

Fall Recommendations Cheer

Updated September 17th, 2020

OVERVIEW

Every school district/program should consult with their local health department to determine which risk level to start this program safely. Continued consultation with the local health department and county gathering guidelines should be used to determine when progression to the next phase can be initiated. This document is meant to provide assistance to decision makers and schools to be adapted at their discretion, as they prepare to return to practices and competitive events.

It is the position of WACPC to recommend and encourage alignment with [WIAA's Return to Fall Sports Considerations](#) "General Considerations" for practices and events, including the use of the Medical Clearance Form. (See pages 1-4)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Pre-Workout/Pre-Contest Screening:

- Athletes and coaches should check their temperature at home before attending practices or games. If a student athlete or a coaching staff member has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above, they should not attend practices or games.
- Ensure that individual(s) with symptoms do not return to practice until:
 - They are free of fever (less than 100.4°F) AND respiratory symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath) for at least three days (72 hours) without the use of fever-reducing medicine; AND
 - Ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- Any person with symptoms of respiratory illness should not be allowed to take part in workouts until they are free of fever and respiratory symptoms for at least three days without the use of fever-reducing medicine AND ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared. They should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional for guidance. Written medical clearance is required to return to activity.
- A record should be kept of all individuals present at team activities.
- Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions, but should practice social distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.

Sport Specific Information

Social distancing:

- **Practice** – Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between cheerleaders as much as possible. This means additional spacing between cheerleaders while practicing or changing drills. No congregating of cheerleaders while waiting to enter a drill or waiting in line to use an apparatus (i.e. tumbl trak, crash mats, etc.). Workouts should be conducted in 'pods' of athletes, with the same 5-10 cheerleaders always working out together. When working out with **partners/stunt groups**, the **partners/stunt groups** should be the same until the risk level becomes lowest. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- **Stunting** - Stunting should only occur when local directives allow contact in sports. It is recommended to keep stunt groups together, **in their cohort of the same 5-10 cheerleaders**, and avoid switching with personnel of different groups.

- **Locker Rooms** – Should not be used during higher Risk Levels. Students should report to workouts in proper gear and immediately return home to shower, clean clothes and equipment at the end of every workout.
- **At Practice:**
 - **Sidelines** – Cheerleader’s items should be lined up against the wall or in the hallway at least six feet apart. (see Gym Bag below) Athletes should maintain social distancing unless they are actively participating in the practice.
 - **Practice Floor** – Only essential personnel are permitted in the practice floor area. These are defined as cheerleaders, coaches, and athletic trainers. All others, i.e., managers, video personnel, etc. are considered non-essential personnel and are to be outside of the practice floor area.
- **At Games:**
 - **Sidelines** – Cheerleader’s items should be lined up against a fence or other out of the way area, at least six feet apart. (see Gym Bag below) Athletes should maintain social distancing unless they are actively participating in the game.
 - **Competition Floor** – Only essential personnel are permitted in the competitive area. These are defined as cheerleaders, coaches, judges, and athletic trainers. All others, i.e., managers, video personnel, etc. are considered non-essential personnel and are to be outside of the practice floor area.
 - **Spectators** – Spectators should practice social distancing between different household units and accept personal responsibility for public health guidelines.
- **Coach conferences/Team Huddles** – Encourage limiting the number of individuals in a conference to those who must be in close proximity for these discussions. It is encouraged that coaches wear a mask. Team huddles should be conducted using social distancing guidelines.
- **Team handshakes** – Teams shall NOT exchange handshakes before, during, or following the practice.

Practice and Meet Protocols:

- **Masks** – *** Masks must be worn according to the [governor’s mandate](#) upon arrival to game and practice venues, and until warm-up has begun. *** Cheerleaders are not required to wear face coverings while participating in practices and games, but may do so if they desire. They should consider wearing cloth facial covering while in the facility, but not while actively participating as the mask could come off, move, or become a distraction and increase the risk of injury. Coaches and others are encouraged to wear masks especially when not able to maintain social distancing. If an individual would like to wear a mask on the competition floor or in a practice, they may do so. There is no prohibition on the color of the mask. Spectators, workers, and others are encouraged to wear masks and they are expected to follow social distancing guidelines. Consider the following if using masks:
 - Masks should be snug-fitting.
 - Masks should not impede vision or movement.
 - Masks should be soft and pliable with no exposed metal.
 - Consider masks that are held in place with over-the-head straps using breakaway type connections; or masks that minimize the chance of fingers getting caught in them, or shifting to impede sight.
 - Masks should provide adequate ventilation and protection from the spread of particulate matter.
 - Modification to skills should be considered while wearing masks (i.e. limiting inversions, twisting, and tosses).

