

Phase Two Guidance Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Playing Sports

During Phase Two, the public, community organizations, and businesses are required to adopt new behaviors and rigorous safeguards to reduce risk for all. This guidance is intended for participants, coaches, and organizers of adult and youth community sports. It is not meant to address professional and collegiate sports. **The following measures must be implemented to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission amongst participants, staff and the community.** For additional information, visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

Please note that any individual experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or recently exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, must not participate in organized sports activities due to the risk of exposing others. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or otherwise feeling unwell.

General Considerations for Playing Sports:

- **Prioritize outdoor practice and sporting events as much as possible.** Outdoor activities are preferred over indoor; however, it is important to understand that interacting with more people in any setting raises your risk, so it is important to follow social distancing and cloth face covering recommendations.
- Field permits may be issued by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) field, for a maximum of 250 persons.
- Recreation centers, bowling alleys, climbing gyms, squash or racquet clubs, skating rinks, and indoor skateboard parks must have no more persons inside the facility (including staff) than 25% of its rated capacity on its Certificate of Occupancy and no more than 250 persons at any one time, **whichever is fewer**, including staff. Private rooms within the facility are allowed a maximum of 10 persons per room.
- Some sports require more physical proximity and contact between players than others. Low risk, low-contact sports activities that allow for social distancing are safer than sports activities involving close body contact.
- Practices, training, and games with no spectators are permitted for low-contact sports. Only non-contact training is permitted for moderate and high contact sports.
- Indoor group exercise classes at gyms and recreation centers are permitted with up to ten (10) persons, and outdoor exercise classes are limited to fifty (50) persons.

Risk Hierarchy for Sports Activities:

- Risk by activity
 - **Low-Risk Activity:** Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with members of the same household.
 - **Moderate-Risk Activity:** Team-based practice.
 - **Moderately High-Risk Activity:** Within team competition.
 - **High-Risk Activity:** Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area (e.g., city or county)
 - **Very High-Risk Activity:** Full competition between teams from different geographic areas (e.g., outside county or state)
- Risk by sport:
 - **Low-contact/lower risk sports:** Archery, Badminton, Baseball, Bowling, Cycling (outdoor), Fencing, Golf, Gymnastics, Horseback Riding, Ice Skating, Skiing, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, and Track & Field.

- **Moderate-contact/moderate risk sports:** Flag Football, Racquetball, Volleyball, and Water Polo.
- **High-contact/high-risk sports:** Basketball, Boxing, Football, Hockey, Lacrosse, Martial Arts, Rugby, Soccer, and Wrestling.

Participants and Staff Must Practice Everyday Prevention Measures:

- **Stay at home if you feel sick** or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- **Practice social distancing.** Keep 6 feet of distance or more between you and other people who are not in your household.
- **Wear a cloth face covering or face mask.** Masks protect the wearer and protect other people.
 - Face masks must be worn during any sports activity involving more than one person, such as a game or practice.
 - Masks are most effective if they fit snugly to the face and have 2-3 layers of tightly woven fabric.
 - All individuals must wear a face covering while entering, exiting or within the facility, including while exercising if able to do so safely.
 - For more information about mask wearing see *Masks and Cloth Face Coverings for the General Public* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
- Avoid physical contact with others not from your household (e.g., don't shake hands, give high-fives, fist-bumps or hugs). Wave and verbally greet others instead.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
 - Sneeze into your elbow, even when you are wearing a cloth face covering or mask.
 - Dispose of tissues properly in a trash receptacle.
- Avoid spitting.
- Limit engaging in sports activities to small groups and with people inside of the National Capitol Region.
- Perform frequent hand hygiene (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water not available).
 - Key times to perform hand hygiene include
 - Before and after you participate in the sports activity,
 - Before eating food,
 - After using the toilet,
 - Before and after putting on, touching, adjusting or removing cloth face coverings/masks,
 - Before and after using any equipment,
 - After touching anyone else's belongings,
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and
 - After handling trash bags.

Considerations for Organizers and Coaches to Promote Participant Safety

- Communicate clearly in advance with participants and parents (if applicable) about COVID-19 related safety protocols and procedures. Provide this information in a welcome letter or email.
- Ensure all personnel are trained on enhanced safety protocols.
- Signage must be posted at entrance(s) to facility stating that nobody with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 is permitted to enter and that individuals must wear a mask or face covering.
- Organizers must provide adequate supplies to allow for frequent hand hygiene (e.g., soap and water and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol) for use by staff, participants and any visitors. Hand sanitizer must be easily accessible. Consider creating sanitization stations in multiple areas of the facility.
- Display signage throughout the facility reinforcing everyday protective measures including use of face coverings, social distancing and hand hygiene.

- Have extra masks/cloth face coverings for participants who arrive without one or whose masks become soiled, wet or damaged during the activity.
- Traveling for competition outside of the National Capitol Region is prohibited.
- Bands, cheer squads, and other entertainment groups at sporting events are not permitted.
- Shift focus during practices from competitive games to individual skill-building activities.
- Coaches should consider utilizing a public address (PA) system for voice amplification to minimize shouting. PA system can also be useful for making announcements to reinforce everyday prevention measures.
- Coaches must model good health practices like mask wearing, social distancing and hand hygiene. Reinforce prevention messages frequently.

