



OVERVIEW OF IMPORTANT RETURN-TO-PLAY TOPICS

***This document was updated on February 15, 2021.** Over time, this document will change. Please check back frequently for updates. The first four pages of this document feature easy-to-understand overviews of Winter 2020-21 COVID-document-related guidelines. For more detailed answers, read this entire packet. Winter athletics will not be risk-free, but by following the guidance in this document, we all can help mitigate those risks. You should also consider your interactions outside of sports during this season in order to limit the potential for exposure in other portions of your daily routine.*

PROTOCOL FOR POSITIVE CASES: A detailed and more complete version of these protocols can be found on page 4 of this document (“What to Do When Someone Gets Sick”).

1. Contact health department and follow guidance.
2. Close contacts MAY have to quarantine for 14 days; follow health department guidance. “Close contact” is defined as someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, starting from two days before illness onset.
3. Notify all schools, families and officials involved without identifying the person involved.
4. Students, coaches, officials and others at the event but NOT in close contact should be closely monitored for symptoms and may not need testing. Follow health department guidance.
5. Clean the area.

FACE MASKS: The December 18, 2020 order issued by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), as amended, mandates that masks are to be worn during practice and competition. In general, face masks are required for athletes in basketball, bowling, competitive cheer and ice hockey at all times. In wrestling, all participants must have a negative rapid antigen test on either the day before or day of a meet or a negative PCR test within 72 hours of competition. All tested wrestlers would be able to compete without wearing a mask during the match; masks would be required of all individuals at all other times during meets and practices. Face masks are optional for athletes in active participation in gymnastics and skiing but are required at all other times when not involved in active participation. Bench personnel are required to wear face masks at all times. This includes athletes not currently in the game, coaches, managers, trainers, statisticians, media and anyone else on the sideline. If a student has a disability or medical situation that would not permit a mask to be worn, the student would need to obtain documentation of such disability or medical situation from a medical provider (MD, DO, PA, NP) and complete a negative COVID test within 24 hours (rapid antigen test) or 72 hours (PCR test) for each day of competition and practice. Both items must be documented and paper copies shall be made available to all officials and opponents prior to each contest. Management, school administrators, table personnel, announcers, media, broadcasters and all staff are required to wear face masks. Spectators are required to wear face masks.

REGULAR-SEASON TOURNAMENTS, INVATIONALS, MULTI-TEAM COMPETITIONS: The following limitations are in place for regular season winter tournaments and invitationals, both home and away. Regular-season dual/head-to-head matchups, between multiple levels of two different schools, are not affected.

- Bowling – 72 individual competitors at a site
- Competitive Cheer – four schools/teams at a site
- Gymnastics – four schools/teams at a site
- Skiing – 72 individual competitors at a site
- Swimming & Diving – four schools/teams at a site
- Wrestling – four schools/teams at a site
- Basketball & Ice Hockey – one game permitted for a team in a day. Host sites must strictly enforce spectator capacity limits on a game-by-game basis and actively sanitize between games. Event organizers must consider proper scheduling, seating areas, and crowd entry and exit to facilitate sanitizing and physical distancing.

When determining the number of teams present at a tournament, count the school's varsity team as one team, and its JV team as a second team. The goal is to achieve physical distancing at all possible times; teams not in competition should be provided adequate space, and spectator limitations must be followed. Consider staggered contest and team arrival times to maintain physical distancing.

Where two sites and/or facilities are used, there should not be any crossover competition between the two tournaments.

SCRIMMAGES: There are no scrimmages allowed for any sports this winter.

SPECTATOR LIMITATIONS: The current MDHHS epidemic order indicates that in facilities with fixed seating of more than 10,000, the maximum number of spectators is 500. In facilities with fixed seating of less than 10,000, the maximum number of spectators is 250. If a facility has no fixed seating such as an ice rink with no bleachers, the maximum number of spectators is 100. For smaller gyms or other school facilities (under a seating capacity of 1250), the spectator capacity limit would be 20% of the facility's seating capacity. Schools may limit spectators further (two per participant, as suggested by MDHHS) but the order defines the maximum number of spectators based on facility size and type.

Bowling and swimming & diving spectators limits are 25% of the bowling center or bather limit capacities.

If local health department orders exist that are stricter than these updated MHSAA requirements, member schools and host venues are expected to follow those local orders.

