



**MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

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**WORKPLACE SAFETY and REOPENING STANDARDS FOR  
BUSINESSES and OTHER ENTITIES PROVIDING  
YOUTH and ADULT AMATEUR SPORTS ACTIVITIES – Phase IV, Step 1**

Updated on May 17, 2021

Effective May 18, 2021

**I. INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the authority granted to the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) pursuant to [COVID-19 Order No. 66](#) to issue Sector-Specific Rules to implement COVID-19 safety measures for organized youth and adult amateur sports activities, the following guidelines are effective on May 18, 2021 .

This document provides standards for how to implement general workplace safety standards and other public health guidance (“COVID-19 measures”). Facility Operators and Activity Organizers who fail to implement applicable COVID-19 measures may be sanctioned in accordance with [COVID-19 Order No. 66](#). Facility Operators and Activity Organizers are further reminded that in addition to implementing COVID-19 measures, they must still comply with all federal, state, and local laws.

The public health data and guidance on which this document is based can and does change frequently. To provide more clarity for school sport organizers, the following guidelines will apply for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year, unless public health conditions warrant any necessary updates. The most recent version of this document can be found on the Commonwealth’s reopening website, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts>.

**II. HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT**

The guidelines in this document are designed to provide instructions to Facility Operators and Activity Organizers of all youth and adult amateur sports activities to help protect against the spread of COVID-19.

Recognizing that in many instances, activities are organized by one entity and take place at a facility operated by a second entity, this document categorizes guidance based on an entity’s role. The guidance provided on safety protocols includes specific guidance for both Facility Operators and Activity Organizers. Entities that organize activities in facilities for which they are responsible should comply with both sets of guidance (Facility Operator Guidance and Activity Organizer Guidance).



The Department of Public Health, Department of Labor Standards and/or a Local Board of Health may issue a civil fine for failure to comply with the limitations and requirements set forth below in the amount of \$300 per violation for each incident and for each day the violation(s) occur.

### **III. LIMITATIONS ON RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES DURING PHASE IV, STEP 1**

Facility Operators and Activity Organizers (as defined below) are subject to these guidelines and must comply with activity limitations listed herein. For non-organized sports and recreation, individuals should follow these guidelines, where it applies to their activities. Organizers of athletic and recreational activity competitions or tournaments should follow the competition and tournament guidance herein.

An **Activity Organizer** includes any person, organization, business, school or government entity that organizes or oversees youth and adult amateur sports activities, including without limitation, teams and sports program at, organized or sponsored by private, independent and public K-12 schools, private or independent leagues and clubs, recreational leagues and centers, and municipal sports programs. These guidelines do not apply to professional or collegiate sports.

A **Facility Operator** includes any person, organization, business, school, or government entity that operates the following athletic facilities, including, but not limited to:

- Gymnastics Facilities
- Indoor & Outdoor Pools\*
- Indoor and Outdoor Athletic Fields, Courts, and Courses
- Indoor & Outdoor Ice Rinks
- Indoor and Outdoor Tracks
- Indoor Gymnasiums
- Martial Arts & Dance Facilities
- Indoor and Outdoor Racquet Courts

Road races and other large, outdoor organized amateur or professional group athletic events are permitted but are not subject to this guidance. Road Races and other large outdoor organized group athletic events will either be required to submit a safety plan to the Department of Public Health (DPH), or one or more Local Boards of Health, depending on the configuration of the event and the number of municipalities affected.

\*Pool Facilities (both indoor and outdoor) must also ensure compliance with the [\*Safety Standards for Public and Semi-Public Pools\*](#).



Fitness Centers and Health Clubs must follow the [\*Sector Specific Workplace Safety Standards for Fitness Centers and Health Clubs to Address COVID-19.\*](#)

Recreational camps or other programs that are subject to [105 CMR 430.000](#) must follow the requirements outlined in the [\*Recreational Camps and Programs Health and Safety Standards for Reopening.\*](#)

Alpine and Nordic Ski centers and resorts must also ensure compliance with the [\*Workplace Safety and Reopening Standards for Businesses Providing Outdoor Recreational Experiences and Educational Activities.\*](#)

### **A. RISK LEVEL OF SPORTS**

Sports and recreational activities are categorized as “**Lower Risk**,” “**Moderate Risk**,” and “**Higher Risk**” based on the risk of transmission of COVID-19 inherent in the sport or recreational activity itself as traditionally played.

