



# COVID-19 GUIDANCE

## Organized sports

<https://covid19.colorado.gov/organized-sports>

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### IF THERE IS A CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 AMONG ATHLETES, COACHES OR SPECTATORS

- The facility must notify and cooperate with their local public health agency on next steps.
- Local public health agency contacts can be found [here](#).
- Outbreak guidance for non-healthcare facilities can be found [here](#).

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has approved the Colorado High School Activities Association's (CHSAA) request for a winter sports variance. Find more information on Season B sports guidelines on [CHSAA's website](#) and [CDPHE's FAQ](#). Sports leagues may [apply to engage in organized sports by filling out this form](#). Completed forms should be emailed to [mara.brosy-wiwchar@state.co.us](mailto:mara.brosy-wiwchar@state.co.us). A return to in-person or hybrid learning should precede the commencement of extracurriculars like athletics. View the [list of approved sports leagues](#).

#### [Wrestling data report](#)

Sporting facilities and gyms may host sports up to the appropriate dial capacity below, unless they are hosting a league which is contracted and approved for the CHSAA variance on a CHSAA Season B sport, in which case the facility may host the league to the capacity of the variance. In such situations, the approved league is responsible for compliance with the specifications of their contract such as symptom screening, face covering enforcement, and any requirements specific to the sport.

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Organized youth recreational and adult amateur leagues, club sports, interscholastic, and other organization-sponsored athletics must adhere to state and local orders and restrictions, and operate with restrictions and strong precautionary measures, as specified in the guidance below.

The transmission control strategies for COVID-19 that follow can be applied to other settings where physical activity and forced exhalation occur, and parks and recreation staff (or their equivalent) and state sporting governing bodies are encouraged to enforce these guidelines.

Sports settings such as professional or collegiate entities should adhere to the specific guidelines for their governing body and specifications in public health orders.

In the event of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 outbreak in a sports team, club, or school, public health may require additional restrictions in order to reduce the spread of disease.

### **Guidance rationale**

Participating in sports with and against other individuals, in any capacity during this pandemic, holds an inherent risk of infection for participants and risk of transmission to other individuals, such as their household members. Stakeholders in organized sports must consider the risks and benefits of participation in their plans for resuming organized sports. Adherence to public health guidelines is essential to minimize risk and disruptions to athletic activities. Organizers must also be familiar with recommendations from their national, state, and local governing bodies regarding illness (including, but not limited to, COVID-19).

The risk of COVID-19 spread can vary depending on the:

- Number of people with whom a player or coach interacts
- Type of physical interaction
- Length of time of the close interaction
- Sharing of equipment across multiple players
- Environment of play (e.g. indoors vs. outdoors)
- Layers of protection that are in place, including:
  - Masks.
  - Physical distancing.
  - Hand hygiene.
  - cleaning and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces, etc.

Physical exertion, including sports, involves forced exhalation, which may increase the risk of transmission, similar to singing or playing certain musical instruments. Therefore, **it's recommended that all participants and spectators keep at least 6 feet of physical distance from people outside their immediate households.**

Infection control measures applied collectively, such as screening, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and masks where appropriate are especially important given that many sports involve close contact of individuals at various times during training or competition.

Athletes who develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 will need to [isolate](#), and their close contacts will need to [quarantine](#); public health will determine who is a close contact. Athletes, teams, and organizations should hold each other accountable to follow guidelines and ensure compliance with infection control measures during and beyond play. Behaviors and decisions of participants outside the sports setting may impact the ability of the entire team to participate in training or competition if a single athlete or coach becomes exposed or ill.

Teams that desire to practice and compete without disruption are strongly advised to take these recommendations seriously.

Athletic scouts and recruiters are encouraged to rethink how they evaluate athletes so as not to encourage unsafe practices and competition and unintentionally put athletes and programs at risk.

Competition creates motivation for athletes. Coaches and athletic organizations are encouraged to instill discipline in athletes and find new ways to motivate athletes during times when competition is too risky. Athletes can be encouraged to practice discipline, set goals, and continue to engage in their sport in different ways to foster motivation while aligning with safe practices.

## **Guidance for all phases**

### **Gathering size and cohorts**

- Per the state public health order:
  - Level Green - Protect Our Neighbors: No state regulations, but locals may choose local restrictions.
  - Level Blue - Caution: Groups of up to 50 players, excluding coaches or referees/umpires (or other staff required for player safety) at a time per court or per field.
  - Level Yellow - Concern: Groups of up to 25 players, excluding coaches or referees/umpires (or other staff required for player safety) at a time per court or per field.

