

# Safe Play: Back to the Diamond

## 2021 Baseball and Softball COVID-19 Safety Guidelines



As of 4/15/2021

### Mandatory

#### ARRIVING AND LEAVING THE VENUE

- **All participants must maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from any other person.**
- Whenever possible, practice and game start times should be staggered so a team leaves the field before the next team arrives.
- Whenever possible, everyone should enter and exit through designated areas that are different from each other.
- Gathering and congregating on and around fields is discouraged.

#### PRACTICES

- **All athletes must maintain at least six feet of distance, whenever possible, from any other person.**
- Players and coaches must be separated into pods of fifty (50).
- Practice groups must maintain distance from each other and not mix during the duration of the practice.

#### GAMES

- **All athletes must maintain at least six (6) feet of distance, whenever possible, from any other person.**
- Game balls should be wiped down/sanitized between innings and before being put back in play.
- During a game, participants must maintain at least six (6) feet of separation in the dugout. Participants not able to be in the dugout will be lined up down their respective foul lines or behind the backstop with six (6) feet of separation. [Field Layout Map](#)

#### COACHES

- **Coaches must maintain at least six (6) feet distance from any other person.**
- Masks/face coverings are not required *if* and *when* six (6) feet of distance from others can be consistently maintained (per MDH [COVID-19 Sports Guidance](#)).
- Repeatedly remind players not to touch their faces.
- Up to four coaches, including one COVID-19 safety manager, permitted for a practice or game.
- Must conduct a daily symptom assessment and stay home if experiencing symptoms.
- No spitting, chewing gum, or eating sunflower seeds.
- No sharing of food or drinks.
- No touch rule – coaches must refrain from high fives, handshake line, and any other physical contact with fellow coaches, opposing coaches, players, umpires, and spectators. A “tip of the cap” will be used as a salute to the opposing team to promote sportsmanship following the game.

### Recommendations/Guidance

- Participants should enter and leave the field in a timely fashion and not congregate.
- Team meetings should occur virtually or over the phone, rather than a team huddle.
- Hand washing or hand sanitizing, when soap and water is not available, is strongly recommended when arriving at and leaving the venue.
- Carpooling is discouraged. If carpooling is not avoidable, masks are strongly encouraged.

- Each team is responsible for bringing hand and equipment sanitizing products to practices.
- Each team should sanitize the dugout bench before, during, and after each practice.
- Hand sanitizing is strongly recommended during practices.
- When there is a play at a base, the runner and fielder should resume physical distance immediately upon completion of the play.

- Each team is responsible for bringing hand and equipment sanitizing products to games.
- Each team should sanitize the dugout bench before, during, and after each game.
- Hand sanitizing is strongly recommended during games.
- When there is contact of any kind in the field of play, players should resume physical distance immediately upon completion of the play.
- If a concession stand is open, the people in line must maintain at least six feet of spacing.

- Each team is responsible for bringing hand sanitizing products to practices and games and use of sanitizer between innings is recommended.
- Coaches should ensure the players are adhering to social distancing in dugouts and other seating areas and wearing face coverings while not actively participating on the field of play.
- Masks/face coverings are highly recommended to be worn at all times.

Respect the game, respect the guidelines.

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### ATHLETES

#### Mandatory

- **Outside of your game-time, you must maintain at least six (6) feet distance, whenever possible, from any person outside of your household.**
- Masks are not required if athletes can stay at least six (6) feet away from others; athletes are required to wear a mask when around others (dugout/bench area) and not actively playing/training (per page 5 of MDH [COVID-19 Sports Guidance](#)).
- No spitting, chewing gum, or eating sunflower seeds.
- No sharing of food, drinks/water bottles, or towels.
- No touch rule – players must refrain from high fives, handshake line, and any other physical contact with teammates, opposing players, coaches, umpires, and spectators. A “tip of the cap” will be used as a salute to the opposing team to promote sportsmanship following the game.

#### Recommended Best Practices

- Whenever possible, equipment and personal items should have proper sanitization and should not be shared. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitization should be administered between users.
- Batting gloves should be worn whenever possible, especially when handling a bat.
- Hand sanitizing is strongly recommended during practices and games.
- Athletes are not required to wear masks/face coverings if they can stay at least six feet away from others on the field of play.

