

Responsible RestartOhio

Youth, Collegiate, Amateur, Club and Professional Sports



In addition to this state guidance, schools, universities, amateur, and professional sports organizations also must follow any additional health guidance rules for the prevention of COVID-19 from their governing bodies that are more restrictive than this minimum health guidance. Independent youth sports organizations also must follow sport-specific guidance from the Ohio High School Athletic Association. The primary purpose of permitting spectators is to allow and encourage the family members and loved ones of players, coaches, team staff members, officials, and other event participants (band, honor guard, etc.) to observe and share in the experience.

Players, Coaches, Athletic Trainers, and Officials

Mandatory

- Players, coaches, athletic trainers, and officials must conduct daily symptom assessments before each practice or game.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.*
- Coaches must (1) Participate in COVID-19 education developed for them by the Ohio Department of Health, and (2) Educate their players on how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 using resources provided by the Ohio Department of Health. This training can be found at: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/sector-specific-operating-requirements/sector-specific-operating-requirements>
- Promote good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Flyers and signs are available at [coronavirus.ohio.gov \(https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Posters-and-Signs/\)](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Posters-and-Signs/).
- No congregating before or after practices or games by players, coaches, athletic trainers or officials is permitted.
- Coaches, volunteers, athletic trainers, and officials must wear face coverings at all times, and players must wear face coverings when not on the field or court of play, except for one of the reasons stated in the Director's Order for Facial Coverings throughout the State of Ohio signed July 23, 2020 (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/Directors-Order-Facial-Coverings-throughout-State-Ohio.pdf>) or as it may thereafter be amended. Coaches and officials are not required to wear facial coverings when on the field of play during games and practices to allow the use of whistles.
(Written justification must be immediately provided to local health officials, upon request, explaining why an athlete, coach, or volunteer is not required to wear a facial covering when not on the field of play.)
- Players, volunteers, coaches, athletic trainers, and officials must strictly follow Ohio's face coverings Order when out in public in order to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 and potentially spreading it during sports activities.
- Coaches must have a parent/volunteer help monitor/ensure social distancing on teams of young children.
- Coaches shall identify players at higher risk of developing serious complications from COVID-19, such as those with asthma, diabetes or other health problems, and take extra precautions to protect them.
- Event sponsors, coaches, and participants must review protocols for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs).

Recommended Best Practices

- Players should consider wearing face coverings while at home to protect family members who may be at higher risk.

Mandatory

Spectators

- Spectators must conduct daily symptom assessments.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.*
- Family members must sit together, socially distanced from other individuals/family groups.
- Six-foot social distancing must be maintained between individuals/family groups
- No congregating before or after practices or games is permitted.
- Spectators must wear face coverings at all times except for any of the allowable exceptions stated in the Director's Order for Facial Coverings throughout the State of Ohio. (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/Directors-Order-Facial-Coverings-throughout-State-Ohio.pdf>)

Practices/ Games/ Tournaments

- **Six-foot social distance must be maintained between individuals except when necessary on the field or court of play.**
- Players, coaches, and officials are not to physically contact each other before or after practice, pregame and competitive play (i.e., greetings, team huddles, high-fives, congregating, etc.).
- Limit time spent on activities where players are in close proximity for extended periods of time (e.g., repeatedly practicing corner or penalty kicks in soccer; rebounding drills in basketball).
- Facilities, teams, and clubs must ensure that facilities have adequate space for social distancing for players, coaches, athletic trainers, officials, parents/guardians, and spectators off the field or court of play.
- No congregating before or after practices or games is permitted.
- Prior to competitive tournaments, tournament organizers must notify the local health department.
- If a Sports Venue allows spectators, personnel from a local health department, the Ohio Department of Health, or any person charged with enforcing the Sports Order (an "Inspector") must be allowed access to the venue during the sports event. The Sports Venue must cooperate with the Inspector in permitting an inspection of the event and venue, and must provide any information requested relating to compliance with the Order. If the Inspector determines that the event is not proceeding in compliance with the Order, the event shall immediately terminate and all participants and spectators must vacate the Sports Venue.
- Athletes at cross country races are limited to a total of 150 per race (smaller numbers are encouraged), and spectators must comply with social distancing, including at the finish line.