Sideline cheerleaders, dance team members and pompon squads would be considered participants if a school allows. If a non-athletic support organization such as a pep band is allowed in a facility, all those individuals must be counted in the total number of spectators.

ENTRANCE/EXIT STRATEGIES: Event organizers and venues must consider proper scheduling, seating areas, and crowd entry and exit to facilitate needed sanitizing and physical distancing protocols.

PRE-WORKOUT AND PRE-GAME SCREENING: All coaches and students should be screened daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating, including with a temperature check. This check may take place onsite or be completed and verified prior to arrival onsite (at home, for example). Anyone with a temperature of greater than 100.3 degrees should not participate and be sent home. Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19. These records must be kept confidential. Any person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should not be allowed to participate, should self-isolate and contact his or her primary care provider or other healthcare professional. Continue to remind and insist that coaches and students disclose symptoms so all schools can compete safely. Involve local health departments if positive cases of COVID are discovered. Vulnerable adult individuals should not coach, supervise or participate in any competitions or workouts. School districts will make the decision on vulnerable individuals.

COVID GAME CANCELLATIONS: Any game or contest cancelled because of COVID issues is not considered a forfeit. It is considered a no-play, provided the contest has not started. For officials' payment purposes, this is considered an act of God.

TICKETS: Schools should strongly consider using a digital ticket or cashless system. Schools must work together to develop a distribution plan for the limited amount of tickets available per game. If a physical ticket is used, each school should consider conducting a pre-sale, with no onsite ticket sales – only tickets, not money, is collected at the event site.

TRANSPORTATION: The use of buses is a local school district decision. Cleaning and ability to physically distance should be part of the decision. Schools should also consider length of trips when determining the season schedule. When feasible, consider having parents drive athletes to and from games.

LOCKER ROOMS: Home teams are not required to offer locker room access. Visiting teams should arrive dressed and ready to play. Locker room restrooms should be available, and a cleaning schedule should be created.

FACILITY CLEANING: Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities. Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (bleachers, chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.). Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds before participating in workouts. Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.

CONCESSIONS: The current MDHHS order states that consumption of food or beverages is permitted only where patrons are seated and those groups of patrons are separated by at least six feet. The order also states that no more than six patrons may be seated at a table and those groups of patrons cannot intermingle.

BEST PRACTICES FOR NON-ATHLETES – THIS IS NOT SPORT-SPECIFIC

Administrators/Host Management

- Administrators must wear face masks and practice physical distancing.
- Obtain officials' information in order to trace contacts if necessary. (This information may be accessible through Arbiter.)
- Provide clear instruction to teams in advance of contests about entrance and exit points of the facility.
- At larger spectator events, consider providing volunteers to monitor entrances and spectator seating areas who can promote physical distancing and face masks.
- Schools should restrict spectators on both sides of the gym from sitting in the first two rows of bleachers closest to the gymnasium floor to allow for adequate spacing between the spectators and contest participants, permit a scorer's table/judge's table and benches to be moved back or use the first row of bleachers for team bench seating if needed.
- When possible, officials and teams should be provided separate bathrooms and/or gathering areas.
- Scorer's Table/Press Box – essential personnel should be 6 feet apart when possible.
- A cordless microphone could be used.
- Cleaning supplies should be available onsite with devices sanitized between uses.

Coaches

- Coaches must wear face masks and practice physical distancing.
- Provide and review NFHS Playing Rule modifications with players and parents.

Spectators

- Spectators must wear face masks and practice physical distancing.
- Entrance and exit protocols, and posted signs by host management must be obeyed.

Media Personnel

- Media must wear face masks and practice physical distancing.
- Press box/table accommodations should allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- Promote to local media the need to call in advance of the event to secure accommodations.
- Designate locations where photographers may shoot from and enforce it. Make sure photographers are aware of restrictions when they arrive. Photographers must be kept out of team box and bench areas.
- Limit postgame interviews to open-air areas. No locker room access.
- Establish times when the venue will become available to the media and when it will close.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Precautionary Measures (in addition to other protocols and precautions)

- Anyone attending or participating in an MHSAA regular season or tournament event should check his/her temperature before arriving. Spectators, participants or personnel displaying COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., *fever, cough or shortness of breath*), or with temperatures of 100.3°F or greater, should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms persist.
- Prior to participation, the COVID-19 athlete/coach monitoring form should be used, which includes five questions plus a temperature check. **NOTE: Athletic directors should consider requiring similar precautions for game officials.**

