

MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION



COVID-19 Fall 2021

Recommended Procedures



September 1, 2021





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Massachusetts Youth Soccer remains dedicated to protecting the health of all people in and outside of our community. In an effort to assist players, coaches, parents, officials and administrators participating in soccer activities taking place during the “new normal” Massachusetts Youth Soccer has put together recommended procedures for members and affiliates to use.

Given the current trajectory of the pandemic, these guidelines are subject to change from time to time based on updates to the CDC and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines. Local municipalities may have additional guidelines in place that will need to be followed.

The information contained in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. All content, including text, graphics images and information are provided for general informational purposes.

General Safety Standards and Best Practices

Facility operators, activity organizers, coaches, players, and parents should continue to implement and follow safety standards to minimize the risk of transmitting COVID-19 among all members of the soccer community. While sector specific guidance has been removed, the COVID-19 virus is still with us and we should continue to follow basic safety standards. Some of the mitigation strategies that are recommended include:

- Relevant public health guidelines - including CDC - should be adhered to when attending all soccer activities.
- All waste should be placed by the respective player, coach, or spectator in the trash receptacle. Nothing should be picked up by anybody other than the originator of the waste.
- Participants and spectators should only drink from their own container.



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COACHES & ADMINISTRATORS

- All coaches and other administrators interacting with players are recommended to wear face coverings for all soccer activities.
- Maintain social distancing.
- Do not allow shared team snacks.
- No group celebrations, hugs, handshakes, fist bumps etc.

PLAYERS

- Currently, players are not required to wear face coverings for all outdoor soccer activities. Face coverings may be worn at the discretion of the adult (18 and 19 years old) player or the minor (17 years old and younger) player's parent/guardian.
- Players should maintain social distancing when not actively playing and while on the sidelines.
- CDC recommendations regarding vaccinations and protection should be followed for non-outdoor soccer activities.
- Players should arrive dressed for soccer activities and leave immediately after.
- Players should have all of their personal equipment (ball, water bottle, GK gloves, etc.)
- Players should keep their personal belongings in their personal space. Sharing of personal equipment (e.g., shin guards, GK gloves, uniforms) is not permitted.
- Players may be assigned a pinnie for use during practices or games. Pinnies should not be shared and properly washed/sanitized after every use.
- Players should practice proper hygiene during soccer activities. Use alcohol based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol). Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or sleeves, do not use hands. Do not touch your face (eyes, nose, mouth) with unwashed hands.
- Carpooling should be avoided. In the event that transportation of a non-family member becomes necessary, all parties in the vehicle should wear a face covering and have external air circulation in the vehicle (open window).

SPECTATORS

- CDC/Public Health recommendations for vaccinated and unvaccinated spectators should be followed.
- Masks are recommended to be worn per the [CDC Mask recommendations](#)
- Spectators should allow for at least six feet of social distancing between family units when entering, sitting, and leaving.



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REFEREES

- Referees are not required to wear face coverings for all outdoor soccer activities. Face coverings may be worn at the discretion of the adult (18 years and older) referee or the minor (17 years old and younger) referee's parent/guardian..
- While traditional whistles are allowed, electronic whistles are preferred and recommended.
- Physical distance should be maintained whenever possible, especially when using a traditional whistle.

FACILITY OPERATORS AND ACTIVITY ORGANIZERS

- Facility operators and activity organizers should:
- Set schedules with time buffers to prevent the overlap of competitions and limit congregating.
- Mark off designated areas for spectators at each field, surface, court, etc., to minimize the overlap of spectators from adjacent fields/surfaces/courts at any one time.
- Regularly clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly, such as doorknobs, light switches, handrails, sinks, faucets, toilet handles, and drinking fountains.
- Clean and disinfect restroom facilities in accordance with CDC/ public health guidance and best practices linked [here](#).
- Clean and disinfect any equipment provided at the end of each match or session
- Require staff to wear gloves and other appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when cleaning. PPE should be properly disposed of when cleaning is complete.
- For outdoor facilities, provide alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol in common areas for proper hand sanitization. For indoor facilities, provide access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water. If soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer as described above should be provided.
- Post visible signage throughout the site to remind employees and visitors of hygiene and safety protocols.



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SAFETY OFFICER

All facilities owners, activity organizers and member organizations are required to have a COVID Safety Officer. The COVID Safety Officer will communicate policies organization-wide and to those who may be renting their facilities, to coaching staff, administrators, parents and players. Updates should be provided as necessary. Safety officers:

- Should ensure all coaches and team administrators have adequate PPE (face coverings) and sanitizing products.
- Should develop a relationship and dialog with local health department officials (identify risk tolerance).
- Develop a plan to communicate with the local health department in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case..

If a player or coach tests positive for COVID-19, all team activities shall be halted only until **the local department of health can be contacted for further direction**. Reporting procedures may be found at [Notification section of the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Website](#) should be followed.