Equipment

- Equipment and personal items must have proper separation and must not be shared. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation must be performed between users.
- Do not share towels or facial coverings.
- Do not share water bottles or other drinks.
- Do not share food.

Facilities/ Venues

- Designate 6-foot distances with signage, tape, or by other means for people in lines and elsewhere.
- Increase frequency of cleaning and sanitizing per CDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection guidance on high contact areas/hard surfaces, including snack counters, door handles/hinges, etc. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Recommended Best Practices

- School and organization officials should distribute tickets with an emphasis on allowing family and loved ones to see students participate.

- During practices, consider putting players into small groups that remain together through practice stations rather than mixing groups for station to station.

- Competing players/teams should not use the same equipment.
- Make sure there are adequate supplies of items and equipment to the extent possible to minimize the need for sharing (e.g. bats, protective gear, etc.).

- Close shared spaces such as locker rooms, if possible. Otherwise, clean and disinfect between use.
- Limit the number of players sitting in confined player seating areas (e.g., dugouts) by allowing players to spread out into spectator areas if more space is available.
- Use contact-free ticketing to eliminate box office congestion.

Facilities/ Venues (cont.)

Mandatory

- Develop a spectator pathway that allows for physical distancing as spectators move from parking, through box office lines, ticket scanning, and security screening to their seats.
- Seating must be assigned, in staggered rows and sections, in groups of no more than four people, unless members of the same household. Groups must be separate by at least 6 feet in each direction.
- Outdoor spectators are limited to the lesser of 15% of fixed seating capacity of the venue or 1,500 total.
- Indoor spectators are limited to the lesser of 15% of fixed seating capacity or 300 total.
- Time must be allotted between practices, games and events sessions to allow teams and spectators to exit fields/facilities prior to new teams and spectators arriving and for proper sanitizing for shared spaces and high-touch surfaces (benches, equipment, etc.).
- Organizers of sports tournaments must follow applicable guidance for venues (including grandstands) in which the tournament is held.
- Promote good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Flyers and signs are available at [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Posters-and-Signs/) (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Posters-and-Signs/>).
- Make hand sanitizer available at convenient locations.
- Train, implement, and enforce hygiene and handwashing with staff.
- Locker rooms, restrooms, weight training rooms, and athletic training rooms must be cleaned and sanitized between each use. Use must be staggered. Individuals must maintain social distancing as much as possible while in these rooms. Face coverings must be worn at all times while in these rooms.
- If playing inside, ensure ventilation systems or fans operate properly. Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, such as opening windows and doors unless doing so poses a safety or health risk.
- Venues must follow all other requirements included in the Director's Order that Provides Guidance for Youth, Collegiate, Amateur, and Professional Sports and the Responsible RestartOhio Guidelines for Outdoor and Indoor Entertainment Venues.
- Food concessions operations must adhere to Ohio's guidance for Restaurants, Bars, Banquet & Catering Facilities/Services available at coronavirus.ohio.gov.
- Designate a compliance officer responsible for compliance of public health requirements.
- Establish one-way entries, exits, and aisles; require spectators to enter and exit gates or doors closest to assigned seats. Establish a plan to allow for social distancing when spectators leave, including during inclement weather for outdoor venues.
- Monitor elevators and escalators to ensure compliance with social distancing standards.
- Limit entrance to hospitality suites to ensure that physical separation can be maintained for both indoor and outdoor viewing sections.
- Establish one-way entry and exit in restrooms.
- Communicate with spectators before each event the importance of staying home if sick, the face covering requirement, and the need to maintain physical separation; install signage on hygiene, physical separation, and face covering.
- Communicate reminders of physical separation, face coverings, hygiene, and health symptoms through public announcements during the event.
- Have a written operations plan, prepared in consultation with the local health department.