- Level Orange - High Risk: Groups of up to 10 players, excluding coaches or referees/umpires (or other staff required for player safety) at a time per court or per field, maintaining 6 feet of physical distance between non-household contacts.
- Level Red - Severe Risk: Groups of up to 10 players, excluding coaches or referees/umpires (or other staff required for player safety) at a time per court or per field, maintaining 6 feet of physical distance between non-household contacts. Only outdoor recreational sports are permitted at this level.
- Level Purple - Extreme Risk: Groups of up to 10 players, excluding coaches or referees/umpires (or other staff required for player safety) at a time per court or per field, maintaining 6 feet of physical distance between non-household contacts. Only outdoor recreational sports are permitted at this level.
- Cohorting is the practice of maintaining a stable group with fixed membership. Cohorting facilitates disease control by minimizing the number of new contacts each individual interacts with and limits the scope of dismissal and closure activities in the event of a detected case of COVID-19 or other disease.
- Cohort athletes on teams, and to the greatest extent possible, maintain the integrity of the cohorts the kids may already be participating in at school. Ensure appropriate communication between teams and other institutions where an athlete may be in another cohort, such as their school.

### **Considering risk of activities**

- All athletes and participants should be aware that different sports pose different risks.
- In general, outdoor sports present less risk than indoor sports. As much as possible, indoor airflow should be encouraged by ventilating spaces and opening windows. Even with these considerations, outdoor sports present less risk.
- Sports in which at least 6 feet or more of space between athletes can be consistently maintained present less risk than sports where participants come in closer contact with each other.
- Highest risk is presented in sports which involve players coming into physical contact with each other.
- Wrestling, for example, is a high risk sport which is often held indoors and includes long direct exposures between competitors.

### **Face coverings**

- All spectators, referees, coaches, and noncompeting individuals, including players, must wear masks at all indoor events.
- Players are required to wear masks even during play, except for the following activities:
  - Aquatics, where a wet mask would be a choking hazard.
  - Wrestling, where a mask could easily be caught or dislodged.
  - Spirit, only during high-intensity maneuvers where the mask might get caught or dislodged.
- It is recommended for players to bring multiple spare masks to replace sweaty masks as needed.
- If a player or participant cannot medically tolerate wearing a mask, the athlete may obtain a medical exemption from a medical professional.

### Collegiate sports

Collegiate sports should follow the guidelines for their governing body and specifications in public health orders. This includes implementing mask-wearing among participants and spectators. In order to continue hosting sports activities and contests, collegiate sports organizations must work with their conference to develop a plan for mitigating the spread of COVID-19, then submit the plan to CDPHE for approval.

Before engaging in collegiate sports, the team should ensure they have taken the following measures:

- Consulted any and all guidelines from the governing bodies of their institution and conference.
- Made a plan to adhere to all local public health orders, including mask-wearing orders.
- Worked with their conference to develop a plan for mitigating spread of COVID-19 and submitted this plan to the local public health agency (LPHA).
- Received written plan approval from the LPHA and CDPHE.

### Facility considerations

- Host practices and play outdoors as much as possible. Outdoor environments are less risky than indoor environments.
- Maximize ventilation and increase circulation of outdoor air, referencing [ASHRAE guidance](#), when it is not feasible to be outside.
- The use of locker rooms is strongly discouraged, and they should only be used when absolutely necessary for player safety. In those limited circumstances, limit or stagger access to accommodate physical distancing, reduce the number of people in the locker room at one time, and maximize ventilation and air

turnover. Per the [statewide mask order](#), masks are required indoors except in limited circumstances.

- Regularly clean and disinfect locker rooms or changing areas if they must be used.
- Assess athletic facilities and determine the need to reorganize equipment, venue entry/exit, venue layout, directional arrows and signage to prevent people from congregating.
- Determine capacity for square footage of usable space. Capacity may be calculated using the [Social Distancing Space Calculator](#).
- Minimize shared equipment and create a plan for cleaning and disinfection for athletic facilities, equipment between uses and cohorts using CDPHE's [cleaning guidance](#).
- Do not allow athletes to share towels, clothing, or other items they use to wipe their faces or hands.
- Stagger training and competition times to allow time for cleaning/disinfection of equipment and facilities and avoid overlapping arrival/departure of teams and cohorts.

## Spectators

- Spectators must be hosted according to the [indoor](#) or [outdoor](#) events guidance, depending on the setting of the game. All teams engaged in play are responsible for ensuring these guidelines are followed by spectators.
  - When considering local dial capacity for indoor or outdoor events, competitors are not included in the count.
- If there are multiple games happening at different sections of the field, spectators must not mingle or mix with each other.
- Limit any nonessential visitors, spectators, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- If an organized sport has spectators, then athletes must follow the requirements for performers under Appendix I of PHO 20-36 Paragraph I.C., specifically:
  - Spectators must be at least 12 feet away from athletes at all times.
  - This applies both indoors and outdoors and may limit the ability of a venue to have spectators at all.
  - Spectators and athletes must not mingle. If possible, spectators and athletes should use separate entrances and exits.
- The sport must be the only activity taking place in the room (indoor) or designated area (outdoor) - no other activities, including cheer or band, should be co-occurring.

