

Sporting Activities

COVID-19 Requirements

Summary of January 2021 changes:

- New Phase 1 and Phase 2 requirements youth team sports and sporting activities, and outdoor adult recreational team sports and sporting activities
- New sports added to the low risk category

Included Here:

- Professional sporting activities indoor and outdoor
- School and non-school youth team sports and sporting activities indoor and outdoor, and adult recreational team sports and sporting activities indoor and outdoor
- Higher education, colleges and universities sporting activities

Not included here:

- Pool specific guidelines. Pool and water recreation facilities should follow the [Department of Health's COVID-19 guidance for staffed pools](#) and the [Governor's Phased Guidance for pools](#).
- Staffed indoor fitness studios, individual sports and fitness training, group fitness, gyms, and multi-use indoor fitness facilities providing private instruction and access to personal fitness training and/or specialized equipment, including but not limited to weight and resistance training, cardio exercise equipment, martial arts, yoga, figure skating, squash and racquetball and similar personal training, group training, or independent fitness services. Unstaffed indoor fitness facilities is locations such as hotels and an apartment buildings. Outdoor group fitness classes. [These activities should follow the Indoor Fitness and Training guidelines](#).
- Golf

All professional sporting activities, indoor and outdoor, youth team sports and sporting activities, and adult recreational team sports and sporting activities operating must adopt a written procedure for employee safety and customer interaction that is at least as strict as this procedure and that complies with the safety and health requirements below.

No business may operate until it can meet and maintain all the requirements in this document, including providing materials, schedules and equipment required to comply.

Professional Sporting Activities, Indoor and Outdoor

RESTART COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All professional sporting activities, including back office operations subject to [Professional Services guidelines](#), full team practices, and spectator-less games and competitions, can resume on June 5, 2020, regardless of phase, if all of the following conditions are met:

- The organization follows both the league-wide and team-specific "return to play" safety plans.
- The league-wide plan is approved by the player's association or union representing players of the team.

- The team must report in advance to its respective county health department the dates when full team practices and spectator-less pre-season games will occur.
- For horse racing, instead of the above requirements, a horse racing safety plan safety plan must be developed and followed and, along with specific guidance to horse racing, which can be found [here](#).

Higher Education, Colleges, Universities Sporting Activities Guidance

RESTART COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before returning to play sporting and athletic activities colleges, universities, and higher education institutions must:

1. Adhere to the Governor's Office guidance in the [Higher Education and Workforce Training COVID-19 Requirements](#), and follow the principals of the [Campus Reopening Guide](#).
2. Adhere to the Secretary of the Department of Health [Face Coverings Order](#), and current DOH orders specific to higher education, and any other relevant DOH guidelines regarding hygiene, cleaning, ventilation, transportation, and records and contact tracing. [Department of Health Resources and Recommendation can be found here](#).
3. Ensure operations follow the Labor & Industries COVID-19 requirements to protect workers. COVID-19 workplace and safety requirements can be found [here](#).

In order to return to practices and competition colleges, universities, and higher education institutions must have a COVID-19 prevention plan for athletics. The plan must either:

- Adopt [sporting activities](#) guidelines from Governor's office **or**,
 - Create a COVID-19 prevention plan for athletics and integrate requirements from an approved COVID-19 prevention plan for athletics adopted by the athletic conference in which the college, university, or higher education institution is a member.
4. A college, university, or higher education institution that does not adopt the Sporting activities guidance and adopts their conference COVID-19 prevention plan for athletics must maintain their return-to-play COVID-19 prevention plan on file for review upon request by the local health jurisdiction in the county where the college, university, or higher education institution resides or by the Washington State Department of Health. If a college, university, or higher education institution participates in an athletic conference, that athletic conference's COVID-19 prevention plan for athletics must be approved by all member schools of the conference who are participating in athletic competition with Washington state schools and be submitted for review, but not for approval, to the Washington State Department of Health. Schools participating in athletic activities are responsible for ensuring their athletic conference COVID-19 prevention plan is submitted to Washington State Department of Health for review.
 5. Regardless of which plan (Washington State Sporting Activities guidelines or a conference COVID-19 prevention plan) a higher education institution follows, there shall be no spectators at games and competitions until such time as spectators are allowed for sporting activities and athletics under the Safe Start Washington Plan.

