

Community Sports

General Guidance and Requirements for Community Sports Activities (Updated 11/6/20)

Community sports activities for both youth and adults require careful consideration during the COVID-19 pandemic. Health experts recognize the role of outdoor recreation and exercise in promoting mental health, physical fitness, and cognitive development. Reducing exposure to respiratory droplets through physical distancing and face coverings, as well as increased hand hygiene and avoidance of shared and common touch items, remain the primary tools to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Because of the increased possibility of infection through droplets, vigorous exercise in closely confined spaces should be avoided.

At this time, outdoor training with physical distancing may be prudent. These requirements and guidelines focus on maximizing opportunities for physical distancing and keeping small, stable cohorts of participants whenever possible. This guidance includes best practices recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Aspen Institute, and guidance documents from several states.

Students attending school and students participating in any group sporting activity (club, community or school-based) are mixing the cohorts that schools are attempting to use for their public health protection measures. This increased mixing creates a high risk for potential spread both within schools and between schools and therefore this guidance must be diligently followed.

Sports activities present multiple challenges in the effective use of primary prevention strategies. These challenges include:

- Risk of exposure to the virus due to close physical proximity during sports activities through participation in the sport activity itself, group seating, and group travel.
- Increased risk during intense and sustained physical contact whether purposeful or accidental.
- Increased projection of respiratory particles during cardiovascular activities, yelling or shouting as part of play, or common sneezing or coughing. This increase in projection of droplets can be up to 14 feet, well exceeding the typical physical distancing recommendation of 6 feet between individuals.
- While face coverings may not be compatible with some activities, experience in different states with fall sports shows that they can be safely and effectively worn during competition. As such, face coverings are required for all individuals at practices and competitions at all times, including players, coaches, staff, and officials while engaging in practice or competition.

Note: This document applies to community-based sports clubs, teams, and events. This includes organized sports with limited private as well as public participants (Updated 11/13/20). It also applies to venues that host community sports such as ice rinks and municipal buildings. (Updated 12/4/20) It does not apply to professional and collegiate sports, which are governed by professional and intercollegiate association guidelines as well as applicable Executive Orders (e.g. large gathering limits). (Updated 10/22/20)

Framework for Assessing the Risk of Sports and Recreation Activities (Updated 11/6/20)

The risk of participating in sports and recreation activities is determined by a combination of (1) risk of transmission of COVID-19 inherent to each sport in terms of duration and proximity of contact (e.g. golf versus rugby) and (2) risk associated with the type of play (e.g. skill-building drills, within-team competition, competition between teams from different geographic areas).

Type of Play

The following types of play are defined by level from least to greatest risk. Across all types of play, keep players together in small, stable groups (i.e. cohorts) with dedicated coaches or staff. Ideally, these cohorts should include fewer than 30 individuals. Individual training alone or with household members is permitted at all times. (Updated 11/13/20)

- Level 1: Performing skill-building drills or conditioning with physical distancing, no close contact, and in limited numbers when possible (Updated 12/4/20)
- Level 2: Team-based practice with physically distanced group activities
- Level 3: Within-team competition (e.g. intra-squad scrimmages) or virtual competition with other teams. This level of play involves interaction within one cohort of participants. (Updated 11/13/20)
- Level 4: In-person competition between teams from the same geographic area (e.g. the same county and in some cases adjacent counties). This level of play involves interaction between two cohorts of participants. (Updated 11/13/20)
- Level 5: In-person competition between teams from different geographic areas within Maine (Updated 11/13/20)
- Level 6: In-person competition between teams from different states (Updated 11/13/20)

Note: Individuals traveling or returning to Maine must follow the executive order on travel and rules explained in the [Keep Maine Healthy](#) plan. This includes a requirement that all out-of-state travelers coming into Maine, as well as Maine residents returning to Maine, complete a 10-day quarantine upon arrival or have a negative COVID-19 PCR test no longer than 72 hours of arrival with quarantine while waiting for the result (unless that travel is to or from an exempted state). Check the [website of the Maine Centers for Disease Control](#) for updated information on exemptions to this requirement. Please note that competition between teams from different states is not recommended at this time.