Recommended Best Practices

- Set assigned arrival times.
- Block off unused seats, front rows (to avoid contact between sports participants and spectators), the last row of each section, and aisle seats (to prevent contact with people walking to and from seats).
- Use every other sink in restrooms.
- Optimize HVAC to blend additional outside air and open fire doors and loading doors so that outside air can circulate.
- Offer partial event tickets. For example, for youth events that have tickets for a particular game or meet during a day that has multiple events.
- Have ushers actively monitor social distancing practices and encourage additional distance between spectators as appropriate.

Team Travel by Bus, Etc.

- Individuals traveling together by bus, etc., must wear a face covering and social distance where possible while in the vehicle.
- Conduct a pre-travel symptom and temperature check immediately prior to departure.
- Consider traveling to and from games with parents, guardians, or members of household if possible.

Mandatory

Travel

- For out-of-state travel, follow the COVID-19 guidance of the state and local public health jurisdiction to which the team is traveling.

Suspected and Confirmed Cases

- Immediately isolate, and seek medical care for, any individual who becomes ill or develops symptoms.
- Contact the local health department about suspected COVID-19 cases or exposure.
- The affected person should seek COVID-19 testing as soon as possible. Teams, schools, and clubs should work with parents to ensure they have access to testing through their healthcare providers or direct them to testing options.
- Coaches/administrators must work with the local health department to identify individuals who were potentially exposed to help facilitate contact tracing. This includes, but is not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents and other support personnel.
- A team, school, or club must notify all athletes and parents/ guardians associated with the affected team regarding a positive test. Athletes and families must be reminded of proper daily health screening protocols.
- If the affected individual participated in competitive play, the team is responsible for notifying any opponents played between the date of the positive test and 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms. If the teams, schools, or clubs reside in different counties, the health departments in each county should be notified to help facilitate effective contact tracing.
- An individual who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, must not return to sport activities until a documented medical exam is performed clearing the individual to return to play. The documented medical exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart risk of high-intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis occurring in COVID-19 patients. More information on this issue can be found at <https://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2020/07/13/13/37/returning-to-play-after-coronavirus-infection>.
- Follow protocol for cleaning and disinfecting if a COVID-19 case is identified at the venue.
- Players, coaches, officials or other individuals who had close contact (within six feet of an infected individual for at least 15 minutes), or who had direct physical contact with the person (e.g., who were coughed on or sneezed on by the infected person), must self-quarantine for 14 days following exposure based on CDC guidance.*** Individuals may return to play afterward if they have not had any COVID-19 symptoms.

Recommended Best Practices

- Limit use of carpools. Encourage players to only ride with others in their household if possible.
- Traveling outside the local community may increase the chances of exposing players, coaches, and fans to COVID-19, or unknowingly spreading it to others. Consider competing only against teams in your local area.
- To the extent possible, facilitate testing of all suspected infections or exposures.
- Following testing, contact local health department to initiate appropriate care and exposure notification.
- Teams, schools, and clubs should establish a partnership with a local healthcare provider to help accelerate testing if needed.
- When a player, coach, or athletic trainer tests positive for COVID-19, team members who are not close contacts requiring self-quarantine as determined by the local health department, should conduct (1) Daily symptoms assessment and stay home if sick, and (2) An in-person temperature check before the start of each practice and game for 14 days as a precaution.

* Per CDC, COVID-19 symptoms include fever or 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, and diarrhea. This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update symptoms as more is learned about COVID-19. CDC's list of COVID-19 symptoms and a "self-checker" is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

** CDC guidance on "When You Can be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19" at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>.

***CDC guidance on "Quarantine If You Might Be Sick (Stay Home if You Might Have Been Exposed to COVID-19)" at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>.