Protocol for Suspected Cases of COVID-19

- All schools should have an emergency action plan in place for each site. If a student, coach or official is or becomes sick on site with symptoms of COVID-19, they should be placed in a clearly identified and designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they can be picked up. Staff who are identified to care for students must wear a mask.
- A symptomatic student should be sent home with a parent or designated adult until they have tested negative or have been released from isolation according to the local health department's protocols.
- Students, coaches, and/or officials should be transported by their parent or guardian, emergency contact or ambulance (if clinically unstable) for off-site testing. If an ambulance is called, or someone is being brought to the hospital, there should be an attempt to call the hospital first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19. If a student, coach or official becomes sick, they must not use group transportation to return home.

Protocol for Positive Cases of COVID-19

- The local health department should be contacted by the school for further direction. They likely will initiate contact tracing, following regular public health practices.
- All schools, public and private, must cooperate with the local public health department if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, and collect the contact information for any close contacts (*i.e., someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period*) starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. Close contacts should stay at home for up to 14 days after last contact with a person who has COVID-19. Follow the recommendations of the local health department. Options they may consider include stopping quarantine after day 10 without testing and after day 7 after receiving a negative test.
- Administrators of the schools involved, as well as students/families/officials in attendance, should be notified of the presence of any laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed cases of COVID-19 so there continues to be awareness and close observation of any symptoms. **NOTE: Student communicable disease related information is protected health information. The individual with COVID-19 should not be identified by name to non-family or non-health department officials. Even if a family/student acknowledges and publicly discloses a positive test, school staff and officials must not participate in discussion or acknowledgement of a positive test by identifying a specific student.**
- Students, coaches or officials who were at the event, but not in close contact with a positive case, should continue to be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, these individuals are not required to receive testing unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- Areas that were used by the sick person should be closed off and should not be used until after cleaning and disinfecting them (this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area). If possible, cleaning and disinfecting of the area should not occur until at least 24 hours has elapsed. If 24 hours is not feasible, as much time possible should be allowed to pass before cleaning or disinfection occurs.



SPORT: Girls Competitive Cheer – High School

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This information is provided to schools to help conduct a High School Girls Competitive Cheer season. The intent of this information is to minimize and reduce risk as much as possible. As such, parents and athletes should discuss the risk and determine if these provisions allow participation. By participating in practice and competition with masks, competitors and parents are acknowledging, consenting to and assuming the risks.

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be additional steps in each school, city and conference to help prevent the spread of the virus. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams.

The situation with COVID-19 continues to change and these considerations may quickly become outdated. Continue to keep up with the latest from the CDC and your local health department. A coach and the Athletic Director within the program should be designated to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.

REQUIREMENTS:

- **Face masks are currently required for indoor activities. *This is mandated by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, which has been granted that authority by the state legislature: MCL 333.2253.*** Face masks are required for coaches, participants, event workers and spectators in Girls Competitive Cheer. This includes all times during active participation and all times during non-active participation when 6 feet of physical distance cannot be maintained. Even if an individual receives a negative rapid test, a mask must still be worn during competition. If a student has a disability or medical situation that would not permit a mask to be worn, the student would need to obtain documentation of such disability or medical situation from a medical provider (MD, DO, PA, NP) and complete a negative COVID test within 24 hours (rapid antigen test) or 72 hours (PCR test) for each day of competition and practice. Both items must be documented and paper copies shall be made available to all officials and opponents prior to each contest.
- Stunting and tumbling with masks could create additional risks due to visual field restrictions. Participants and coaches must make certain that masks are well-fitting and secure prior to each practice and competition. Coaches must make certain that the masks of participants are well-fitting and secure prior to each practice and competition. Policies and additional masking risks must be clearly communicated to participants and parents.
- Securely fastened/fitted face masks to consider are (not an exhaustive or definitive list)
 - Masks that are made of cloth or approved grade fabric which cover the nose and mouth, are securely fitted, and do not impede vision or movement.
 - Masks that are soft and pliable with no exposed metal and minimize the chance of having fingers caught in them or become dislodged.
 - Masks that are held in place with over-the head straps must use a Velcro or other breakaway type connection.
 - Masks that tie behind the head and/or neck ARE NOT ALLOWED.
- **Coaches must follow progressions with all athletes.**
- **As much as possible, stunt groups need to remain consistent and in the same “pods” for practices and games.**
- **Proper sanitizing of hands should be continuous and breaks should be built into practices and competitions for sanitizing.**
- **Until further written notice by the MHSAA and MDHHS and in support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the following rules have been modified for the 2020-21 season.** The information outlined is meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing and allowing for appropriate protective equipment. References include some of the page numbers in the 2020-22 MHSAA Girls Competitive Cheer Manual.