**Lower Risk** sports and recreational activities are characterized by:

- Sports or activities that can be done with social distancing and no physical contact
- Sports or activities that can be done individually

Examples: Tennis, pickleball, swimming, catch, disc golf, golf, individual biking, surfing, horseback riding, individual sailing, fishing, hunting, motor sports, no contact exercise classes, gymnastics, cross country, individual crew, alpine and nordic skiing

**Moderate Risk** sports and recreational activities are characterized by:

- Sports or activities that involve intermittent close proximity or limited, incidental physical contact between participants

Examples: Baseball, softball, crew, sailing, outdoor track and field, indoor track and field, running clubs, team swimming, volleyball, dance class, fencing, field hockey, girls’ lacrosse, soccer

**Higher Risk** sports and recreational activities are characterized by:

- Sports or activities for which there is a requirement or a substantial likelihood of routine close and/or sustained proximity or deliberate physical contact between participants and a high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants



Examples: Football, wrestling, rugby, basketball, lacrosse, ice-hockey, competitive cheer, martial arts, ultimate frisbee, boxing, pair figure skating

## **B. SPORTS & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ALLOWED BY RISK LEVEL DURING PHASE IV, STEP 1**

The risk associated with an activity is also dependent on the type of play. The following types of play are defined by level from least to greatest risk.

- **Level 1:** Individual or socially distanced group activities (non-contact workouts, aerobic conditioning, individual skill work, and drills)
- **Level 2:** Competitive Practices (Intra-team/group games, contact drills, and scrimmages)
- **Level 3:** Competitions (Inter-team games, meets, matches, races, etc.)<sup>1</sup>
- **Level 4:** Tournaments<sup>2</sup>

Sports and recreational activities are subject to the limitations and guidelines set forth below:

- Sports and activities included in the **Lower Risk** category can participate in **Level 1, 2, 3, and 4** type of play.
- Sports and activities included in the **Moderate Risk** category can participate in **Level 1, 2, 3 and 4** type of play.
- Sports and activities included in the **Higher Risk** category can participate in **Level 1, 2, 3 and 4** type of play, subject to the following:
  - Football and rugby may conduct Level 1 play indoors but must only engage in Level 2, 3, and 4 activities outdoors.
  - If feasible, conduct Level 2, 3 and 4 wrestling activities outdoors, but wrestling may be conducted indoors

## **C. SAFETY STANDARDS FOR PLAY**

All Facility Operators and Activity Organizers of activities **must** develop and implement safety standards to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among participants, especially for High Risk sports and those sports conducted in indoor settings and are expected to ensure compliance by all participants. Safety standards should be disseminated regularly. Some of the

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<sup>1</sup>“**Competition**” is defined as multiple participants or two teams competing against one another in a single contest. A competition includes inter-team games, matches, shows, meets, and races.

<sup>2</sup>“**Tournament**” is a formal contest that consists of multiple competitions or a series of games between multiple persons or teams, that might include multiple stages, played in a condensed period of time, such as over the course of a single day or multiple days in a row.



mitigation strategies that should be considered and incorporated into safety standards include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying measures that can be implemented to increase physical distancing, where feasible.
- In races or similar activities where players typically start or finish together, staggering starts to avoid close contact. When indoors, starting lines should also be adjusted to allow for 6 feet of distancing between participants at the start (e.g. have runners in every other lane, spacing competitors on start line 6 feet apart). If space is limited, staggered start times should be used to allow appropriate spacing for participants for each starting group.
- Conducting the activity or sport outdoors where possible, as outdoor participation is generally safer than indoors and allows for greater distancing.
- Shortening activities, practices, and game play or performing the activity with fewer participants to the extent possible.
- Modifying the activity or sport to reduce the sharing of equipment or to allow for cleaning of shared equipment between participants.
- Utilizing cohorts, even if not required to do so, of the same participants over the course of an entire program or season.