If a player or coach is contact traced and identified as a close contact in a setting other than a soccer related event, this should be reported to the COVID-19 Safety Officer by the coach or the player's parent/guardian. The player/coach is to follow the quarantine process provided to them by the DPH and/or by the school nurse. A player can return to soccer activities on the return date issued by DPH or their school. If the date is provided by the school, a player should return to soccer on the same day they can return to school and under the same guidelines. The remainder of the team can continue to practice as normal. Massachusetts Youth Soccer does not need to be notified in this case.

If at any time during their quarantine period, any member of the team (including coach or staff) tests positive for COVID-19, the Safety officer should be notified. Timelines will be reported and discussed by the Safety Officer with the DPH at that time. Notification of the team and any opposing team will be based on recommendations by the DPH in accordance with current [CDC recommendations](#). If the team is asked to quarantine, reporting procedures as outlined in the Notification section of the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Website should be followed. Massachusetts Youth Soccer should be notified of the positive case.

Member organizations should be prepared to shut down and stop operations if instructed to do so by the local Board of Health. Develop plans for temporary closure of facilities (indoor, outdoor) to properly disinfect and ensure other adult leaders are not infected.



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HEALTH ASSESSMENT

All participants (players, coaches, spectators, staff) should ensure that they complete a health assessment prior to participating in any soccer activities. This health assessment should consist of the following:

- Ensure the participants health. Take one's temperature daily. The average normal body temperature is 98.6°F (37°C). Some studies have shown that the “normal” body temperature can have a wider range, from 97°F (36.1°C) to 99°F (37.2°C). A temperature over 100.4°F (38°C) most often means you have a fever caused by an infection or illness.
- If there are any symptoms, even mild ones, do not attend practice or a game. Public health urges you to stay home and isolate until:
 - You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (without the use of medicine), AND
 - Other symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved, AND
 - At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

If you are unvaccinated and anyone in your household or that you have had close contact with (within six feet for approximately 15 minutes over a 24 hour period) displays symptoms, you should self-quarantine based on current [CDC guidelines](#), [The Commonwealth of MA](#), and direction from your local Board of Health.

Notify your soccer organization immediately if your child has become sick.

TENTS

- Team tent guidelines:
 - Players only may congregate under the tent, while maintaining social distancing.
 - No adults under the tent with the players.
 - All team sideline tents must be at least 5 yards away from the field touchline during games.
 - No side panels are to be used, leaving all four sides open.
 - All tents must be erected based on the manufacturer's instructions with no alterations; must be secured with sandbags or other methods to prevent it from moving from any conditions (e.g., wind).
- Family tent guidelines:
 - Only immediate family members may congregate under the tent, while maintaining social distancing.
 - All spectator tents must be at least 10 yards away from the field touchline
 - No side panels are to be used, leaving all four sides open.
 - All tents must be erected based on the manufacturer's instructions with no alterations; must be secured with sandbags or other methods to prevent it from moving from any conditions (e.g. wind).



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OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

All Massachusetts Youth Soccer member organizations should be aware of, and understand all travel advisories that are in place for the [Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#) or any state to which they travel as a team.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS/EVENT STAFF

Tournament directors should:

- Follow the guidelines set forth by Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, CDC, Federal, State, and local governments.
- Ensure that participants are following the specific local and state restrictions from their home location counties or associations before allowing teams from other associations/areas into the tournament.
- Predetermine appropriate emergency contacts should anything arise during your event and provide the information to all tournament staff and participants.
- Include in all communications leading up to the tournament information on COVID-19 preventive measures, and all procedures that the host has established as requirements for participants and spectators, including:
 - Information on physical distancing measures, personal protection equipment requirements, limits on spectators (if in place), and what the plan of action will be for suspected cases.
 - Instructions to stay home if the participant or a member of the participant's family is not feeling well.
 - Instructions on what to do if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a participant is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, the participant should not attend or participate in the event until such time as the participant has been tested and cleared. Doctor's note is required as proof of testing results.
 - All participants and spectators should have access to handwashing and hand sanitizer.
- Develop procedures for any possible COVID-19 cases at the event. This should include a designated area for those who present with symptoms and those they came in contact with to be isolated until an ambulance is called
- Require event staff to wear appropriate personal protection equipment per the CDC guidelines when coming in contact with spectators, participants, and coaches.
- Supply masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer for their tournament staff. The tournament host is the organization running the tournament and not the facility at which the event is held.
- Organize the team registration/check-in area to allow for necessary physical distancing for both the staff and the team representatives. Markers should be placed on the ground to ensure six feet of physical distance for those waiting in line. Such markings should be at least eight feet from field boundaries.
- When possible, coordinate team registration and roster check-in electronically prior to the event. If needed, paper materials may be exchanged on the day of the event



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Disclaimer:

Participants, parents, family, and spectators taking part in soccer and soccer related activities do so with the knowledge of risk and potential exposure involved. In doing so they agree to accept any and all inherent risks to their personal health.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[CDC Covid-19 Information Hub](https://www.cdc.gov/covid-19/information-hub/)