Not permitted: Suspended Rolls, (p. 53), Static Inversions (p. 59), Basket Tosses (p. 60), Pyramids (p. 65)

SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS:

- Schools will be limited to scheduling a maximum of four teams at each site at one time. Dual or triangular meets should be highly considered. Physical distancing must always be maintained unless in direct competition.
- When determining the number of teams present at a site, count the school's varsity team as one team, and its JV team as a second team. The goal is to achieve physical distancing at all possible times; teams not in competition should be provided adequate space.
- There is an allowance for four teams to compete; all spectators and competitors exiting the facility from a designated exit; cleaning occurring; and four new teams entering through a designated entrance.
- Schools may also provide additional spectator limitations due to the size of the facility.
- Face masks are required for all participants for indoor participation.
- Face masks are required for all coaches, spectators and event workers.
- There are no scrimmages allowed.
- Schools or conferences may choose to delay the start of winter sport practices and/or competition and/or reduce the length of the season.

RESPONSIBILITIES AT PRACTICES:

- Clear instructions should be provided about entrance and exit points and face masks must be worn by all individuals when arriving to and departing from the practice area. **All coaches and students must be screened daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating, including a temperature check. Anyone with a temperature of greater than 100.3 degrees or any other positive signs/symptoms for COVID-19 should not participate and be sent home. Coaches must keep accurate records of athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is necessary.** While screening, all individuals must be physically distanced. Continue to remind and insist that coaches and students disclose symptoms so all schools can compete safely. Involve local health departments if positive cases of COVID are discovered. Vulnerable adult individuals should not coach, supervise or participate in any competitions or workouts. School districts will make the decision on vulnerable individuals.
- Coaches and athletes must wash and sanitize their hands prior to practice and continuously during practice. All individuals should avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. Handwashing and covering of coughs and sneezes should be enforced.
- Ensure enough time between practices to allow for proper cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and mats.
- Towels, clothing or other items used to wipe faces or hands should not be shared.
- Participants should be appropriately spaced to the extent compatible to the sport. Athletes who are not directly participating in conditioning or workouts must wear face masks and practice physical distancing. Coaches and other personnel must wear face masks and practice physical distancing.
- Appropriate clothing and shoes must always be worn. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps. Participants should remain physically distanced during breaks. Hands should be washed and sanitized during breaks.
- As much as possible, workouts should be conducted in "pods" of students with the same group working together.
- Each team is responsible for their own hand sanitizer and med kit. Each individual should bring their own water bottle which must be marked and cannot be shared. Gloves are permissible. Backpacks, etc. should be placed in a separate monitored area.
- Any equipment and mats that are used should be cleaned after each team use. Mat manufacturers should be contacted for specifics on proper cleaning protocols for mats.
- Coaches should provide breaks often, where participants can sanitize regularly.
- Masks should be sanitized and washed regularly and often.
- Hydration/Food/Snacks: All players must provide their own water bottles, drinks and snacks. There is to be no sharing of food or drink. Public drinking facilities should not be used. Coaches/teams should not provide food or drink to players unless it is individualized to each player and/or commercially prepared or prepacked.

RESPONSIBILITIES AT CONTESTS:

- Coaches should screen in their own athletes per the MHSAA and school district policy prior to checking in to the competition as a team.
- Spectators should be provided with a specific school section for seating with an equal number of seats allowed in each section. These sections could be identified by the first-Round draw for competition. Section 1, 2, 3 and 4 (from left to right in the bleachers) would equate to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th teams drawn.
- Athletes should come dressed to participate. Masks must be worn during the contest, before and after the contest, as well as during any travel.
- In an effort to minimize the time that teams are in a preparation space, uniform changes should be minimal.
- During the 2020-21 season, ten minutes is required between rounds for proper warm-up.
- There should be no shared athletic clothing between athletes. Food, drinks or towels should not be shared. Individuals should have their own hand sanitizer.
- No hugs/handshakes/high-fives/fist bumps before, during or following contest.
- Competitive cheer athletes should remain physically distanced during breaks. Hands should be washed and sanitized between rounds.
- Each person should have their own water bottle, clearly marked with their name. Each team is responsible for its own hand sanitizer and its own medicine kit.
- The coaches meeting is limited to one coach from each team. Physical distancing must occur.
- One coach is allowed to receive/review scores at the scorer's table.
- The area for non-competing athletes should be marked at 15 feet from the mat and everyone should stand, be masked, and must be a minimum of 6 feet physically distanced.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SCHOOLS:

- Provide separate entrances and exits as well as arrival times to maintain physical distancing.
- When two sites/facilities are used, there should not be any crossover competition.
- Schools should restrict spectators on both sides of the gym from sitting in the first three rows of bleachers closest to the gymnasium floor to allow for adequate spacing between the spectators and contest participants as well as to permit for a judge's table and coaching area.
- Spectators should be provided with a specific school section to be seated with an equal number of seats allowed in each section. These sections could be identified by the First-Round draw for competition. Section 1, 2, 3 and 4 (from left to right in the bleachers) would equate to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th teams drawn.
- No team food tables at event.
- Provide separate warm-up space for each team. This can be a specific space that is split into four equal sections.
- If no additional warm-up space is available, the competition mat may be used for warm up with specific entry points and exit points for each team.
- Panel officials should be placed a minimum of six feet from one another and maintain a minimum of 6 feet from the competition mat and spectators in the bleachers. Panel and Safety officials must wear face masks.
- Hosts should provide a separate physically-distanced space in the stands for teams to sit once they are done competing.
- No teams will be allowed back on the competition floor post-competition. Teams may gather at each of the outside four corners of the mat while scores are announced to maintain physical distancing.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Focus on one practice and contest first and build from there. Remember that there is a mindset switch that needs to occur and we must operate from the standpoint that we did not have Girls Competitive Cheer for a long time. Use common sense, care and caution. The spirit and intent are important to consider when planning. Everyone needs to be responsible in order for us to come back to Girls Competitive Cheer.

- Events such as team dinners, gatherings at homes and restaurants following games and other team-connected but non-athletic social gatherings on the weekends with little to no mitigation measures of faces masks and physical distancing is causing COVID numbers in Michigan to increase. Coaches and schools should work to limit or eliminate these gatherings as much as possible to mitigate the spread of COVID. Coaches need to encourage parents and players to use best communication practices with all involved including parents, families and players.
- Prepare for changes, postponements and work to be flexible in your scheduling including potentially changing or cancelling games because of an unexpected, difficult and last-minute decision on a game or because of a quarantine/isolation situation.

Information could be updated after reassessing future epidemiology data and/or health department and CDC directives.