### ***Mandatory Facial Coverings for All Sports:***

Facility Operators and Activity Organizers **must require facial coverings to be worn by all participants during active play** except:

- During swimming, water polo, water aerobics or other sports where individuals are in the water; or
- For low-risk sports when indoors but where a distance of at least 14 feet or more is consistently maintained between each participant during active play or performance (e.g., singles tennis or individual gymnastics performance); or
- For youth aged 18 years and under when outdoors and engaged in low, moderate and high-risk sports; or
- For adults aged 19 years and older when outdoors and engaged in low risk or moderate risk sports where social distancing can be consistently maintained. This includes for example, but is not limited to, the following low and moderate risk sports: tennis, pickleball, disc golf, golf, biking, surfing, horseback riding, individual sailing, fishing, hunting, motor sports, gymnastics, cross country, individual rowing, skiing, baseball, softball, beach volleyball, and running formats where social distancing is maintained.



- For individuals with a documented medical condition or disability that makes them unable to wear a face covering.

For purposes of this guidance, a facial covering means a face mask or cloth facial covering that completely covers the nose and mouth.

Participants should take frequent facial covering breaks when they are out of proximity to other players, using caution to avoid touching the front or inside of the face covering by using the ties or ear loops to remove and replace.

This requirement applies to all spectators and chaperones, coaches, staff, referees, umpires, and other officials.

#### **E. INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITY CAPACITY AND SPECTATOR LIMITS**

- Indoor facilities and outdoor facilities with a permitted capacity must limit capacity to no more than 50% of the facility's maximum permitted occupancy up to a maximum capacity of 500. Large capacity venues may exceed the 500-person capacity limit as specified below.
- Large capacity venues, defined as having capacities of 5,000 persons or more as specified in a certificate of occupancy or other, equivalent authorization must follow capacity limits for Large Capacity venues in *COVID-19 Sector-Specific Safety Rules for Large Capacity Venues*.
- For facilities with multiple fields, surfaces, courts, courses etc. the above capacity limitations shall apply per playing field, surface, court, etc., provided that there is adequate spacing for at least six feet social distancing for all individuals, including those at adjacent fields, surfaces, courts, etc.
- Facility Operators and Activity Organizers should set schedules with time buffers to prevent the overlap of competitions or overlap of players/spectators from adjacent fields/surfaces/courts at any one time.
- Facility Operators and Activity Organizers should mark off designated areas for spectators for each field, surface, court, etc. to minimize the overlap of spectators from adjacent fields, surfaces, courts, etc.

#### **IV. COOPERATION WITH HEALTH OFFICIALS**

Facility Operators and Activity Organizers, as well as coaches, participants, and others engaging in sports activities are required to cooperate with state health officials and local boards of health



and their authorized agents. **Facility Operators and Activity Organizers must keep rosters of all participants with appropriate contact information and make that information available upon request by state officials, local boards of health or their authorized agents.** Should a Facility Operator or Activity Organizers fail to completely and promptly cooperate with health officials, operators and organizers risk closure or suspension of a league's practices and/or games.

## V. REQUIRED SAFETY PROTOCOLS

All Facility Operators and Activity Organizers must adhere to the following safety standards.

### A. SOCIAL DISTANCING

#### Facility Operator Guidance

- Facility Operator must follow the indoor and outdoor facility and spectator capacity limits as indicated in Section III (E) above.
- Locker rooms are permitted to open up to 50% capacity. Facility Owners must close or mark lockers to enforce 6 feet social distancing. Operators must ensure that users of a locker room can abide by capacity restrictions and social distancing standards and establish signage and visual guidelines. Locker room users must use facial coverings or masks. Adult coaches or other staff must ensure youth participants are complying with distancing, capacity, and face coverings.
- Individual and communal shower areas may open but are limited to 50% capacity. Social distancing of at least 6 feet is required for all individuals in shower areas.
- Operators should ensure that individuals are not congregating in locker rooms or common areas during or following practices or events.
- While indoors, visitors, spectators, volunteers, and staff must wear facial coverings.