## Screening and best prevention practices

- Screening practices
  - Coaches, athletic directors, and medical and administrative staff should familiarize themselves with public health requirements and [athlete welfare considerations](#) and direct play accordingly.
  - Maintain a list of participants for each practice/game.
  - Athletes and spectators must participate in the screening process for symptoms and COVID-19 exposures to ensure they are symptom-free before they are deemed able to attend or play. A person must be delegated to be responsible that screening is performed consistently and according to [public health recommendation](#).
  - Athletes or spectators with suspected or known COVID-19 exposures, such as ill household contacts, must stay at home and adhere to requirements for [quarantine](#).
  - Require documented medical clearance for athletes with a history of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection to ensure each athlete has fully recovered and is medically capable of resuming sports participation.
  - Require public health clearance for athletes with a history of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection to ensure each athlete is no longer infectious. Frequently communicate with all staff and families of athletes about the organization's actions, restrictions due to public health orders, occurrences of COVID-19 within the team, and potentially affected individuals within the sports organization.
  - Encourage athletes and parents/guardians/household members of athletes at [higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19](#) to discuss the risks and benefits of sports participation with their health care provider. Consider alternative timing or method of return to sports participation if necessary.
- Programmatic practices
  - Establish a system of tracking attendance athlete, staff, and spectator participation in practices and games to facilitate contact tracing in the event of illness or exposure to COVID-19.
  - Regularly clean and disinfect all commonly touched surfaces and shared objects ([Additional Guidance](#)).
  - Eliminate shared water stations, towels, uniforms, etc. for athletes, staff, and coaches.

- Prepare to scale back the level of activity following a case or outbreak of COVID-19.
- Educate athletes about COVID-19 and the related protocols and address their fears and questions in an age- and developmentally-appropriate manner.
- Management practices at training and athletic events
  - Athletes, staff, and coaches must maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet when not engaged in active training or competition, including when on the sidelines.
  - All participants, staff, and coaches on the sidelines must be sitting or practicing at least 6 feet apart from each other.
  - Require hand hygiene upon arrival, before hydration breaks, and at regular intervals throughout training and competition.
  - Adhere to the statewide mask order, which requires that masks are worn in indoor settings, except under limited circumstances.
  - Masks are strongly encouraged, although not required, in outdoor settings unless required by local authorities.
  - No spitting (saliva, sunflower seeds, chewing tobacco) or sharing water bottles/team jugs.
- Isolation and quarantine
  - Establish protocols for isolation of symptomatic individuals and for communication of positive cases and/or potential exposure to COVID-19, including assigning a specific staff member to coordinate with local public health officials.
  - Isolate athletes on-site who develop symptoms during training or competition and make arrangements for them to safely leave the venue as soon as possible. Symptomatic athletes must wear a mask (if it is medically safe to do so) and isolate in a designated space at least 6 feet from other individuals while awaiting transportation.
  - Symptomatic athletes and spectators should [isolate](#) and contact a healthcare professional to discuss the need for evaluation and [testing](#). Athletes and spectators who test positive for COVID-19 must notify the sports organization and follow instructions from local public health agencies.

### Suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19

- All organized sports must follow the [case and outbreak guidance for schools](#) if their participants are within grades P-12.
- For adult organized sports, refer symptomatic employees, spectators and athletes to a healthcare professional for evaluation and testing, as well as to

the [CDPHE Symptom Support tool \(Additional Guidance\)](#), and report to local public health agencies.

- Follow protocols for isolation of individuals who become symptomatic during training or competition, and alert youth sports organization or school of symptomatic individuals.
- The sports organization must notify their local public of cases within 24 hours and cooperate with public health investigation. Find [local public health agency contacts online](#). Failure to report may result in suspension of games or even seasons.
- Due to the need for [quarantine](#) of all potentially exposed parties, as determined by public health, all individuals should wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash your hands, avoid crowds, and take other precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 for 14 days from the date of exposure. Group training and competition for those exposed individuals must be cancelled for 14 days from the last date of exposure.. For more information about how long to quarantine, see the [How to quarantine webpage](#). Athletes who develop symptoms after COVID-19 exposure should [isolate](#) and contact a healthcare professional to discuss the need for evaluation and [testing](#).
- Given the potential for prolonged symptom recovery and cardiac complications from COVID-19, athletes with confirmed or presumed COVID-19 infection must coordinate with their health care provider to obtain clearance for return to sports participation. Due to the demands of athletic activity, clearance may be different from timing for return to school or return to work.

