

# Guidance for Social Distancing in Adult Sports

This guidance document outlines the practical application of prevention strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among sports activities. We strongly recommend that your program follows the parameters outlined below when developing the required COVID-19 plan.

All businesses are required to develop a program-specific plan. Templates for developing a program-specific plan can be found at [StaySafeMN: Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp).

This document is meant to support organized adult sports, which are any sports activity where participants are organized by entities, associations, clubs, or organizations providing for registration of participants and oversight on a regular basis for a defined period of time.

College and university sports are recommended to follow the below guidance, but should also take into consideration their national association and sports organization's standards.

Those who are not part of an organized adult sport but enjoying a pick-up game, MDH encourages you to know the risk of the various sports and use the following grid as a guide when determining what sports to play.

In general, the guidance and template documents include recommendations for:

- Following social distancing.
- Encouraging norms of health etiquette, including face coverings.
- Promoting health checks and screening of participants and staff/volunteers.
- Promote stay-at-home when sick expectations.
- Routine disinfection of high-touch items (balls, racquets, bats, other equipment).
- Ensuring policies are considerate of staff, volunteers, and participants at highest risk of complications.
  - [People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html)

## Programs involving organized adult sports

If your program involves sports as either an activity within a program or as the focus of the program itself, please use the following guidance. The guidance is based on the risk level of the sport. The risk categories were determined after reviewing recommendations from the following groups: [United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee: Sports Event Planning Considerations Post-COVID-19](https://www.teamusa.org/-/media/8BEB91F1CD574230BCD39CE0C779B592.ashx) (<https://www.teamusa.org/-/media/8BEB91F1CD574230BCD39CE0C779B592.ashx>), the [National Collegiate Athletic Association: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/coronavirus-covid-19) (<http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/coronavirus-covid-19>), and the MN Higher Education Athletics Workgroup.

### General Guidance

- Strongly encourage that games and practices occur outdoors as much as possible.
- Use face coverings; especially among program staff and coaches, and among participants when feasible.
- Within the program, create consistent pods of the same staff, volunteers, and participants with a maximum number of 10 people for indoor activities, and up to 25 people per pod for outdoor activities.
- Remind friends and family members to not attend practices to avoid crowding. If necessary for them to be at practices, ensure that proper social distancing is maintained and encourage the use of face coverings.
- Discourage sharing of equipment as much as possible.
- Adhere to facility or field specific guidelines and facility-developed preparedness plans for COVID-19, including capacity limits.
- Avoid using locker rooms and facility showers.
  - If facility showers need to be used, only allow shower and locker room use if there are partitions or else place signage to maintain proper physical distancing of 6 feet.

## Risk Factors

Risk Level	Examples
HIGH RISK: sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.	Rugby, boxing, judo, karate, taekwondo, wrestling, pair figure skating, ice dancing, football, lacrosse, hockey, group dance, group cheer.
<b>MEDIUM RISK:</b> Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports OR sports that use equipment that cannot be cleaned between participants.	Bobsled, doubles luge, multi-person rowing, multi-person kayaking, multi-person canoeing, water polo, gymnastics, sport climbing, trampoline, table tennis, doubles tennis, swimming relays, synchronized diving, artistic swimming, fencing, cycling in a group, running in a close group, modern pentathlon, group sailing, volleyball, soccer, basketball, <b>baseball/softball</b> , short track, speed skating, speed skating in a group, bowling, curling, pickleball (doubles), ultimate frisbee, flag football.

## Recommendations for high- and medium-risk sports

- Focus on skill development.
- Keep any “play” or interaction between players contactless.
- Do not have intermixing between groups.
- **It is recommended to not participate in games, competitions, or tournaments for these sports, even if these events are out of state where sports games/tournaments are supported.**

Risk Level	Examples
LOW RISK: Sports that can be done individually, or with social distancing, or no to minimal sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.	Archery, shooting/clay target, individual running events, individual cycling events, individual swimming, diving, individual canoeing, individual kayaking, individual rowing, individual diving, equestrian jumping, dressage or eventing, golf, individual sailing, skateboarding, weightlifting, alpine skiing, nordic skiing, biathlon, single luge, freestyle skiing, individual speed skating, snowboarding, ski jumping, singles figure skating, , singles tennis, individual dance, pole vault, high jump, long jump, marathon, triathlon, cross country, track and field, disc golf, badminton, pickleball (singles).

## Recommendations for low-risk sports

- Continue to focus on individual development.
- Although there is no recommendation against holding competitions or games for low-risk sports, friends and family should not attend games or practices for this phase. If necessary for them to be at practices or games, ensure that proper social distancing is maintained between friends and family and that limits to social gathering numbers are adhered to.

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## Future steps

Future steps may include recommendations about larger gatherings and/or flexibility around intermixing between teams and will likely have different guidance based on the type of contact that normally occurs in the sport. In general, MDH will be increasing parameters based on the epidemiology of COVID-19 in Minnesota.

### Resources

[Reopening of Public Swimming Pool and Aquatic Facilities](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/poolreopen.pdf)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/poolreopen.pdf>)

[Stay Safe Guidance for Businesses & Organizations](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp) (<https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp>)



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Contact [health.communications@state.mn.us](mailto:health.communications@state.mn.us) to request an alternate format.

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