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COVID SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS BASEBALL and SOFTBALL

General COVID Safety Recommendations

According to the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported—ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Athletes and coaches should not participate if they:

- exhibit any symptoms of the coronavirus.
 - These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.
- have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- are a vulnerable individual—a vulnerable individual is an elderly individual and or an individual with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.

Additional Recommendations Include:

- Educate student-athletes about physical distancing, handwashing and sanitizer use, and other immune system protocols.
- Ensure your state and region allow softball practices and/or competitions and that you are following all Federal and State Agency mandates.
- Workouts should be conducted in “pods”—following the most current State Department of Health Return-to-Play guidelines. Pods are small groups of student-athletes always working out together. This will ensure limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Any person who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous 24 hours should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
- Individually, as a team, or as a department, participants should confirm that they are symptom free on a daily basis. These confirmations can be aligned with the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)'s “[Coronavirus Self-Checker](#)”, current State Department of Health recommendations, or other resources including USCAH's “[Game Day Ready Survey](#)”.
- A record should be kept of all individuals present at each training session to assist with contact tracing.
- When possible, student-athletes should maintain the recommended six feet of distancing and should not be in contact with each other, including no sharing of equipment.
- Avoid grouping of student-athletes at the start and end of practice or during transitions.
- When spectators are allowed at outside events, they should not have access to student-athletes during the competition. Social distancing should be practiced throughout the entire event and spectators may connect with participants following the completion of the event.
- Be aware that although restrictions are eased safety precautions must remain in place until there is a universal vaccine or effective treatment for the coronavirus.

See below for a thorough list of specific recommendations for each type of activity

Practice Sessions	
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pods shall not exceed 25 Masks should be worn in the dug-out and at all times when not actively participating in the field of play.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All shared athletic equipment including balls, bats, etc., should be cleaned before, intermittently during, and after practices. Helmets, gloves, batting gloves, bats, rosin bags and other personal equipment should not be shared. Coaches should limit physical contact with athletes when possible. Physical contact for technique instruction should only occur if necessary. Hand sanitizer should be used by participants and coaches as they enter and leave practice. Sunflower seeds and/or spitting should not be permitted, as this practice increases the likelihood of spreading respiratory droplets/saliva. Athletes should not lick their fingers and should limit contact with their face and mouth as much as possible, particularly pitchers.
Equipment for Practice Sessions	
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water bottles may not be shared. Equipment used during practices should be disinfected between each student-athletes' use of the equipment. If in groups, sanitization should occur in between each group.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean frequently touched objects and areas. Provide hand sanitizer for athletes, coaches, and support staff at all times.
Games, Events and Contests	
Masking Requirements	
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletes and coaches must wear face masks at all times when not actively participating in a practice or contest. Coaches must wear a mask when conversing with student-athletes and when social distancing is not possible. Student-athletes must wear a mask when social distancing is not possible. <p>Bus/Van</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks must be worn at all times during school provided transportation.
Recommendations and Considerations	
Site Set Up	
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When spectators are permitted at the event, they must NOT have access to student-athletes and must be restricted to areas outside of the field/competition area. Team benches/dugouts should be isolated from spectators or other non-essential personnel. Team benches/dugouts must be only available to members of that specific team, and not a shared/common space. Social distancing requirements of 6 feet should be maintained in these areas. Each student-athlete, coach, and support staff member should have a designated space within the team bench/dugout area. Host schools must establish team bench areas of this nature for visiting teams as well. Determine restroom access protocols. Identify all Essential and Non-Essential Staff.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional signage may be necessary to identify restricted spectator areas. Clean frequently touched areas and provide ample hand sanitizer.
Pre-competition	
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student-athletes must use hand sanitizer prior to their competition and prior to re-entry into a game. No pre-game handshakes or fist bumps should occur between student-athletes and/or referees.

Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual water bottles must be filled prior to the competition and when a refill of the water bottle is necessary, a designated individual, wearing appropriate PPE (i.e. mask, gloves) should fill the bottle. Gloves should be changed in between filling of each individuals' water bottle to limit transmission.
Competition	
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy foods/snacks should not be shared. Towels should not be shared. Individual towels should stay in the student-athletes' designated bench area and should not be handled by any individual other than the student-athlete. Masks should be worn in the dug-out and at all times when not actively participating in the field of play.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All shared athletic equipment including balls, bats, etc., should be cleaned before, intermittently during, and after competitions. Helmets, gloves, batting gloves, bats, rosin bags and other personal equipment should not be shared. Individual water bottles must be filled prior to the competition and when a refill of the water bottle is necessary, a designated individual, wearing appropriate PPE (i.e. mask, gloves) should fill the bottle. Gloves should be changed in between filling of each individuals' water bottle to limit transmission. Food, drinks, and/or towels should not be shared. Sunflower seeds and/or spitting should not be permitted, as this practice increases the likelihood of spreading respiratory droplets/saliva. Athletes should not lick their fingers and should limit contact with their face and mouth as much as possible, particularly pitchers. Home and visiting teams should have their own set of official game balls. Avoid home-run celebrations at home plate.
Post Competition	
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No post-game handshakes or fist bumps should occur between student-athletes and/or referees. No award ceremonies should take place following competitions. If consecutive competitions are taking place at the same stadium/field between different teams, the dugouts/bench areas should be sanitized and every seat in the team bench area should be cleaned and sanitized.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food, drinks, and/or towels should not be shared. Home team participants should not use a locker room or changing area. Shower at home. If a visiting team needs to shower/change they must be provided a space to do so. The space should establish capacity limits and these limits should be strictly followed. No extra-curricular or social activity should take place after the match. No congregation after competition. All student-athletes should leave the facility immediately after the team has completed the competition.