

# MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION



## COVID-19 Summer 2021 Recommended Procedures



June 2, 2021





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On May 29, 2021 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts lifted sector specific guidelines as they relate to youth sports. In lieu of sector specific guidelines the Commonwealth recommends current [CDC guidelines](#) are followed. Massachusetts Youth Soccer remains dedicated to protecting the health of all people in and outside of our community. In an effort to assist players, coaches, parents, officials and administrators participating in soccer activities taking place during the “new normal” Massachusetts Youth Soccer has put together recommended procedures for members and affiliates to use. Given the nature of the pandemic, this framework may change at any time based on the most recent CDC and or Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines. Please keep in mind that local municipalities may have additional guidelines in place that will need to be adhered to.

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

## Safety Standards and Best Practices

It is recommended that facility operators, activity organizers, coaches, players and parents continue to implement safety standards to minimize the risk of transmitting COVID-19 among all members of the soccer community. While sector specific guidance has been removed, the COVID-19 virus is still with us and we should continue to follow basic safety standards. Some of the mitigation strategies that are recommended include but are not limited to:

- [CDC guidelines](#) for safer activities should be adhered to when attending all soccer activities.
- All waste should be placed by the respective player, coach, or spectator in the trash receptacle. Nothing should be picked up by anybody other than the originator of the waste.

## COACH

- Coach should be the only one to handle cones, discs, and goals.
- Ask players to bring their own personal practice vest. (a.k.a. pinnie) or a dark and light shirt to eliminate the need to share.
- Do not allow shared team snacks. Participants and spectators should only drink from their own container.
- No group celebrations, hugs, handshakes, fist bumps etc



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## PLAYERS

- Players should arrive dressed for soccer activities and leave immediately after.
- Players should keep their personal belongings in their personal space. Sharing of equipment should be discouraged.
- Players should have all of their personal equipment (Ball, water bottle, GK Gloves etc.)
- Players should be encouraged to practice proper hygiene during soccer activities. Using alcohol based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or sleeves, do not use hands. Reminding not to touch the face (eyes, nose, mouth) with unwashed hands. It is recommended that carpooling be avoided. In the event that transportation of a non family member becomes necessary, all parties in the vehicle should wear a cloth face covering and have external air circulation in the vehicle (open window)

## SPECTATORS

- Spectators should continue to allow for at least 6 feet of social distancing between family units. CDC recommendations for unvaccinated spectators should be followed
- To limit congregating, team and family tents should not be allowed.

## REFEREES

- Traditional whistles are allowed, however electronic whistles are highly recommended.
- It is recommended that physical distance should be maintained whenever possible.

## FACILITY OPERATORS AND ACTIVITY ORGANIZERS

- Facility operators and activity organizers should continue to set schedules with time buffers to prevent the overlap of competitions and limit congregating.
- Facility operators and activity organizers should mark off designated areas for spectators at each field, surface, court, etc. to minimize the overlap of spectators from adjacent fields/surfaces/courts at any one time.
- Facility owners/operators and staff should clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly. These surfaces include but are not limited to doorknobs, light switches, handrails, sinks, faucets, toilet handles, drinking fountains.
- Restroom facilities shall be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the CDC's guidance and best practices linked [here](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/sports/index.html).



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- Any equipment provided by the facility operator, activity organizer, or coach should be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each practice session
- Staff should wear gloves and or other personal protective equipment when cleaning. PPE should be properly disposed of when cleaning is complete.
- Outdoor facilities should ensure alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is available in common areas for proper hand sanitization. Indoor facilities should provide access to handwashing facilities on site. Facilities should include soap and running water. If not available hand sanitizer as described above should be made available.
- Facility operators should post visible signage throughout the site to remind employees and visitors of hygiene and safety protocols.

## SAFETY OFFICER

- All facilities owners, activity organizers and member organizations are required to have a Safety Officer. The Safety Officer will communicate policies organization wide and to those who may be renting their facilities, to coaching staff, administrators, parents and players. Updates should be provided as necessary.
- Facility Owners and Activity organizers should assign staff to oversee the compliance of organizations at the facility.
- Assign each team a coordinator to oversee compliance at the team level (can be a team parent who must register as an Adult with MA Youth Soccer.)
- The team safety coordinator will ensure accurate attendance for all practice and game sessions is taken. This is necessary for contact tracing if this should become necessary.
- Develop a relationship and dialog with local Health Department officials (identify risk tolerance).
- Develop a plan to communicate with the local health department in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 within a team.
- If a player or coach tests positive for COVID-19 all team activities shall be halted only until the local Department of Health can be contacted for further direction. [Reporting procedures as outlined in the Notification section of the MA Youth Soccer Website should be followed.](#)
- If a player or coach is contact traced and identified as a close contact in a setting other than a soccer related event, this should be reported to the COVID-19 Safety Officer by the coach or the player's parent/guardian. The player/coach is to follow the quarantine process provided to them by the Department of Public Health and/or by the school nurse. A player can return to soccer activities on the return date issued by DPH or their school.



