure that players are following COVID-19-related prevention measures included herein.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Should wear face coverings at all times.
- Coaches should ensure the players are adhering to social distancing in dugouts and other seating areas and wearing face coverings while not actively participating on the field of play.
- Whenever possible, equipment and personal items should have proper separation and should not be shared. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation should be administered between users.
- Consider prohibiting spitting, eating seeds, gum, or other similar products.



- Coaches shall adhere to six-foot social distancing protocols to the extent practical while conducting practices and games.
- It is recommended that all coaches supply their own masks and wear them at all times.
- Coaches must conduct a self-assessment for any symptoms, including a temperature check, prior to coming to the field for any practice or game and stay home if experiencing any symptoms.
- Spitting seeds, gum, and similar products will be prohibited.
- Coaches shall refrain from contact with others whenever possible. Teams will devise alternate celebrations and modify handshake lines.
- Coaches will run practices and games in accordance with the COVID-19 protocols and do their best to ensure that their athletes are complying with all protocols on social distancing, contact, and equipment sharing.
- For games, an assistant or “dugout parent” volunteer will be designated to monitor athletes’ compliance with the protocols while the coach(es) are coaching the team.

# Umpires - 1



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## Mandatory

- **Must adhere to six-foot social distancing practices when interacting with players, coaches, and spectators off the field of play.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.
- Must avoid exchanging documents or equipment with players, coaches, or spectators.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Should wear face coverings at all times.
- Digital check-in and registration for all events.
- Umpires calling balls and strikes should allow adequate distance behind the catcher while still able to perform their duty.



- Umpires shall adhere to six-foot social distancing protocols to the extent practical while conducting games.
- Umpires must provide their contact information including address and phone number to the ABL coach prior to the start of each game. This will be provided to the local health department upon request.
- Umpires must conduct a self-assessment, including temperature check, for any symptoms prior to coming to the field and stay home if experiencing any symptoms.
- It is recommended that all umpires supply their own masks and wear them at all times.

# Umpires - 2



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## Mandatory

- **Must adhere to six-foot social distancing practices when interacting with players, coaches, and spectators off the field of play.**
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.
- Must avoid exchanging documents or equipment with players, coaches, or spectators.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Should wear face coverings at all times.
- Digital check-in and registration for all events.
- Umpires calling balls and strikes should allow adequate distance behind the catcher while still able to perform their duty.



- Umpires (plate umpires, in particular) should station themselves at the farthest distance from the catcher that will permit effective performance of their duty.
- Umpires will not hold baseballs; the coach for each team will hold all baseballs for their team.
- To the extent possible, umpires will be paid via electronic means to avoid exchanging cash/checks.
- Coaches will perform umpiring duties in developmental leagues (leagues other than Minor, Major, and Senior).
- **Umpires will have the ability to declare a forfeit if safety protocols are not in place or not adhered to.**

# Leaving the Venue



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## **Mandatory**

- Individuals should not congregate in common areas or parking lot following the event or practice
- Umpires should adhere to social distancing practices when interacting with players, coaches, and spectators off the field of play.
- Individuals should not exchange items.

## **Recommended Best Practices**

- Team meetings should occur virtually or over the phone rather than in a team huddle.
- Athletes are strongly recommended to travel to the venue alone or with a member(s) of their immediate household, if possible. Face coverings are strongly recommended for individuals traveling to and from the venue.
- Team meals should only occur in compliance with the guidelines issued for restaurants in the state of Ohio.



- When scheduling games and practices, ABL and the Parks and Rec Department will allow extra time between events to reduce interaction between those leaving and arriving.
- All participants will be encouraged to leave the field, common areas, and parking lot as quickly as reasonable when the practice or game ends.
- Post-game team meetings will be minimized and will adhere to social distancing protocols.



# Confirmed Cases



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## Mandatory

- Immediately isolate and seek medical care for any individual who develops symptoms.
- Contact the local health district about suspected cases or exposure.
- Organizer must maintain a complete list of coaches, players, and employees present at each event to include the date, beginning and ending time of the event, plus name, address, and phone contact to be made available upon request from local health district.

## Recommended Best Practices

- Work with local health department to identify potentially infected or exposed individuals to help facilitate effective contact tracing/notifications.
- Once testing is readily available, test all suspected infections or exposures.
- Following testing, contact local health department to initiate appropriate care and tracing.

- Any individual developing symptoms will be immediately removed from participation in the practice/game and sent home.
- ABL will maintain a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers for all league participants.
- Coaches will maintain a roster of players and coaches for their team. Prior to each practice, coaches will be responsible to note any players/coaches not present to assist in the event contact tracing becomes necessary. If using umpires, prior to each game, contact information for the umpire(s) will also be collected.
- When playing a non-Aurora team, the coach of the Aurora team must be supplied with the roster of players/coaches/participants and contact info for the non-Aurora team.
- If any coach (or parent) learns of a confirmed case related to any participant in any practice or game, they will report it immediately to the ABL Board and the health department and City of Aurora will be notified.
- Contact information for the health department will be supplied to each coach and parent at the start of the season.