#### Activity Organizer Guidance

- Activity Organizer must ensure compliance with the indoor and outdoor spectator capacity limits as indicated in Section III (E) above.
- Players, coaches, and officials should be encouraged to arrive for practices, games, meets and competitions dressed to play.
- While in-person, team-based social events are often considered an integral component of recreational sports leagues, more frequent, extended physical or close contact increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission between team members should an outbreak occur. In the interest of reducing preventable transmission events, Activity



Organizers must ensure that team-based social gatherings do not occur until all other COVID-19-specific restrictions regulating sports leagues are fully lifted.

- Sportsmanship should continue in a touchless manner – no handshakes/slaps/fist bumps.
- If social distancing is not possible in an athletic facility, chaperones/spectators may be asked to wait outside the facility until an activity is completed.
- Once athletes have completed their competition or activity, they must leave the area if another team is taking the field or using the playing surface to ensure adequate space for distancing.

## **B. STAFFING AND OPERATIONS**

### Facility Operator Guidance

- Any concessions or food service must follow the [\*Safety Standards for Restaurants\*](#).
- Facility Operators of indoor facilities shall establish traffic patterns (one-way flow, designated exits and entrances where possible), and limit capacity to maintain social distancing for the facility, including any restrooms.
- Facility Operators must post notice to employees, workers, and participants of important health information and relevant safety measures.
- Require workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the workplace employer for purposes of cleaning / disinfecting and contact tracing. If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace, the employer must notify the Local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located and assist the LBOH to advise likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and /or at the request of the LBOH.
- Facility Operators shall not knowingly allow an Activity Organizer to use a facility if the Activity Organizer is continuing to organize sports activities despite a notice of non-compliance or directive from the Department of Public Health, Department of Labor Standards or a Local Board of Health. The Department of Public Health, Department of Labor Standards and/or a Local Board of Health may issue a civil fine for failure to comply with this requirement of \$300 per violation for each incident and for each day the violation(s) occur.

### Activity Organizer Guidance





- To participate or attend, organizers should ensure that participants, volunteers, coaches, and spectators must show no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 Current list of symptoms is available from the [CDC](#).
- If any individual develops symptoms of COVID-19 during the activity, they should promptly inform organizers and must be removed from the activity and instructed to return home.
- Activity Organizers of activities are responsible for following all guidelines and creating a safe environment for participants.

### **C. HYGIENE, CLEANING AND DISINFECTING**

#### Facility Operator Guidance

- If any equipment is provided by the Operator, the Operator must clean and disinfect shared equipment at the end of a practice or competition session.
- Indoor sports facilities should take steps to ensure adequate ventilation, including, increasing the volume of outdoor air to the maximum possible and reducing the volume of recirculated air being returned while the facility is occupied.
- Indoor facilities must provide access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water, and allow sufficient break time for staff and participants to wash hands frequently; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative.
- All facilities must supply employees with adequate cleaning products (e.g., sanitizer, disinfecting wipes).
- Operators must post visible signage throughout the site to remind employees and visitors of hygiene and safety protocols.
- Keep cleaning logs that include date, time, and scope of cleaning.
- Conduct frequent disinfecting of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, handrails, bathrooms).

#### Activity Organizer Guidance

- Organizers must ensure that any shared personal equipment is disinfected before use by each individual using a product. Personal equipment includes all gear that is worn by players (e.g., gloves, helmets, masks, skates, footwear, pads, etc.).
- No shared food or drink may be provided during any activities for participants or spectators except by concessions and food service providers following the [Safety Standards for Restaurants](#).



- Participants and spectators should only drink from their own containers. Organizers must provide individual, dedicated water bottles for children if they do not have their own.
- Participants and coaches must achieve proper hand hygiene at the beginning and end of all activities, either through handwashing with soap and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Organizers should understand the cleaning and disinfection protocols employed at the facility they are using and should raise any issues to the operator or Local Board of Health.