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If the date is provided by the school, a player should return to soccer on the same day they can return to school and under the same guidelines. The remainder of the team can continue to practice as normal.

Massachusetts Youth Soccer does not need to be notified in this case.

- If at any time during their quarantine period, any member of the team (including coach and staff) tests positive for COVID-19 the Safety officer should again be notified. Timelines will be reported and discussed by the Safety Officer with the Department of Health at that time. Notification of the team and any opposing team will be based on recommendations by the Department of Health in accordance with current [CDC recommendations](#). If the team is asked to quarantine reporting procedures as outlined in the Notification section of the MA Youth Soccer Website should be followed. Massachusetts Youth Soccer should be notified of the positive case.
- Be prepared to shut down and stop operations if instructed to do so by the local Board of Health.. Develop plans for temporary closure of facilities (indoor, outdoor) to properly disinfect and ensure other adult leaders are not infected.
- Provide coaches and team coordinators with PPE (masks) and sanitizing products.

## HEALTH ASSESSMENT

- All participants (players, coaches, spectators, staff) should ensure that they complete a health assessment prior to participating in any soccer activities. The health assessment should consist of the following:
- Ensure the participants health. Take temperature daily. The average normal body temperature is generally accepted as 98.6°F (37°C). Some studies have shown that the “normal” body temperature can have a wide range, from 97°F (36.1°C) to 99°F (37.2°C). A temperature over 100.4°F (38°C) most often means you have a fever caused by an infection or illness.
- If there are any symptoms, even mild ones, do not attend practice or a game. Public health urges you to stay home and isolate until:
- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (without the use of medicine) AND
- Other symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved AND
- At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.
- If you are unvaccinated and anyone in your household or that you have had close contact with (within six feet for approximately 15 minutes over a 24 hour period) displays symptoms you should self-quarantine based on current CDC guidelines, The Commonwealth of MA and direction from your local Board of Health.
- Notify your soccer organization immediately if your child has become sick.
- Notify your soccer organization immediately if your child has been identified as a close contact by a school or public health authority.



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## OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

All Massachusetts Youth members should be aware and understand any [travel advisory that is in place for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#) or any state they travel to as a team.

## TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS/EVENT STAFF

- Tournament Directors should follow the guidelines set forth by Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, CDC, Federal, State, and local governments.
- Tournament Directors should ensure that participants are following the specific local and state restrictions from their home location counties or associations before allowing teams from other associations/areas into the tournament.
- Predetermine appropriate emergency contacts should anything arise during your event and provide the information to all tournament staff and participants.
- All communication leading up to the tournament should include information on COVID-19, preventive measures and all procedures that the host has established as requirements for participants and spectators, including:
  - Information on physical distancing measures, personal protection equipment requirements, limits on spectators and what the plan of action will be for suspected cases.
  - Instructions to stay home if the participant or a member of the participant's family is not feeling well.
  - Instructions on what to do if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a participant is exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus the participants should not attend or participate in the event until such time as the participant has been tested and cleared. Doctor's note would be required as proof of testing results.
- All participants and spectators should have access to handwashing and hand sanitizer.
- A procedure should be developed for any possible cases at the event. Event staff are to wear appropriate personal protection equipment when they come in contact with spectators, participants, and coaches.
- It is the responsibility of the tournament host to supply any and all masks, gloves and hand sanitizer for their tournament staff. The tournament host is the organization running the tournament and not the facility at which the event is held.
- Team registration/check in area should be set up to allow for necessary physical distancing for both the staff and the team representatives. Markers should be placed on the ground to ensure 6 feet of physical distance for those waiting in line. Such markings should be at least 8 feet from field boundaries.
- When possible, organizations will need to coordinate team registration and roster check-in electronically prior to the event. If needed, paper materials may be exchanged on the day of the event



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## Disclaimer:

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

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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