FAQ FOR MHSAA MS and HS GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER

Updated 02-15-21

- 1. Q: Does the team all need to wear the same masks?**
A: A closely-fitting secure mask made of cloth, multi-layer absorbent material or surgical type material must currently be worn. Masks do not need to be identical. Nothing included on the mask may be offensive or unsportsmanlike and glitter or jewelry/adornments may not be included. A school or manufacturer's logo is permitted as indicated on p. 13 of the Girls Competitive Cheer Manual. Coaches should be prepared to bring extra clean, unused masks to a competition. Nose pieces are suggested, not required.
- 2. Q: What if a mask falls to the ground while competing?**
A: Masks are expected to be secure and well-fitting. If a mask falls to the ground and hits the mat in an area where it is stepped on or causes a safety hazard during a routine, the team will be given a warning. If there is another occurrence in the same round, a 2-point penalty for detached devices could be assessed.
- 3. Q: What if a cheer athlete's mask falls below the nose and mouth while participating?**
A: If a mask legitimately falls down below the nose while participating, it should promptly be pulled up unless it is during active participation.
- 4. Q: What if a cheer athlete decides to wear a mask with glitter or jewelry/adornments?**
A: Four points will be deducted from the total points earned in the round each time the infraction occurs.
- 5. Q: What if a cheer athlete purposely pulls down, alters their face covering or it breaks?**
A: The safety judge will approach the coach, stop the round if necessary, allow the correction of the face mask and provide a warning. The team will start the routine from where it was stopped. If needed, the athlete will be provided a new mask and the routine will begin immediately. If it occurs again in the same round, a four-point penalty for delay of meet could be given.
- 6. Q: Why can't a high school or middle team perform certain stunts?**
A: In an effort to curtail close face-to-face contact or mask dislodgement with certain stunts, there are stunts currently not allowed for high school teams and middle school teams.
- 7. Q: What if my team chooses to still perform any of these stunts/tumbling?**
A: The stunt/tumbling will not be counted as a part of the routine and a penalty for an illegal skill should be given.
- 8. Q: How will we be judged on vocals when we have a mask on?**
A: Vocals will be judged per rule as they always have been. The consideration for everyone wearing a mask is provided.
- 9. Q: Can teams layer uniforms and remove layers to change their look between rounds?**
A: Home teams are not required to offer locker room access. Teams should arrive dressed and ready to participate. In an effort to minimize the time that teams are in a preparation space, uniform changes should be minimal. If needed, the layering/removal of a piece of uniform is permitted and the piece removed stored in each student's individual bag.
- 10. Q: Will restrooms be available?**
A: Restrooms will be available, and a cleaning schedule should be created. Whenever possible, officials and teams should be provided separate bathrooms and/or gathering areas.
- 11. Q: What happens when there are only a few teams and my team is scheduled to go first or last more than once?**
A: For this year, due to the number of teams, it will be important to be flexible with the rotation schedule. All efforts should be made to not have a team go first or last more than twice.
- 12. Q: Will there be a penalty if teams cannot field the required number on the mat?**
A: Penalties remain for the required number of competitors in Girls Competitive Cheer. Cheer coaches should make every effort to choose skills that many athletes are capable of doing and also include opportunities for as many athletes as possible.

- 13. Q: Are instructional clinics or camps the same as a scrimmage in Girls Competitive Cheer?**
A: Yes. Any time there is more than one team involved, it is considered a scrimmage during the season. There are currently no scrimmages allowed in any MHSAA Fall or Winter sports. This is to limit exposure across different groups of individuals.
- 14. Q: Can we place clear plastic dividers between officials?**
A: Yes. However, physical distancing is still required. Dividers are not required.
- 15. Q: How do the safety officials converse regarding a rule during the contest, or how can a new official be mentored?**
A: In both cases, they should remain physically distant and communicate while wearing a mask.
- 16. Q: May a judge arrive 30 minutes ahead of time instead of the normal one hour?**
A: For this year, due to limited amount of teams and less Round 3s to review, judges may arrive 30 minutes ahead of time for the meet. Hosts should provide the Round 3 Descriptions ahead of time electronically whenever possible.
- 17. Q: What if the coach is unable to get the changes on their Routine Description form to the officials 30 minutes prior to the event?**
A: Due to the conditions of this season and the fact that judges may arrive 30 minutes ahead of the meet, the coach is expected to provide any updated information as soon as possible and before the start of the meet.
- 18. Q: What if an athlete, coach or official becomes symptomatic at a contest?**
A: The athlete, coach or official should be moved to a designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they are transported from the facility.

Officials Considerations for COVID-19 Competitive Cheer Guidelines

Included below are considerations for contest officials within the guidelines for returning to school sports. They have been developed in consultation with health professionals, government officials, the National Federation and officials from around the state of Michigan. They include general expectations for schools in relation to officials, provisions specific to officials in the sport, rules and mechanics modifications and protocols for when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified.

Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as physical distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring remains the responsibility of the coaching staff and school personnel.

General Expectations for Schools

- School athletic directors and officials should communicate with one another well in advance of the contest so that there is a clear understanding as to what is expected from each. Failure to discuss the details may create greater conflicts at the date/time of the contest.
- Officials should be provided a designated parking area apart from the general public.
- An adult host should meet the officials at a single, designated location and time for arrival. They should be escorted all together to a *private open and/or ventilated locker room or meeting area* before the start of the contest, to and from the contest during any intermissions and to the parking areas following the conclusion of the contest.
- Officials should be provided cold beverages either (1) in a sealed, disposable bottle or (2) in a newly washed, reusable bottle. Each shall be designated for a single official and should be marked to indicate to which official the beverage is assigned.
- If offered, snacks or meals provided to officials should be individually packaged separately for each official.
- It is recommended that officials' fees are paid using an electronic payment method.

