



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: Ice Hockey
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This information is provided to schools to help conduct a high school hockey season. The intent of this information is to minimize and reduce risk as much as possible. As such, parents and athletes should discuss the risks and determine if these provisions allow participation for their child.

This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city and state to help prevent the spread of 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 for Hockey to occur:

- Face coverings are currently REQUIRED for indoor activities where physical distancing is not possible. ***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 coverings are required in hockey.** This includes all times during active participation and all times during non-active participation when 6 feet of physical distance cannot be maintained.
- There are no provisions in the MDHHS mandate on facial coverings for medical intolerance reasons or medical waivers. This is not an MHSAA regulation, and thus the MHSAA has no legal authority to waive or modify this emergency order from HHS. They will take time to get used to, as they can be uncomfortable and increase the perceived effort of exercise. Use your preseason practices to adjust to this mandate.
- In practice and training sessions in all regions of the state, this same guidance applies.
- Traditional cloth/fabric masks, gaiters, affixed cage or bubble plastic shields and cloth/fabric helmet attachments located inside the face mask (all of which must cover the nose and mouth) are allowed.
- A clear plastic “bubble” hockey shield **DOES NOT ALONE** meet the requirement for a facial covering. It must be accompanied by either cloth/fabric facial covering or a plastic covering or “splash guard” covering the air holes at the bottom of a plastic “bubble” shield.
- Face coverings/masks cannot alter or modify the required HECC certification of helmets, cages, shields or other hockey protective equipment.
- Face coverings are currently required for all spectators, coaches and event workers.
- All other NFHS and MHSAA requirements, including uniform, neck guard and mouth guard, are still in effect.
- All other NFHS and MHSAA playing rules shall be enforced.
- No scrimmages (*other than within your own team*). The only occasions where students from different schools can be together is for official games.

Equipment:

- **Face masks (NFHS 3-4-2)** – Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask, attached on the inside of the face mask, and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.
- **Tooth and Mouth Protectors (NFHS 3-4-4)** – If mouthguards are removed on the sidelines or bench area, the athlete should use hand sanitizer each time after touching the mouthguard.
- **Water Bottles** – Players should use their own, clearly marked water bottles. There should be no sharing of bottles during games or practices.
- **Hockey Helmet** – Players should use their own helmet.

- **Hockey Equipment** – Players should use their own equipment.
- **Need to have shared equipment sanitized** – Coaches must sanitize shared equipment before and after each practice.

Practice Guidelines/Protocols:

- Team Meetings Prior to Practice – Observe social distancing/wearing of face masks required.
- Handouts/Rule Books – Use of online materials, emails, sport team apps and other electronic communication is recommended.
- Hydration/Food, Snacks – All players must provide their own water bottles or drinks and snacks. There is to be no sharing of food or drink. Also, 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 prepackaged.
- When engaging in multiple drills or stations, ensure that players are properly spaced out and there is no congregating of players while waiting to perform drills.
- There should be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual at all times when not in active participation.
- There should be no shared athletic equipment (towels, clothing, neck guards, masks or specific equipment) between student-athletes.
- No Player or Coach Spitting – There should not be ANY spitting on or off the ice while in the rink.
- Students should wear their own appropriate clothing (do not share clothing).
- Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual. Cleaning/sanitizing supplies should be readily available onsite.
- Coach Modeling – Coaches should be great role models for their players and observe all of the stay safe, stay healthy guidelines. Coaches should promote physical distancing on-ice, while keeping players active and engaged at all times.
- Player Habits – Coaches should work to continue to reinforce safe and healthy habits. This includes staying away from touching their face, social distancing of 6 feet between individuals, no spitting on or off the ice and constant hand washing.
- Hand Sanitizer and/or Sanitizing Wipes – Players, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and/or sanitizing wipes. Coaches and other team officials should have this on the bench.
- Coaches should provide breaks often, where participants can sanitize regularly.
- Players should have a separate mask that they use for practice/games, and one they wear when not training or competing. These masks need to be washed regularly and often.
- Team-issued uniforms and equipment must be sanitized before handing out, and if possible, players would be advised to use their own equipment or keep it for the duration of the season.