Type of play allowed, based on risk level of sport or activity

At this time, sports are restricted to the types of play presented in the table below based on the level of risk associated with the sport or activity. During all activities, the public health measures in this guidance must be followed (e.g., hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting, face coverings, etc.) These requirements will be updated as conditions change and they will be reviewed on or about January 1, 2021

(Updated 1/21/21)

Risk level characteristics	Examples	Levels of Play Allowed
Lower Risk		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports and activities that can be done with physical distancing and no physical contact Sports and activities that can be done individually 	<p><i>Examples:</i> Batting cages, singles or doubles tennis, singles pickleball, individual swimming, catch, disc golf, golf, individual biking, surfing, horseback riding, crew/sailing, fishing, hunting, motor sports, gymnastics, weightlifting, single sculling, no contact martial arts (Updated 11/13/20), curling (Updated 11/13/20), individual figure skating (Updated 11/13/20), individual speed skating (Updated 11/13/20), throwing events (javelin, shot put, discus, hammer), jumping events (high jump, pole vault, long jump, triple jump), skiing, cross country events where physical distance can be maintained</p>	Levels 1-5
Moderate Risk		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports and activities that involve intermittent close proximity or limited, incidental contact, but with protective equipment or mitigating measures in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants (e.g., wearing masks, modifying play to maintain 6 feet of physical distance, cleaning and disinfecting) 	<p><i>Examples:</i> Baseball, softball, team swimming, fencing, soccer, basketball, lacrosse, ice hockey, competitive and sideline cheer, contact martial arts (Updated 11/13/20), ultimate frisbee, running events where physical distance cannot be maintained, field hockey, pair figure skating, team speed skating (Updated 11/13/20), volleyball, 7 vs. 7 flag (touch) football, doubles pickleball</p>	<p>Level 1 starting December 7</p> <p>Levels 2-3 starting January 4</p> <p>Level 4 starting January 11, 2021</p>
Higher Risk		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports and activities that involve sustained close contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants 	<p><i>Examples:</i> Football, wrestling, rugby, boxing</p>	<p>Level 1 starting December 7</p> <p>Level 2 starting January 4 (Updated 12/4/20)</p>

Outdoor Level 1-4 activity for Moderate Risk sports can wrap up this weekend, ending by November 9, subject to the new face covering guidance. (Updated 11/7/2020)

High-Risk Populations

1. Vulnerable or high-risk populations require special consideration for sporting activities.
2. Individuals should discuss the risk of COVID-19 with their primary care provider to determine if sports activities are a safe option for them or their child, with consideration for individuals at higher risk with whom they or a member of their household group may be living or interacting with. (Updated 9/1/20)
3. The following populations are at higher risk. Higher risk should be considered in regard to participation in sporting activities as a player or a coach (and in some settings, as a spectator):
 1. People 65 or older
 2. People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
 3. People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled including:
 1. People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 2. People who have serious heart conditions
 3. People who are immunocompromised: Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
 4. People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 5. People with diabetes
 6. People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 7. People with liver disease
4. Consider offering options for individuals at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as virtual coaching and in-home drills that limit their exposure risk.

General Requirements

1. Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the [Governor's Executive Order](#) on gathering size limits. (Updated 11/6/20)
 1. Players, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators count toward the gathering limit. (Updated 9/10/20)
 2. If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the six-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
2. Require individuals to wear a face covering, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor. (Updated 11/6/20)
 1. Face coverings are required for all individuals during practice and competition.
 2. Unless the governing body for your sport has a specific recommendation regarding plastic face shields, do not wear them in place of a face covering given potential safety risks.
 3. Face coverings must be worn by coaches, staff, officials, and spectators.
 4. To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn in place of a whistle.
3. Require individuals to maintain 6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.
 1. Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators.
 2. Space players at least 6 feet apart whenever possible (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game).

3. Spectators must maintain 6 feet of physical distance between themselves and other spectators as well as players.
4. Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.