### PARENTS/ SPECTATORS

- **Must maintain at least six (6) feet distance from any other person and stay in the designated spectator area outlined by the venue.**
- Masks/face coverings are not required *if* and *when* six (6) feet of distance from others can be consistently maintained (per MDH [COVID-19 Sports Guidance](#)).
- Parents or spectators should maintain social distance from each other if they attend practices.
- Must conduct a daily symptom assessment and stay home if experiencing symptoms.
- No sunflower seeds allowed.
- See COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Outdoor Venues and Venue Occupancy Calculator.

- Spectators must be separated from the competition by a minimum of twelve (12) feet.
- If spectators and participants can be clearly separate by at least twelve (12) feet, then participants do not need to be included in the total capacity (see MDH Guidance).
- Spectators must be separated by at least six (6) feet from other households/spectators groups.
- Masks/face coverings are highly recommended to be worn at all times.
- Hand washing or hand sanitizing, in the absence of soap and water, is strongly recommended during the games.

### UMPIRES

- **Must maintain at least six (6) feet distance from any other person.**
- Masks/face coverings are not required *if* and *when* six (6) feet of distance from others can be consistently maintained (per MDH [COVID-19 Sports Guidance](#)).
- Must conduct a daily symptom assessment and stay home if experiencing symptoms.
- Must avoid exchanging documents or equipment with any other person.
- No touch rule – umpires must refrain from physical contact with coaches, players, and spectators. A “tip of the cap” will be used as a salute to the teams to promote sportsmanship following the game.

- It is recommended that umpires officiate the game behind the pitcher’s mound. (If an umpire chooses to officiate behind the plate, they are incurring an additional risk to themselves and the athletes.)
- During extended at bats or a break in game play, it is strongly encouraged that umpires step away and create six (6) feet of distance from others.
- Masks/face coverings are highly recommended to be worn at all times
- Hand washing or hand sanitizing is strongly recommended during the games.

### COMMUNICATION AND CONFIRMED CASES

- Each team must keep an accurate log of their rostered players, spectators, and opponents, including opposing coaches’ contact information. In the case of someone being infected, this document will be necessary for MDH to perform contact tracing.
- Organizers must post these guidelines at their facilities, where applicable, and disseminate them to all coaches, officials, players, and parents.

- These guidelines must be communicated to all organizers for dissemination to all participants, and must be posted at facilities.
- Facility operators should post signage promoting physical distancing, including directing foot traffic and outlining spectator areas.
- Organizers should regularly communicate to participants that they should stay home if/when they are experiencing any COVID -19 symptoms.
- Organizers should contact the MDH about any suspected case of COVID-19 or known exposure.

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### Symptoms & Screening Assessment

- Do you have temperature of 99.5 (F) or higher?
- Do you have a new or worsening cough today?
- Do you have any of these other symptoms?
  - ◊ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - ◊ Fatigue
  - ◊ Muscle or body aches
  - ◊ Headache
  - ◊ New loss of taste or smell
  - ◊ Sore throat
  - ◊ Congestion or runny nose
  - ◊ Nausea or vomiting
  - ◊ Diarrhea

USCAH COVID Care Package (COVID Education & *GameDay* Ready App) is recommended for all competition in order to verify completion of daily screening assessment and to maintain accurate attendance.

# STAY SAFE MN

### MDH Guidance

- [MDH COVID-19 Organized Sports Practice and Games Guidance for Youth Sports](#)
- [COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Outdoor Seated Venues](#)
- [Venue Occupancy Calculator](#)
- [COVID-19 Decision Tree](#)
- RedCap Case Reporting: [COVID-19 Case Reporting Form](#)
- E-Mail Address: [health.Sports.covid19@state.mn.us](mailto:health.Sports.covid19@state.mn.us)

### CDC Guidance

- [COVID-19 Playing Sports](#)
- [Considerations for Youth Sports](#)

### Screening Assessment

### Requirements

- Conduct a screening assessment prior to arriving at the facility.
- If you answered “Yes” to having any of the symptoms listed, you **must** stay home.

#### When to start and end quarantine when exposed to a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19

People who have been in **close contact** with someone who has COVID-19, excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past three (3) months or have been fully vaccinated.

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to three (3) months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within three (3) months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

#### What counts as **close contact**?

- You were within six (6) feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of fifteen (15) minutes or more.
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with the person
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

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