Pre-Workout & Pre-Game Screening:

- All coaches and students should be screened daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating, including 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 greater than 100.3 degrees should not participate and be sent home. Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19. These records must be kept confidential. Any person displaying symptoms of COVID:
 - Should not be allowed to participate.
 - Should self-isolate and contact his or her primary care provider or other health-care 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.
- If onsite temperature checks are conducted, coaches should record temp checks with infrared thermometers prior to practices or games. Temperatures should be recorded on a log sheet or via software/applications.
- The MHSAA COVID Tracking Form is provided on the last page of this document.

- Schools may also develop their own online survey (Google Forms, or other software/applications) used for contact tracing. Many schools currently are utilizing this system for daily attendance, with parents providing the information. This may be something you can develop through your school system. You may also consider developing a QR Code for players to access forms/applications without touching pens/paper.
- Below are typical questions to ask daily before participation:
 1. *Date (that day's date)*
 2. *Last Name*
 3. *First Name*
 4. *Have you been diagnosed with Covid-19 in the past 14 days?*
 5. *Are you experiencing symptoms typically associated with Covid-19 such as: rash, diarrhea, fever, coughing, fatigue, headache, chills, loss of taste/smell or respiratory distress?*
 6. *Have you been in contact with anyone who has a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of Covid-19 in the past 14 days?*
 7. *Have you taken medicine for a fever or body aches within the past 24 hours?*
 8. *If you have answered "YES" or your temperature is 100.3 degrees or higher, you are not able to participate in today's activities. Please isolate and contact your primary care physician for direction.*
 9. *By submitting, I am certifying that all information supplied is accurate and true.*

Competition/Game Guidelines:

- In ice hockey, host sites must strictly enforce spectator capacity limits on a game-by-game basis.
- Host sites must actively manage sanitation and cleaning protocols during transition times between games, such as during a JV-varsity doubleheader or between games/sessions of a showcase when a number of teams rotate through a rink during the day.
- Event administration and venues must consider proper scheduling, seating areas, and crowd entry and exit to facilitate needed sanitizing and physical distancing protocols.
- No more than two teams should be in the same rink/facility/ice surface at the same time. Teams awaiting play in a subsequent game should not enter the same rink that a game is going on until that game is over, the facility has been cleaned and the previous teams have left.
- Unique and creative scheduling of multi-team showcases or tournaments needs to be considered, including using multiple days, multiple facilities and/or geographic matchups.
- Provide clear instruction to teams in advance of contests about entrance and exit points of the rink facility.
- It is strongly recommended that visiting schools/teams provide ahead of time a roster and list of players, coaches and team personnel who will be attending the game. This will assist the home team and rink on the entrance protocols for that rink and game and expedite visiting team arrival.
- Provide clear instruction regarding suggested arrival time and protocols (including temperature screening, contact tracing, online forms or waivers) for rink, locker room access and restrooms.
- When using the restroom, maintain social distancing while waiting and avoid congregating in the restroom.
- Arrival of teams and players may be restricted to a timeframe prior to ice time (for example, entry into rink no earlier than 30 minutes prior to ice time). This must be coordinated with your rink, athletic director and rink manager.
- Teams may need to change prior to departing for the game or when arriving in vehicles, as locker rooms may not be available until a defined time prior to game ice.
- Each team is responsible for its own hand sanitizer and its own med kit.
- All players are encouraged to have their own hand sanitizer in addition to what the coach has available.
- Consideration should be given to limiting or restricting access to warmup areas or other shared areas. Off-ice warmup may have to be done elsewhere, including outside.
- During Off-Ice Warmup – Coaches are responsible for ensuring physical distancing is maintained.
- No post-game handshake lines. Players should line up on their respective blue lines and raise their sticks to the other team immediately following the conclusion of the game. This stick salute should be done after each game.
- All players shall bring their own water bottle or drinks. Water bottles must not be shared.

