

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

2/12/2021

Executive Order (EO) 21-07 will go into effect Saturday, Feb. 13 at 12:00 p.m. (noon) and is an amendment to EO 21-01 which does not have an end date. Youth and adult sports must continue to comply with the requirements set forth in EO 21-01. This guidance is not affected by amendments to EO 21-01 through EO 21-07.

For guidance related to organized sports refer to the [Stay Safe Guidance for Organized Sports \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/organized-sports.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/organized-sports.jsp).

[Frequently Asked Questions about Stay Safe MN \(https://mn.gov/covid19/stay-safe/faq/index.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/covid19/stay-safe/faq/index.jsp) or [Stay Safe Guidance for Businesses and Organizations \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp) may have additional clarifications about requirements and recommendations.

There are no other updates to this document at this 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 resume 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.

Starting Jan. 4, 2021, practices for organized youth and adult sports may resume. Practices cannot exceed pod sizes of more than 25.

Starting Jan. 14, 2021, games and scrimmages with other teams may begin.

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).

Concessions and entertainment are discouraged at this time.

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

- ✓ Successfully resuming practices and, when allowed, games is dependent on the adherence to guidance necessary to prevent transmission as outlined in this document.
- ✓ It is important to communicate to parents and players that masks will be required for all practices and, when allowed, games. For further information see the [American Academy of Pediatrics 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/) (<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/>).
- ✓ Additionally, players, parents, and coaches should understand that social interactions outside of practices are sources of transmission among teams. Gatherings indoors should be strongly discouraged. Further, players, parents, and coaches must understand that any gatherings that exceed the current social gathering limits of up to two households indoors (maximum of 10 people total) and up to three households outdoors (maximum of 15 people total) are prohibited. Permitted social gatherings must follow the [Stay Safe in Social Gatherings](https://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](https://mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp) (<https://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 \(https://staysafe.mn.gov\)](https://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 \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp\)](https://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 \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](https://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 \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html\)](https://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 \(www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-55.pdf\)](https://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.

- When games are allowed on and after Jan. 14, 2021 – only allow household groups to purchase tickets for adjacent seating in a single transaction.
- ✓ 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 event setting (e.g., gymnasium, rinks)

- ✓ Do not exceed the number of people allowed in the venue.
 - Facility and venue guidance is available at [Stay Safe Guidance for Businesses & Organizations \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp). Including:
 - [Stay Safe Guidance for Outdoor Recreation Entities \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/outdoor-recreation.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/outdoor-recreation.jsp)
 - [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp)
 - [2020-21 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools \(https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE032934&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary\)](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE032934&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary) – Updated 1/8/21
 - An overview of capacity limits can be found at [Minnesota’s Stay Safe Plan \(https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/stay-safe-mn/stay-safe-plan.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/stay-safe-mn/stay-safe-plan.jsp).
 - The following requirements apply to games, once they are allowed starting January 14:
 - For competitions held indoors, 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 capacity 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 capacity count.
 - For practices, spectators and participants all contribute to the total capacity 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 and at entrances that inform patrons of the following:
 - Not to enter if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
 - About the venue’s attendance limits.
 - That they are required to adhere to hygiene and social distancing instructions, signage and markings.
 - That they are required to follow the venue’s requirements for wearing face coverings.

- ✓ Encourage patrons and visitors to review a screening survey that checks for COVID-19 symptoms, close contacts with confirmed cases and quarantined cases, and out-of-state travel. See the Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist on [Businesses and Employers: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html\)](http://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, when allowed, 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.
 - Individuals 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 individuals 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 six 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 six 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 an alpine or Nordic ski competition, a skier may remove their face covering for the duration of the competition if the competition is organized in a way that guarantees the skier will not come within six feet of others on the course, including when starting and finishing. In this situation, skiers 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 (which is more likely with younger children), 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](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html) (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](https://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.
 - 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.
 - A face covering must cover the nose and mouth completely. The covering should not be overly tight or restrictive and should feel comfortable to wear.
 - 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](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html) (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](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html) (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 \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html\)](https://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.

Promote health checks

- ✓ 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.

Requirements for holding practices (effective beginning Jan. 4, 2021)

Only practices are allowed from Jan. 4 through 13. No games or scrimmages with other teams are allowed. Games and scrimmages with other teams will be allowed starting Jan. 14.

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

Spectator requirements

- ✓ Up to one spectator per participant is allowed to attend practices. However, spectators at practices are strongly discouraged.
- ✓ 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-foot 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 per pod, either inside or outside.
 - 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, so teams are strongly encouraged to create pods that are smaller than the maximum of 25.

Additional practice recommendations

- ✓ Start with skill development practices that allow participants to maintain social distance from members of other households for the first week or two of practice. This may help slow initial disease transmission on the team and ease participants back into practice for those who have not had much physical activity during the pause.
- ✓ 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 (effective beginning Jan. 14)

Games, scrimmages, and competitions are not allowed until Jan. 14. Once allowed the following guidance applies.

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 advanced reservations and/or ticketing (e.g., online, app-based, email, will-call). Do not allow walk-ins, impromptu purchases or admittance.
 - 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.
- ✓ 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 250 participants or the total square footage of the course divided by 113, whichever is less.
 - 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. For cross country and track team events/competitions, four groups of up to seven athletes constitutes a pod.