Protocols for Suspected and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Suspected Cases at Contest

- If an official becomes symptomatic at a contest, he or she should be moved to a designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they are transported from the facility. If the symptoms are severe, the official should be picked up by an emergency contact or by ambulance (if clinically unstable) for off-site testing. If an ambulance is called, or someone is being transported to the hospital, there should be an attempt to call the hospital first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

Confirmed Cases

- If an official has a laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed case of COVID-19, he or she should immediately contact the local health department for further instructions, and inform the athletic director(s) of any host school he or she visited within the previous two days before displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
- Officials must inform any host school for which they are scheduled to officiate for (at least) 14 days following confirmation that they are unable to work those contests. They will remain ineligible to officiate any MHSAA contests until they are medically cleared by their personal healthcare provider.

- All officials considered close contacts (*i.e.*, someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) will be informed when a positive case of COVID-19 is identified from a contest they officiated within two days of when the infected individual first displayed symptoms. If identified as a close contact, an official should quarantine and must return assignments scheduled for the next 14 days.
- If an official was at the event, but not in close contact with a positive case, he or she should continue to be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, these individuals are not required to receive testing unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

Cancellations/Failure-to-Fulfills

- Games that are cancelled because of COVID-19 are considered cancelled as a result of an act of God and are not subject to a 10-day minimum advanced notice by the school.
- Officials are not subject to a failure-to-fulfill penalty if they break a contract for an assignment when (1) they have been diagnosed with, or display symptoms of, COVID-19 or (2) if a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified with a team or facility which/where he or she is scheduled to officiate.

Judges' Sport-Specific Provisions

It is incumbent of MHSAA judges to take necessary precautions to ensure a safe working/playing environment. This is especially important for those considered “vulnerable individuals” – people 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions. Individual circumstances, proximity to others while officiating and overall risk level will determine for many the extent of precautions taken.

Provisions are listed in categories described below. As independent contractors, MHSAA judges have the ability to choose or decline assignments as they see fit. Likewise, because judges are hired by the schools, districts and their administrators may require additional precautions be taken by judges that work their contests beyond those mandated in this document. Judges should check with the schools as to any additional precautions or requirements before accepting an assignment and/or arriving to contest.

Provision Categories

- Permitted** – Precautions and safety measures which judges are allowed to take during MHSAA contests. This list is not exhaustive and judges should contact the host school for guidance if they wish to take further precautions not listed in this document.
- Suggested** – Best practices for MHSAA judges based on the recommendations of health professionals. Not required, but should be followed if possible.
- Mandated** – Required practice in order to officiate MHSAA contests. If a judge is unwilling or unable to follow these requirements, he or she is not permitted to officiate the contest.

NOTE: “Physical distancing” refers to a separation of individuals of at least six feet, except for momentary interactions.

Permitted Provisions:

- Judges may wear gloves – including medical latex gloves, work gloves or gloves designed specifically for officiating.



Updated 2/8/21

- Judges may wear plastic face shields which connect to a hat, wrap around the forehead or that hang around the neck.

Suggested Provisions:

- Each judge should check his/her temperature on game days. Judges displaying COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough or shortness of breath), or with temperatures of 100.3F or greater, should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms persist.
- Judges should consider bringing their own marked beverage(s).
- Upon arrival at the site/facility and throughout the contest, judges should wash and sanitize their hands frequently.
- Judges should not share towels, apparel, equipment or supplies.
- Judging crews should not be changed during the course of an event.

Mandated Provisions:

- Judges will arrange to arrive to the site/facility at a single location and time. Unless unavoidable, judges will enter the facility as a group, maintaining proper physical distancing.
- All judges' pre-event contact with teams and/or coaches shall be conducted while practicing proper physical distancing.
- Only one judge shall be permitted to attend any pre-event meeting with coaches and/or hosts, and shall maintain at least six feet of physical distance.
- **Face masks which cover the mouth and nose are required to be worn by officials at all times as required by the MDHHS order, unless a medical exception applies to the individual. Under the current MDHHS order, officials must have documentation from a medical provider (MD, DO, PA, NP) and provide that to the host school administrator upon arrival.**
- Judges shall not engage in pre-event/post-event handshakes or fist bumps with cheerleaders, coaches or administrators.
- When conferring for review of the rounds of competition prior to the start of the competition, judges shall be masked and maintain physical distancing.
- Judges shall be positioned at least six feet apart at the judging tables.
- Judges will maintain physical distancing with each other unless conferencing about a call or ruling. In those cases, the judges should avoid speaking face-to-face.
- Judges shall not physically contact players during the contest, including cheerleaders that appear to be injured or ill, unless required through medical oaths taken by your professional career position (i.e., doctor, nurse, EMT or other medical personnel).
- Only a single masked coach may receive/review scores at the scorer's table.