- The scorer's/announcer's box should be staffed by NO MORE than two persons. A penalty box may be staffed by no more than one person and it may be important to have no one present, given the space constraints. Physical distancing should be practiced and facial coverings/masks MUST be worn by off-ice officials at all times.
- Only essential personnel are permitted on the players benches. These are defined as players, coaches and athletic trainers. Limiting of personnel normally behind the bench may have to occur. It is recommended that no more than 4 coaches or essential bench personnel are behind the bench and this number may have to be reduced, given the parameters of some bench areas. All others, i.e., managers, video people, media, photographers, etc., are considered non-essential personnel and will need to watch the games from other areas away from the bench.
- On-ice award ceremonies may have to be modified or eliminated for tournaments and other awards. Functions may be held following physical distancing protocol and local guidelines.
- Competitors must only use their own personal equipment.

General Considerations:

- Focus on one game first and build from there. There is a mindset switch that needs to occur. We need to operate from the standpoint that we do not have hockey at this time. We have nothing, but want to build on that to get to something using common sense, care and caution. Start with a single game and build from there, not from an invite, tournament, showcase, and working backwards. The spirit and intent of the rule is important to consider when planning. Everyone needs to be responsible in order for us to come back to hockey. There is not a specific restriction on invitationals or showcases, but the strong recommendation is NOT to conduct them early on in the season. The guidance is very clear that there are to be no large-scale events early in the season. Make sure that you can effectively administer a regular game first.
- The latest research and data inform us all that COVID is not being spread during the school day, at athletic practices or during games between teammates and opponents. However, we are learning that many activities loosely connected to schools and school sports are creating COVID challenges for school districts.
- 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 face coverings and social distancing are 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.
- Strong and regular communication between a school hockey coach and the school athletic director are key when navigating this pandemic and how it will impact the hockey season.
- A coach should strongly communicate with the rink and rink manager to ensure that they are aware of new and ever-changing rink policies on directives such as: temperature checks, contact tracing, check-in procedures and communication with other teams.
- Coaches need to also encourage parents and players to use best communication practices with all involved, including parents, families and players. This may include a less punitive and less restrictive practice policy that allows players to miss because of health and mental health issues (COVID or not). A safe health and wellbeing policy using care, caution and common sense will help a hockey team in the long run, this year more than ever.
- 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 situation.
- By MDHHS guidance, indoor concession stands may be restricted from opening and you will need to communicate with your rink, facility and opponent to ensure that communication occurs.
- Advance Messaging to Teams, Spectators, Media – Visiting school teams and spectators are expected to comply with the host school strategies for COVID risk mitigation.
- Provide notice to all attendees, using websites and social media to outline procedures for the event.
- Provide PA announcements to reinforce key site requirements and reminders of guidelines.
- Consider livestream options for spectators who cannot attend in person. Review and communicate plans to all, consider camera location(s) and MHSAA, state and local policies.
- Seating Capacity/Configuration – Teams, spectators, media, medical, event personnel. Consider tape or paint as a guide, communicate in advance and create signage.

- Consider designating an event management team – to include a health professional. This group could have the authority to modify, restrict, postpone or cancel the event based on public health risk or other factors.
- Create Communication Plan – Attendees can receive an emergency notification, if necessary. Think about how you will address and communicate a positive COVID test of an attendee before, during or after the event.
- Attendees – Consider grouping people into tiers from essential to non-essential and decide which tiers will be allowed at an event.
- Athletic Training Services – Athletic trainers in high schools are positioned to play a vital role as sports return following this pandemic. As healthcare professionals, they can take lead roles in developing and implementing infection control policy throughout the school. School administrators should partner with athletic trainers to develop and implement infection control policy throughout the school.
- Transportation to Events – Schools must consider social distancing requirements when scheduling contests and events for the winter. Masking and social distancing (as required by state or local health departments) will need to be maintained on buses/vans. Thus, multiple buses/vans and/or parental/guardian transportation will potentially be needed.
- While there is no restriction on travel to out-of-state opponents that follow MHSAA rules on such travel, it would be important to note that all MHSAA and State of Michigan rules would apply at all times to MHSAA hockey teams.
- Travel considerations may need to be cleared in advance. This includes overnight trips which need to be approved by your school athletic director well in advance and should not be assumed to occur as they normally have been done.