Communicating COVID-19 Policies

1. Inform participants and spectators of your COVID-19 policies and procedures in advance, if possible, via website, newsletters, social media channels, etc.
 1. Coaches are encouraged to send a welcome email or call players and/or parents to inform them about actions that the program will take to protect players. During these calls, coaches should remind them to stay home if they are sick or have been around someone who is sick.
2. Place signage at entrances and throughout the venue alerting individuals to required gathering limits, physical distancing requirements, face covering policies, symptoms of COVID-19, and other health and hygiene reminders. The federal CDC has developed free, printable posters on these topics (see: [Print Resources](#); For communications resources specific to sporting activities see: [Considerations for Youth Sports](#)).
3. It is strongly recommended that program organizers and coaches remind players, spectators, and staff that if they are ill (e.g. have a fever or cough) they should not visit, train, or play. Signage reminding individuals of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 is highly recommended.
4. Consider using announcements and/or recorded messages to communicate COVID-19 policies to individuals during their time at the venue, if applicable.

Operational Requirements

1. Risk of virus transmission decreases in outside environments. Indoor sports activities significantly increase exposure to respiratory droplets in the shared air space. Prioritize outdoor, as opposed to indoor, practice and play as much as possible. Vigorous exercise amongst team members from different households in closely confined spaces should be avoided, even if masked and physically distanced.
2. Provide training to coaches, officials, and staff on:
 1. hand hygiene
 2. physical distancing guidelines and expectations
 3. monitoring personal health
 4. proper wear, removal, and disposal of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 5. laundering of face coverings and uniforms: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, How to Disinfect: Laundry \(CDC\)](#)
 6. cleaning protocols, including how to safely and effectively use cleaning supplies: [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#) (CDC)
3. Conduct training virtually or ensure that physical distancing is maintained during training.
4. Youth activities require adult supervision to ensure careful attention to mitigation strategies.
5. Coaches, volunteers, and athletes must stay home if they are feeling ill or have any symptoms of COVID-19. Organizers/coaches should ask all staff and players (or guardians of players, if appropriate) to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to practice or competition using either of the following approaches:
 1. Use an electronic or app-based self-screening form, such as the Coronavirus Self-Checker available on the [federal CDC's homepage](#).
 2. Self-screen using the following questions:
 1. Do you feel ill or have you been caring for someone who is ill?

2. In the past two weeks, have you been exposed to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19?
6. Promote frequent handwashing or hand sanitizing with all participants engaged in sports activities. If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizers with a minimum of 60% alcohol content. Handwashing and/or sanitizing should occur before and after the sport activities, and more often if the activity involves the use of shared objects.
 1. Providing a method to rinse hands before applying hand sanitizer is recommended for situations where participants may become dirty or dusty.
 2. Encourage visitors to be prepared to bring their own hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for use in facilities where soap and water are not readily available.
7. Educate players about covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their elbow. Discourage spitting.
8. For contact tracing purposes, to the extent practicable, organizers should maintain a record including contact information for athletes and coaches who have direct prolonged interaction.
 1. Based on current knowledge, a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated. Close contacts should stay home, maintain physical distancing, and self-monitor until 14 days from the last date of exposure.
9. Encourage players to wait in their cars until just before the beginning of a practice, warm-up, or game, instead of forming a group.
10. If practice or competition facilities must be shared, consider increasing the amount of time between practices and competitions to allow for one group to leave before another group enters the facility/venue. This will minimize interaction between individuals at points of ingress and egress and allow time for cleaning and disinfecting.
11. Prohibit activities and events such as off-site competitions or excursions (e.g., watching a professional team compete). (9/10/20)
12. Limit the number of players sitting in confined player seating areas (e.g., dugouts). Ensure 6 feet of physical distance by allowing players to spread out into spectator areas if more space is available.
13. Provide physical guides, such as signs and tape on floors or playing fields, to make sure that coaches and players remain at least 6 feet apart.

Facilities

1. Indoor sports activities significantly increase exposure to respiratory droplets in the shared air space. If indoor facilities are used, take steps to improve ventilation in the building.
 2. Increase the percentage of outdoor air (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100% (first verify compatibility with HVAC system capabilities for both temperature and humidity control as well as compatibility with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations).
 3. Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.
 4. Disable demand-control ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
 5. Consider using natural ventilation (i.e., opening windows if possible and safe to do so) to increase outdoor air dilution of indoor air when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
2. Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of disease. Further guidance is available from the CDC (see: [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation](#)).
3. Consider restricting the use of water fountains to water bottle refill only with instruction for individuals to wash or sanitize hands after use.