Updated 2/8/21

Rules Modifications (Competitive Cheer)

- **PROHIBITED STUNTS**
 - Prohibited stunts include static inversions, suspended rolls, basket tosses **and pyramids**. **Additionally, at the middle school level, stunting may occur at the Elevator Level only and pyramids are not permitted.** If these illegal stunts occur, judges should treat them as an illegal skill or technique and they shall be penalized as such, accordingly.
- **TIME BETWEEN ROUNDS**
 - Ten minutes shall be required between rounds for proper warm-up.
- **SOCIAL DISTANCING and FACIAL COVERING REQUIREMENTS**
 - Officials are not responsible to monitor or maintain social distancing mandates for participants, coaches or spectators. This is the responsibility of the host administrator.
 - Please review the Face Coverings and Contest Officials document for updated information as to facial covering requirements and responsibilities for officials.
- **SPECTATOR SEATING**
 - **Schools should restrict spectators on both sides of the gym from sitting in the first two rows of bleachers closest to the gymnasium floor** to allow for adequate spacing between the spectators and contest participants, permit a scorer's table and benches to be moved back or use the first row of bleachers for team bench seating if needed.



Face Coverings and Contest Officials

2/8/21

THIS GUIDANCE CONTAINS SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS ORDERS

This is a brief summary of the expectations for MHSAA officials regarding face mask mandates found in orders issued by the Director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Definition

- “Face mask” means a tightly woven cloth or other multi-layer absorbent material that closely covers an individual’s mouth and nose. Plastic face shields may no longer serve as an alternative to face masks for game officials.

Allowable Exception to Face Mask Mandate

- The most recent MDHHS order permits officials to claim a **medical exception** to the face mask mandate if one applies to the individual. **Under the current MDHHS order, officials must have documentation from a medical provider (MD, DO, PA, NP) and provide that to the host school administrator upon arrival.**

Requirements During Down Times:

- All officials shall wear face masks upon arrival at a facility, before the contest, during intermission away from the field/court/area of play and following the contest until departure from the facility.

Prerogative of Local School Districts

- **Local school districts may choose to only hire game officials that wear face masks at all times. If this is the case, schools must inform officials in advance of the contest in compliance with MHSAA cancellation policies.**

Requirements During Contests

- MHSAA officials are subject to orders of the MDHHS.
- Officials *outdoors* may officiate without face masks.
- Officials *indoors* must officiate with face masks on at all times unless the medical exception indicated above applies.

Officials’ Responsibilities for Enforcement During Contests

- **MHSAA officials shall treat the requirement for participants to wear face masks (when required) as follows:**
 - **An athlete required to wear a face mask will not be permitted to enter the playing surface until his/her face mask is worn properly (i.e., entirely covering the mouth and nose).**
 - **Officials use good judgment and preventative officiating to remind athletes that are wearing face masks to wear them properly if/when they fall below the mouth and nose**
 - **If an athlete refuses to wear his/her face mask (or wear it properly), the face mask is broken during play or an official’s instructions become repetitive for the athlete to make adjustment to wear it properly, play will be stopped at the nearest pause in action and the athlete will be removed from the contest until it is corrected. Athletes that are deemed as intentionally removing an opponent’s face mask should be penalized accordingly.**
- **Officials should expect to encounter MHSAA games where the players may or may not wear face masks and should consider this when deciding whether to accept assignments. MHSAA wrestlers are not required to wear face masks. Athletes in other MHSAA sports may not be required to wear face masks if a medical exception applies to the individual. If this is the case, the school administrator or head coach will notify the game officials of the athlete(s) to which this exception applies.** If an MHSAA official does not feel safe because a team refuses to wear facial coverings *when required*, or to wear them properly, after brought to the attention of the coach or site administrator, the official may leave the contest without penalty.
- If a team refuses to play against another team that is refusing to wear facial coverings, the official will provide a short time for the issue to be resolved between teams. If not resolved in a reasonable amount of time, the official may leave the contest without penalty. The official should complete an incident report online, and the determination of the results of the contest will be made by the MHSAA office.