NFHS Hockey Rules Considerations

- In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee offers this document for state associations to consider whether any possible rules could be altered for the 2020-21 season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

Ice Hockey Rules Considerations

- **Players' Benches (1-9-1)** – Maintain social distancing as much as possible when on the bench. Limit bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- **Penalty Benches (1-10-1)** – Limit to essential personnel and maintain social distancing from personnel and participating players.
- **Team Captains (2-2-1, 2-2-4, and 2-2-5)** – Captains need to maintain social distancing when talking or conferring with a referee. Maintain social distance during the pre-game meeting with captains and head coaches.
- **Protective Equipment Face masks (3-4-2)** – Cloth face coverings are permissible and may be required by state association and/or other state health mandates.
- **Face Masks (3-4-2)** – Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask, attached on the inside of the face mask, and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.

Each state association may adopt other playing/administrative rules for ice hockey for the 2020-21 season that would decrease exposure to respiratory droplets and COVID-19.

- **Tooth and mouth protectors (3-4-4)** – State associations should develop statements instructing athletes to refrain from the removal of mouthguards while on the playing rink. If mouthguards are removed on the sidelines or bench area, the athlete should use hand sanitizer each time after touching the mouthguard.

General Ice Hockey Considerations

- Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, game officials, team personnel and game administration officials should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
- Suspend pregame protocol of shaking hands during introductions/pregame meeting.
- Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.
- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet or greater on the bench when possible.
- Everyone should have their own beverage container that is not shared.

HOCKEY



Updated 2/8/21

Officials Considerations for COVID-19 Ice Hockey 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.

Officials' Sport-Specific Provisions

It is incumbent of MHSAA officials 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 officials have the ability to choose or decline assignments as they see fit. Likewise, because officials are hired by the schools, districts and their administrators may require additional precautions be taken by officials that work their contests beyond those mandated in this document. Officials 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 officials are allowed to take during MHSAA contests. This list is not exhaustive and officials should contact the host school for guidance if they wish to take further precautions not listed in this document.
- Suggested** – Best practices for MHSAA officials 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 an official 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:

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



Updated 2/8/21

Suggested Provisions:

- Each official should check his/her temperature on game days. Officials 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.
- Officials should consider bringing their own marked beverage(s).
- Upon arrival at the site/facility and throughout the contest, officials should wash and sanitize their hands frequently.
- Officials should not share uniforms, towels apparel or equipment.
- Officials should consider utilizing electronic whistles.
- Officials should sanitize their hands after inspecting nets, sticks and other player, team and playing equipment.
- Officials conducting faceoffs should attempt to remain as upright in posture as possible, avoiding bending so far at the knees and waist that the official's face is level with that of the players taking the faceoff.

Mandated Provisions:

- Officials will arrange to arrive to the site/facility at a single location and time. Unless unavoidable, officials will enter the facility as a group, maintaining proper physical distancing.
- Officials' pregame meetings shall be conducted while practicing proper physical distancing.
- **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.**
- Officials shall not engage in pregame/postgame handshakes or fist bumps with players, coaches or administrators.
- Officials shall not physically contact players during the contest, including players that appear to be injured or ill.
- Officials shall not use physical contact to separate players involved in physical confrontations. They should be ordered to cease. If they fail to do so, they should be penalized accordingly – including minors, majors or misconducts as appropriate.
- Officials will maintain physical distancing with each other unless conferencing about a call or ruling. In those cases, the officials should avoid speaking face-to-face.
- Only the referee and the head coach from each team will attend the pregame meeting, maintaining at least six feet of physical distance.
- Only the referee will conduct the pregame meeting with the scorer and timer.



Updated 2/8/21

Rules Modifications (Ice Hockey)

- **FACE MASKS (Rule 3-4-2)**

- Cloth face coverings are permissible by rule. If worn, they must be connected directly to the face, or must be attached to the *inside* of the facemask.
- **Plastic face shields may be used as face masks as long they are clear and cover the entire nose and mouth area and may not contain holes where spit and other particles can escape.**



MHSAA Officials Program



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.