4. Require any organizations that share or use the sports facilities to follow the considerations in this guidance.

Cleaning and Disinfection

1. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on the field, court, or play surface at least daily, or between uses as much as possible. Use of shared objects and equipment (e.g., balls, bats, gymnastics equipment) should be limited and objects should be cleaned between uses if possible.
2. Identify a staff member or volunteer to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of objects and equipment, particularly for any shared equipment or frequently touched surfaces.
3. Cleaning products must not be used near children, and staff must ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes. (Updated 11/6/20)
4. Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. [Wash hands after removing gloves.](#)
5. Refer to the following documents for guidance on general cleaning and disinfection:
 1. [COVID-19 Prevention Checklist General Guidance](#) (State of Maine)
 2. [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) (CDC)
 3. [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#) (CDC)

Shared Objects

1. Participants should bring and use their own equipment when possible, or have equipment designated and labeled for individual use by the organization.
2. Discourage sharing of items, especially those that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect. Do not let players share towels, clothing (e.g. uniforms, pinnies), or other items they use to wipe their faces or hands.
3. Make sure there are adequate supplies of shared items to minimize sharing of equipment to the extent possible (e.g., protective gear, balls, bats, water bottles); otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of players at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
4. Keep each player's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, bags, or areas.
5. If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils.
6. Water bottles should be labeled to avoid cross-contamination.

Cohorting Players and Coaches

1. Keep players together in small, stable groups with dedicated coaches or staff, and make sure that each group of players and coach avoid mixing with other groups as much as possible.
2. Teams might consider having the same group of players stay with the same coach or having the same group of players rotate among coaches.
3. Consider staging within-team scrimmages instead of playing games with other teams to minimize exposure among players and teams.

Transportation

1. Transportation to and from sports activities require attention because of increased risk of close proximity and poor ventilation.
2. Limit the use of carpools or van pools. When riding in a vehicle to a sports event, encourage players to ride with persons living in their same household. Carpooling with individuals from different households is not recommended.
3. If carpooling with individuals outside one's household group is necessary, increase ventilation in the vehicle, and all riders must wear a facial covering, and use hand sanitizer.
4. If buses are used, spread individuals out to the extent possible, increase the airflow with open windows if weather permits, require use of face coverings, and provide hand sanitizer for use when entering and exiting the bus.

COVID-19 Prevention Form

In order to open, businesses must commit to complying with requirements of these checklists by [filling out this short online form](#). Please note that religious organizations and licensed health care providers are not required to use this form.

If you have questions, please contact us at business.answers@maine.gov or [1-800-872-3838](tel:1-800-872-3838).

Large Gatherings

COVID19 Prevention Checklist Industry Guidance

Last updated: *Oct 6, 2020*

The State of Maine has adopted a staged approach, supported by science, public health expertise, and industry collaboration, to allow Maine businesses to safely open when the time is right. The plan is available at www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine.

This is one of many industry guidance documents the State is preparing for businesses so they can be prepared to meet health guidelines and reopen safely. Please make sure you pair this document with the general guidance document that applies to all industries, which is available on maine.gov/decd.

Please note: This document may be updated as additional information and resources become available.

Large Gatherings

Group social gatherings and large community events, **such as spectator events**, weddings, and other celebrations, bring people from multiple communities into close contact with each other and have the potential to increase COVID-19 transmission. The primary tools to control the spread of COVID-19 are to reduce exposure to respiratory droplets through physical distancing and face coverings, increase hand hygiene, and avoid shared items and common touch surfaces. The goals of this guidance are **to protect people** attending and working at the event and the local community from COVID-19 infection; and **to reduce community transmission** and introductions of COVID-19 into new communities.