Multi-team (greater than two teams) events and tournaments (effective Jan. 14)

Multi-team events and tournaments are not allowed until Jan. 14. Once allowed the following guidance applies.

- ✓ 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

- ✓ Allow only one team in a locker room at any one time and limit the amount of time in the locker room.
- ✓ Teams can only be in a facility while playing a game. Teams should only arrive early enough to warm up before their competition, and teams should leave as soon as their game is over.
- ✓ The venue capacity requirements in the “Follow guidance for the event setting” section above must be followed.

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 an individual 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 (effective Jan. 14)

Outdoor recreational race events are allowed starting Jan. 14. Once allowed, the following guidance applies.

Key information

- ✓ This guidance 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).
- ✓ Any race events (including run/walk races, triathlons, bicycle races, or cross-country skiing races) that are half-marathon length or longer can only be held in venues that have defined perimeters and clear entrance and exit points (i.e., not on public roadways). This is to ensure that capacity limits are followed, that crowding can be controlled, and that social distancing is maintained among spectators.
- ✓ Examples of possible venues include fair grounds, golf courses, stadiums, or athletic fields.
- ✓ This guidance is not applicable to motorized races. For these events, please use the [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp).

This guidance outlines the requirements for holding organized recreational race events (e.g., run/walk races, triathlons, bicycle races, or cross-country skiing) during the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency. Unless this guidance imposes a different or additional requirement, any organized race event must also follow the requirements in other sections of this guidance document. Certain race events may have spectators and any event with spectators must follow the requirements of 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)

with respect to how many spectators are allowed and the steps that must be taken to protect the health and safety of spectators and workers or volunteers. The individual or entity responsible for organizing the race must incorporate applicable requirements from these guidance documents 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 contactless methods. Any racing equipment, promotional products or handouts, bibs, etc. should be mailed to participants prior to race day.
- ✓ **Participant and employee 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 one time—is 250 participants or the total square footage of the course divided by 113, whichever is less.
 - This “course maximum” ensures 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).
 - Participants must be divided into completely separated participant groups to ensure the number of participants on the course at one time never exceeds the course maximum.
 - 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.
 - 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 individuals and socially distanced (meaning, 6 feet of distance is maintained between people from different households) within the pods.
 - Each pod is 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 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.

✓ **Spectators.**

- If a race event is shorter than a half-marathon in length and is not being held in a venue with a defined perimeter (for example, if a course is located on a public roadway, trail, or other public right of way), spectators should be strongly discouraged. The event must not set up seating or other areas that will encourage congregation of spectators.
 - Any people who do watch the race must adhere to social gathering limits.
- Secluded courses (roads or trails/parks in areas with low foot and road traffic congestion) are preferred to discourage attracting crowds.
- 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 capacity limitations 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).
- Reminder: Any race events (including run/walk races, triathlons, bicycle races, or cross-country skiing races) that are half-marathon length or longer can only be held in venues that have defined perimeters and clear entrance and exit points (i.e., not on public roadways).

✓ **Vendors and attractions.**

- If a race is held at a defined venue (for example, at a track at a public school or in a stadium), vendors and other recreational/entertainment attractions are permitted, but must follow 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 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.

Important risk considerations

Level of contact in a sport

Before starting any 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 \(https://nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf\)](https://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 individuals 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 individuals quarantine upon return from out of state travel.

- ✓ 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 \(https://mn.gov/covid19/data/covid-dashboard/index.jsp\)](https://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 \(https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map\)](https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map)
 - [CDC: COVID Data Tracker \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html)

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.
 - For more information, see [Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf).
 - 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 \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp\)](https://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 \(https://content.themat.com/covid-19/USAW-Return-to-the-Mat-Guidelines.pdf\)](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 \(https://miama.org/members/covid-19-reference-page/\)](https://miama.org/members/covid-19-reference-page/)

- ✓ [Minnesota Hockey \(www.minnesotahockey.org\)](http://www.minnesotahockey.org)
- ✓ [US Lacrosse: Return-to-Play Recommendations for Lacrosse \(www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/return-to-play-final-1.pdf\)](http://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/return-to-play-final-1.pdf)
- ✓ [USATF Coronavirus 2019 \(COVID-19\) Information Page \(www.usatf.org/covid19\)](http://www.usatf.org/covid19)
- ✓ [USA Volleyball Return to Play Guidelines \(www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/features/-/media/A455B89BE0094BDC96EFEC89BFD324D6.ashx\)](http://www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/features/-/media/A455B89BE0094BDC96EFEC89BFD324D6.ashx)
- ✓ [USA Ultimate Return to Play Guidance \(https://usultimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ReturnToPlayGuidance-June2020.pdf\)](https://usultimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ReturnToPlayGuidance-June2020.pdf)
- ✓ [USA Swimming Coronavirus Resources \(www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/coronavirus\)](http://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/coronavirus)
- ✓ [USTA Tennis Playing Tennis Safely \(www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/national/usta-statement-on-safety-of-playing-tennis-during-the-covid-19-v.html\)](http://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 \(www.ussoccer.com/playon/guides/phase-1-grassroots\)](http://www.ussoccer.com/playon/guides/phase-1-grassroots)
- ✓ [USGA Guidance in Applying Golf's Rules and Posting Scores \(www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rulesarticles/covid-19-rules-and-handicapping-faqs.html\)](http://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.