- **Cheerleader habits** – If an athlete puts their hands/fingers in their mouth or spits on their hands, practice is stopped, and the athlete must sanitize their hands and/or any equipment touched. Coaches should work to discourage these habits.
- **Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes** – Cheerleaders, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and/or sanitizing wipes. As recommended by the WIAA SMAC, using hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) before and after each session, drill, or rotation. Additionally, emphasize to all to avoid touching their face. (See Gym Bag below).
- **Disinfectant wipes** – Cheerleaders are encouraged to provide their own disinfectant wipes to disinfect your feet – can be alcohol wipes. These will be used when entering, after each event and before exiting.
- **Coach Whistles** – Use hand-held whistles or air horns as opposed to regular whistles when possible.

Equipment (see Gym Bag below):

- **Wristbands/Braces** – Cheerleaders should use their own wristbands/braces.
- **Towels** – Cheerleaders should use their own towel.
- **Athletic tape** – Cheerleaders should have their own roll of athletic tape.
- **Equipment needs to be sanitized** – Equipment and Mats should be cleaned for each day of activity, or as needed due to current local guidelines. If different cohorts are meeting in the same space at different times, mats and equipment should be cleaned between cohorts. Contact equipment manufacturers for specifics on proper cleaning protocols for their equipment. Continued use of disinfectant chemicals may reduce the life of the product. The application of disinfectant chemicals may have unintended results and place the cheerleader at risk of injury. Work with your administration to establish appropriate use of chemicals and cleaning protocols.
- **What kinds or brands of sanitizer should we be using** – The WIAA SMAC recommends referencing and utilizing EPA registered disinfectants. All equipment may be wiped with listed disinfectants and a damp cloth.

Hydration:

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should NOT be utilized.

COVID-19 Coach:

- Designate a coach to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.
- All coaches, staff, officials, and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Train coaches, officials, and staff on all safety protocols. Conduct training virtually, or ensure that social distancing is maintained during training.

Considerations for Cheerleading Practice:

- **High Risk Phase** – Drills that can be done during the High risk phase to reduce exposure with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.
 - Cheerleaders may do tumbling drills without partners. It is encouraged that cheerleaders only drill their individually acquired tumbling skills, that they may safely perform on their own, without a spotter.
 - Solo cardio conditioning (i.e. single person calisthenics)
 - Weight lifting
 - Modify drills or activities to limit/reduce potential violations of social distancing requirements including but not limited to: high fives, huddles, and team meetings.
- **Moderate Risk Phase** – Drills that can be done during the Moderate risk phase to reduce exposure, which involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the

likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group drills OR sports that use equipment that can be cleaned between participants.

- Cheerleaders may drill **tumbling/stunting** skills with a **partner/stunt groups**, and may use a spotter for safety
- Remain with one practice partner/**stunt group/one spotting group; no switching personnel among cohorts.**
- Solo cardio conditioning (i.e. single person calisthenics)
- Modify drills or activities to limit/reduce potential violations of social distancing requirements including but not limited to: high fives, huddles, and team meetings.
- **Low Risk Phase** – Drills that can be done during the Low risk phase to reduce exposure, which involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.
 - Cheerleaders may practice and drill with teammates
 - Cheerleaders may use multiple partners and spotters during practice
 - Team cardio conditioning
 - Modify drills or activities to limit/reduce potential violations of social distancing requirements including but not limited to: high fives, huddles, and team meetings.

Gym Bag – Supplies needed for your personal gym bag:

1. A reusable cloth facial covering – According to the Governor’s Mandate, the mask must be worn when entering and exiting the venue. Once you have entered the workout area, you can put your mask into a resealable plastic bag inside your gym bag. However, you must abide by the at least 6’ distancing rule at all times while in the workout area.
2. Wristbands and any braces that are normally used during practices will stay in your gym bag.
3. Personal bottle of hand sanitizer – less chance of possible cross contamination and less time standing around waiting to use a shared gym bottle – be sure to have this inside a Ziploc bag, in case it leaks. This will be used before each event and when exiting the building.
4. Shoes must be worn at all times.
5. 1 ½” white athletic tape, pre-wrap, and any other tape you normally use during practice.
6. Fingernail clippers – flat edge instead of round because they are for cutting rips.
7. Personal water bottles for drinking– the water fountains will not be in use because of CDC guidelines. Bring two bottles if you think you will drink that much water. Label all bottles and keep with your belongings.
8. Your shoes will also be stored in your gym bag, in a separate compartment or bag that is inside your gym bag. Prevent possible cross contamination with other items in the gym bag.
9. Towels that are normally used during practices will stay in your gym bag.

Everything inside the gym bag must be disinfected after every practice – before you return to the gym again. Be sure the disinfectant doesn’t contain bleach, it could ruin your bag. Be sure to spray the inside and the outside of the bag as well. This is for everyone’s protection, we don’t want to take a chance of carrying any potential virus back and forth.