School and Non-school Youth Team Sports Indoor and Outdoor and Adult Recreational Team Sports Indoor and Outdoor

Sport Risk Category guidance (all phases)

For the purposes of this document, sports are defined using the following risk categories (The list below is not all-encompassing. Some sports are covered in other guidance documents, and if so those guidance documents govern those activities. If a sport does not appear on this list that does not necessarily mean it is prohibited at this time.):

Low risk sports: tennis, swimming, pickleball, golf, gymnastics, climbing, skating, archery, fencing, cross country, track and field, sideline/no-contact cheer and no-contact dance, disc golf.

Moderate risk sports: softball, baseball, t-ball, soccer, futsal, volleyball, lacrosse, flag football, ultimate frisbee, ice hockey, cricket, crew, field hockey, school bowling competitions.

High risk sports: football, rugby, wrestling, cheerleading with contact, dance with contact, basketball, water polo, martial arts competitions, roller derby.

Phase 1:

- Facial coverings required for all coaches, volunteers and athletes at all times.
- Indoor training and practice allowed for low and moderate risk sports if players are limited to groups of 6 in separate parts of the field/court, separated by a buffer zone. Brief close contact (ex: 3 on 3 drills) is permitted. It is preferable for the groups of six to be stable over time. All facilities must calculate allowable participant occupancy by dividing the room size or available floor space by 500 square feet per person.
- Indoor individual training/practice allowed for athletes in high risk sports either with or without a coach.
- Outdoor meets, qualifiers, and tournaments allowed for low risk sports. No spectators allowed.
- Outdoor team practices, training and intra-team competitions allowed for low and moderate risk sports. Scrimmage against other teams or training or practices with other teams is not allowed.
- Outdoor team practices and/or training allowed for high risk sports if players are limited to groups of 6 in separate parts of the field/court, separated by a buffer zone. Brief close contact (ex: 3 on 3 drills) is permitted. It is preferable for the groups of five to be stable over time.

Phase 2:

- Facial coverings required for all coaches, volunteers and athletes at all times.
- Outdoor training, practices and competitions allowed outdoors for low, moderate, and high risk sports. Maximum 200 people allowed at competitions, including spectators.
- Indoor team training, practices, and competitions allowed for low and moderate risk sports. Indoor team practices, training and intra-team competitions can allowed for high risk sports. Scrimmage against other teams or training or practices with other teams is not allowed for high risk sports. For all indoor sports the occupancy of the facility may not exceed 25 percent of the fire code occupancy rating.

- Indoor meets, qualifiers, and tournaments allowed for low risk sports. For all indoor sports the occupancy of the facility may not exceed 25 percent of the fire code occupancy rating.

Guidance applicable to ALL sporting activities in all phase levels

No tournaments allowed for moderate and high risk sports. A prohibition on tournaments for sporting activities does not include postseason, playoff, state or regional championship competitions with no more than four teams at one site sanctioned by a statewide interscholastic activities administrative and rule-making body that oversees competition in all counties in the state.

Non-essential travel such as out-of-state team or individual travel for sporting activities are subject to quarantines as detailed in the [Governor's Travel Advisory](#).

Stay home when sick or if a close contact of someone with COVID-19

Athletes, coaches, umpires/referees, spectators and any other paid or volunteer staff should be required to stay home if they feel unwell, show any signs of COVID-19, or are a close contact of a confirmed case. All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Screening should consider [symptoms listed by the CDC](#). Any person with symptoms of COVID-19 or who is a close contact of someone with confirmed COVID-19 should not be allowed to participate and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.

Those who are excluded from training or contests due to [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or because they are [close contacts](#) must follow DOH and local public health isolation and quarantine guidance before returning to training or contests.