### **Tournaments, transportation, and travel**

- For non-interscholastic sports, follow [guidelines for public transportation](#) for transportation between matches. Members of the same household may sit closely together, with 6 feet of distancing between different household groups.
- For competitive sports with participants in the P-12 system, follow [school transportation guidelines](#). Riders over 10 years old must wear face coverings during transit.
- For events that require travel outside the local region, be aware that guidance for travelers may vary depending on what part of Colorado you are visiting. Some Colorado counties may have additional local restrictions which are more stringent than statewide guidance. Consult the [COVID-19 Dial Dashboard](#) for more information about county-specific restrictions. Find [more information regarding travel within Colorado](#).
- Sporting events or tournaments must comply with all protocols in this guidance. Outdoor sporting events or tournaments are encouraged over indoor events.

- It's safer for teams from within Colorado to compete with other teams within Colorado. Playing with teams from other states, especially states with higher rates of transmission, is riskier. Teams that travel to other states must follow restrictions that are in place for those areas.
- Times for games or competitions should be staggered to prevent mingling of separate teams, cohorts, and spectators.
- Concessions should follow [Restaurant Guidance](#), and other facilities should be regularly cleaned, sanitized, and maintained. ([Additional Guidance](#))
- If spectators are present at an outdoor sporting event, adjacent fields of play should be distanced to allow for at least 50 feet of physical distance between each field and their respective spectator sections. All spectators should follow the [outdoor events guidance](#), which means no mingling across groups of spectators.
- Common spaces or other places for gathering (e.g. picnic tables) should be closed.
- Post clear signs notifying participants, spectators, and employees of hygiene and sanitation expectations, including not entering if they or anyone in their household is experiencing any symptoms of illness.

### Sport risk categories based on various factors

- **Low frequency of contact sports:** sports with little inter-athlete contact. Athletes perform these sports at a distance or individually.
  - Examples: running, swimming, diving, weightlifting, skateboarding, skiing, golf.
- **Medium frequency of contact sports:** sports with some inter-athlete contact that allow for physical distancing most of the time or require protective gear. These sports may require shared equipment; provide the opportunity for equipment to be cleaned between participants.
  - Examples: basketball, volleyball, soccer, tennis, softball, baseball, gymnastics, field hockey, ice hockey, bowling.
- **High frequency of contact sports:** sports with more frequent or sustained inter-athlete contact and/or shared equipment among participants.
  - Examples: wrestling, football, rugby, dance, cheer/spirit.
- Additional resources for sport categorization:
  - [National Federation of State High School Associations \(NFHS\) Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities](#)
  - [US Olympic and Paralympic Committee \(USOPC\) Sports Event Planning Considerations Post-COVID-19](#)
  - [Aspen Institute Return to Play COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool](#)

## Recommendations by dial level

Dial level	Recommendations
Level Green: Protect Our Neighbors	<b><u>For all sports:</u></b> Limit scrimmages and competitions to opponents in other Level Green counties.
Level Blue: Cautious	<p><b><u>Low contact:</u></b> Schedule competitions outside of the local community at least two weeks apart to allow for quarantine and isolation requirements while minimizing schedule disruptions.</p> <p><b><u>Medium/high contact:</u></b> Limit full contact/collision activities with other teams outside of the community. Schedule competitions outside of the local community at least two weeks apart to allow for quarantine and isolation requirements while minimizing schedule disruptions.</p>
Level Yellow: Concern	<p><b><u>Low contact:</u></b> Limit competition to opponents within the same local community.</p> <p><b><u>Medium/high contact:</u></b> Limit within-team contact/collision activity to small groups. Make sure athletes understand the risks of higher contact training. Run individual contact drills (for example, tackling pads/sleds during football practice).</p>
Level Orange: High Risk	For all sports: Groups are limited to 10 or fewer people and should maintain 6 feet of physical distancing between non-household contacts. Limit activity to in-person individual or small group training with 6 feet of physical distancing between athletes from different households.

<p>Level Red: Severe Risk</p>	<p>For all sports: Sports are allowed outdoors only. Groups are limited to 10 or fewer people, not including coaches or referees/umpires.</p> <p>Independent individual training and conditioning and remote coaching/personal training are allowed.</p> <p>Activities with household contacts are encouraged.</p>
<p>Level Purple: Extreme Risk</p>	<p>For all sports: Sports are allowed outdoors only. Groups are limited to 10 or fewer people, not including coaches or referees/umpires, and should maintain 6 feet of physical distancing between non-household contacts.</p> <p>Independent individual training and conditioning and remote coaching/personal training are allowed.</p> <p>Activities with household contacts are encouraged.</p>