Group Sports Activity Requirements:

- Group sports activities are limited to a maximum of 50 participants if held outdoors, and 10 participants if held indoors.
- Practice attendance must be limited such that there is at least 10 feet between each person, stationary apparatus, or other piece of equipment being used in all directions.
- Participants must be divided into cohorts to remain together throughout the season, rather than mixing or switching groups, with coaches/staff dedicated to a specific cohort.
- Non-essential visitors and spectators are not allowed at practices or games. If essential visitors are present (such as guardians), the visitors' areas must facilitate 6 feet of social areas between groups. Face coverings must be required.
- Only allow players from the National Capitol Region to participate in the sports practice.

Avoid Close Contact and Reduce Touchpoints

- Have different entry and exit points to the facility, where possible.
- Stagger drop-off/pickup times between cohorts to avoid crowding and congestion.
- Discourage car-pooling with members of different households.
- Minimize face-to-face passing by implementing one-way flows (e.g., separate entrances and exits to the venue, one-way directionality on field and sidelines).
- Provide physical guides to ensure that participants remain at least **10 feet** apart during practices or games (if possible). For example, markings on the ground, colored tape, or signs.
- Reinforce social distancing on playing fields, on sidelines, in bleachers, in dugout or bench areas, bathrooms, locker rooms (if open), and anywhere players gather.
- Younger children may have more difficulties complying with modified procedures. Youth sports programs may consider asking parents to monitor their children and make sure that they follow social distancing and take other protective actions (e.g., younger children could sit with parents or caregivers, instead of in a dugout or group area).
- Modify gameplay to minimize physical contact between players.
- Limit sharing of equipment and gear.
- Participants must bring their own supplies as much as possible for their own use (e.g., drinking water, towels, gloves, balls, helmets, protective gear). Participants' belongings must be kept separated in individually labeled containers or bags.
- Make sure there are adequate supplies of equipment available for use to minimize need to share.
- Do not use equipment and other items that cannot be easily cleaned between uses.
- Do not allow sharing of towels.
- Do not allow sharing of food or drink containers (e.g., coolers).
- Limit player use of confined spaces such as dugouts.
- Prohibit congregating (before and after game, on sidelines, in bleachers, in parking lot, etc.).

Screen and Monitor for Symptoms:

- Organizers must perform screening (e.g., symptom questionnaires) of players and staff daily, prior to entering a facility or accessing premises. Screening may be performed over the phone or in person.
 - For Screening Tool Guidance, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
- Organizers must inform coaches, staff, participants and families of youth participants of the screening procedures.
- Anyone who reports symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19 must not participate in any activities or be allowed on the premises.
- Anyone who develops any symptoms of COVID-19 during practice sessions or games, must immediately isolate, notify their coach/organizer, and leave the premises.
- Organizers or coaches must maintain a daily record of staff and participants, including parents/caregivers, who have participated in the last 30 days to assist with contact tracing. Information collected must include name, date and time of visit, phone number, and email (if available). This information must be provided within 24 hours if requested by DC Health if a case of COVID-19 occurs at your establishment, in order to assist with contact tracing.

Clean and Disinfect:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and common areas like bathrooms at least daily and between uses as much as possible.
- Clean and disinfect any shared items between individual uses (e.g., balls, bats, gymnastics equipment).
- For more information about cleaning and disinfection in community facilities and the disinfectants that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19, see the CDC website: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html.

Building Considerations

- Consider making the following improvements to improve building ventilation (cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html):
 - Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows.
 - Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms).
 - Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
 - Decrease occupancy of spaces with poor ventilation.
 - Improve central air filtration to the highest level compatible with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit bypass.
 - Check filters to ensure they are within service life and appropriately installed.
 - Turn off any demand-controlled ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on occupancy or temperature during occupied hours.
 - Consider portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help enhance air cleaning (especially in higher risk areas).
 - Keep systems running longer hours, 24/7 if possible, to enhance air exchanges in the building space.
 - Consult with a specialist to see what works for your building.
- If a building was closed for an extended period of time, remember to check HVAC systems and ensure all water systems are safe to use. For more information, see CDC's Guidance for Reopening Buildings after Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html.

Organizations Must Establish a Plan for COVID-19 Exposure:

- Establish a plan in the event that a participant or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Identify a point of contact at the organization that a participant (or parent/guardian, if applicable) or staff member can notify if they test positive for COVID-19 and choose to disclose this information.
- If an employee chooses to report to the organization that they are positive for COVID-19, the establishment must have a notification process to share the following with staff:
 - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
 - Referral to the Guidance for Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19, available at coronavirus.dc.gov.
 - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/testing.
- Refer to the guidance “*First Steps for Non-Healthcare Employers when Employees Test Positive for COVID-19*” at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
 - A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, during that person’s infectious period.
 - The infectious period starts two days before symptom onset and typically ends 10 days after symptom onset (or test date for people who do not have symptoms).
- Establishments must notify DC Health when:
 - An employee who interacts frequently with participants notifies the organization they **tested positive for COVID-19** (not before results come back)
OR
 - if a participant notifies the organization they tested positive for COVID-19
AND
 - the person was in the building or participated in sports activities **during their infectious period**.
- Notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements:
 - Submit a **Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form**.
- An investigator from DC Health should follow-up within 48 hours to all appropriately submitted notifications. Please note this time may increase as cases of COVID-19 increase in the District.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.