People with underlying health conditions should consult with their medical provider regarding participation in athletic activities.

Masks

Masks required for all athletes/participants. Coaches, trainers, managers, spotters, and any other paid or volunteer staff must wear face coverings at all times.

Physical Distance

Physical distance of 6 feet must be maintained between staff, volunteers, and any spectators at all times with exceptions for training and medical personnel and volunteers performing their medical duties. Six feet of distance must be maintained among athletes when not engaged in sporting activities, huddles and team meetings must be physically distanced.

Hygiene

Require athletes, coaches, umpires/referees and any other paid or volunteer staff to practice good hygiene including washing their hands frequently and covering their sneezes and coughs. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after practice, especially after touching shared objects or blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol content. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they are dry. Athletes should not share water bottles, uniforms, towels, or snacks and should not spit (saliva, sunflower seeds, etc.).

Provide handwashing or hand sanitizing stations at training and contest locations.

Limit the use of locker rooms to handwashing and restroom use only. Showers should not be used due to potential spread of aerosolized droplets. If use of locker rooms for changing is necessary, maximize ventilation and use tape, spots, or cones to signal 6 feet of distance for athletes who need to change. If locker rooms are used cleaning protocols must be included in the sporting activity safety plan. Stagger entry to the changing area and use of these facilities as appropriate with members of the same team or training cohort only. Limit occupancy of the locker rooms to avoid crowding.

Cleaning

Clean high touch surfaces and disinfect shared equipment before and after each use. Ensure restrooms are cleaned and disinfected regularly. Current CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection for COVID-19 states that disinfectants should be registered by the EPA for use against the COVID-19. Find the current list here: [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\)](#). Disinfectants based on hydrogen peroxide or alcohol are safer than harsher chemicals. The University of Washington has a [handout with options for safer cleaning and disinfecting products that work well against COVID-19](#).

Ventilation

Ventilation is important to have good indoor air quality. Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly. Increase air circulation and ventilation as much as possible by opening windows and doors. Offer more outside time, open windows often and adjust mechanical ventilation systems to bring in as much outside air as possible. Increase filters to MERV 13 if the HVAC can accommodate. Use of fans for cooling is acceptable. In indoor spaces, fans should only be used when windows or doors are open to the outdoors in order to circulate indoor and outdoor air. They should blow away from people.

Outdoors locations are preferred to indoors locations, and should be utilized to the greatest extent possible to allow for maximum fresh air circulation and social distancing. Outdoor structures, in order to be considered outdoors, should have no more than two walls to provide appropriate ventilation unless they meet this ventilation requirement; Structures can have three walls if another opening exists that is large enough to create cross ventilation.

Transportation

Limit exposure to those outside the household unit during travel. Encourage only those in the same household to travel together, and if not in the same household, travel in separate vehicles if possible.

For travel groups, (groups that include more than one household in the same vehicle whether in a carpool or on a bus) all members of the travel group, including the driver, must wear a face covering and spread out as much as possible within the vehicle. Limit travel groups to those who have been in regular contact (e.g. team members). Encourage family members to sit together. Maximize ventilation in the vehicle by opening windows.

Buses should install safety barriers (such as plexiglass shields) between the driver and passengers or close (block off/leave empty) the seats nearest the driver to ensure 6 feet of distance between the driver and passengers. Passengers should board from the rear door when possible. Buses should improve air filtration where possible. Buses should be cleaned and disinfected daily after use with attention to frequently touched services (doors, rails, seat backs).

Records and Contact Tracing

Keep a roster of every athlete, staff and volunteer present at each practice, training session, and contest to assist with contact tracing in the event of a possible exposure. Similarly keep a roster and seating chart for each travel group. Attendance rosters and seating charts must be kept on file for 28 days after the practice, contest, or trip.

Employees

Employers must specifically ensure operations follow the main Labor & Industries COVID-19 requirements to protect workers. COVID-19 workplace and safety requirements can be found [here](#).