Specific event features to consider when planning:

- crowd density
- nature of contact between participants (for example, a concert or religious event, indoors or outdoors, the layout of the venue)
- whether the event will be attended by registered or non-registered participants
- profession of the participants and their possible previous exposure
- number of participants coming from states or areas more heavily impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak within 14 days before the event
- age or health of participants
- type or purpose of event
- duration and mode of travel of participants
- increased duration of the event may increase risk of transmission

Projection of respiratory particles is increased during singing, yelling, dancing, sports, and games. Exposure to respiratory droplets with such activities increases the transmission risk of COVID-19 to attendees particularly in crowded areas and indoor settings.

If the event includes prolonged interaction for invited or registered participants, event organizers should maintain a record of participants including contact information for contact tracing purposes to the extent practicable. Based on current knowledge, a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated. Close contacts of an infected person should stay home, maintain social distancing, and self-monitor until 14 days from the last date of exposure.

Maintain Physical Distancing At All Times

Organizers, staff, volunteers, and attendees are encouraged to follow physical distancing guidelines including maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet between individuals and a distance of 6 feet between household groups.

- The number of individuals that can gather in a shared space must not exceed the limit established by the [Governor's Executive Order](#), currently set at 50 people indoors and **100 people outdoors**.
 - Further breaking a gathering up into smaller groups is encouraged to reduce potential exposure.
 - If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the six-foot distancing requirement, occupancy must be limited to allow for such compliance.
- Face coverings should be worn in public settings when physical distancing is not possible.
- Consider designating areas of outdoor venues that provide visual cues to appropriately space seating, lawn chairs, blankets, etc. so that physical distancing may be practiced.
- Encourage visitors to bring their own food and supplies when possible.
- Food vendors should wear face coverings, practice hand hygiene, use barriers or tables to maintain physical distancing to the extent possible, and ensure that patrons do not crowd sales area.
 - If food is provided, any vendors or catering services should refer to the [food and drink service](#) checklist.
- Signage can help attendees follow one-way traffic patterns to avoid crowding in paths or hallways.
- Consider designated entrances and exits to minimize face-to-face exposure of patrons entering and exiting the establishment.

- Consider displaying posters and signs around the venue to remind patrons to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These messages may include information about:
 - Staying home if you are sick or do not feel well, and what to do if you're sick or feel ill
 - Maintaining at least six feet between individuals
 - Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash
 - Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Spectator Events (Added 7/24/20)

For outdoor spectator events (seated or standing), such as professional sports or concerts, venues may divide seating into separate areas with up to 50 people each if: (Updated 8/5/20)

- There is at least 14 feet of separation between sections, with physical barriers to prevent intermingling between sections
- There is enough space for 6 feet of separation between household groups within each section
 - Household groups are considered up to 10 people
- Each section has access to separate restrooms, concessions, or other offered services, to prevent intermingling
- Sections have independent entrances and exits, or entrance and exit times are staggered so there is no overlap between sections
- There are no more than 4 separate seating sections

Other general considerations

- Promoting appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette at large gatherings requires providing informational materials that reach a range of age groups and varying reading and educational levels. In addition, soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers and tissues should be easily accessible in all common areas.
- Outside events are preferable to inside events in order to reduce the risk of exposure to respiratory droplets from attendees. Increase airflow through open windows and doors for indoor events to the extent practicable.
- For indoor events, understand the square footage of the event space and limit the number of people in the space to ensure physical distancing can be maintained. (Updated 10/6/20)
- Crowding should be minimized where possible, and event organizers should consider using distancing measures to reduce close contact among people during the gathering (for example, by increasing the frequency of transport, staggering arrivals and departures, and minimizing congregation at sanitary stations and food and water distribution areas.
- If the event involves transactions:
 - Promote “contactless” payment options (e.g., online payments, pay by phone options, RFID credit and debit cards, Apple Pay, Google Pay, etc.)
 - Where possible, card readers should be placed in front of physical barriers so visitors can swipe their own cards and enter their codes.
 - Wash hands or use alcohol based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) after handling credit, debit, or identification cards, or cash.

General Cleaning and Disinfection

Refer to the following documents for guidance on general cleaning and disinfection:

- [COVID-19 Prevention Checklist General Guidance](#) (State of Maine)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) (CDC)
- [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#) (CDC)

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