



Sandra Shewry
Acting Director
Erica S. Pan, MD, MPH
Acting State Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human
Services Agency
**California Department of
Public Health**



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

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TO: All Californians

SUBJECT: Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports

Updates since December 14, 2020:

- Updated on January 25, 2021 to clarify that the Regional Stay at Home Order ended as a result of improvement of ICU projections throughout California.

Summary

COVID-19 continues to pose a severe risk to communities and requires all people in California to follow recommended precautions and adapt the way they live and function in light of this ongoing risk. This guidance provides direction on outdoor and indoor youth and recreational adult sports activities to support a safe environment for these sports. The guidance applies to all organized youth sports — including school- and community-sponsored programs, and privately-organized clubs and leagues — and adult recreational sports (hereafter youth and adult sports). This guidance does not apply to collegiate or professional sports.

Sports Risk Profiles

In general, the more people from outside their household with whom a person interacts, the closer the physical interaction is, the greater the physical exertion is, and the longer the interaction lasts, particularly when indoors, the higher the risk that a person with COVID-19 infection may spread it to others.

Youth and adult sports include varied activities that have different levels of risk for transmission of COVID-19. Outdoor activities that allow for consistent wearing of face coverings and physical distancing are lower risk than indoor activities that involve close contact between sports participants and high exertion that increases spread of exhaled particles and limits the ability to wear face coverings consistently. The competition between different teams also increases mixing across groups and outside of communities, which also contributes to the potential for spread of COVID-19 disease.

Youth and adult sports are classified below by their level of contact and transmission risk. This classification applies to competition or training/practice with others. It does not apply to individual conditioning or exercise.

- **Low-Contact Sports**

- Individual or small group sports where contact within six feet of other participants can be avoided. Some of these sports have relatively low exertion rates that allow for consistent wearing of face coverings when within six feet of other people.

- **Moderate-Contact Sports**

- Team sports that can be played with only incidental or intermittent close contact between participants.

- **High-Contact Sports**

- Team sports with frequent or sustained close contact (and in many cases, face-to-face contact) between participants and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants. Indoor sports are higher risk than outdoor sports due to reduced ventilation.

For examples of different levels of sports by risk, see table below.

- **Factors Affecting the Risk of Transmission**

- Risk increases for indoor activities; indoor sports are higher risk than outdoor sports due to reduced ventilation.
- Risk increases when face coverings are not worn, and physical distancing is not maintained.
- Risk increases with increasing levels of contact between participants; closer contact (particularly face-to-face contact), and the frequency and total duration of close contact, increases the risk that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.
- Risk increases with greater exertion levels; greater exertion increases the rate of breathing and the quantity of air that is inhaled and exhaled with every breath.
- Risk increases with mixing of cohorts and groups, particularly when from different communities (during or outside of sports play); mixing with more people increases the risk that an infectious person will be present.

General Guidance for Youth and Adult Sports Participants, Coaches, and Support Staff

Face Coverings

- Participants in youth and adults sports should wear face coverings when participating in the activity, even with heavy exertion as tolerated, both indoors and outdoors (unless the face covering could become a hazard), and face coverings must be worn when not participating in the activity (e.g., on the sidelines).¹
- Observers must wear face coverings indoors, and comply with the CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings, which broadly requires the use of face coverings for both members of the public and workers in all public and workplace settings.

Physical Distancing

- Participants in youth and adult sports should maintain at least six feet of distance from others to the maximum extent possible, including when on the sidelines. Coaches should avoid contact with participants, and facilitate physical distancing between participants to the maximum extent possible (e.g., staggered starts instead of mass starts for races).
- When observing, individuals must stay at least 6 feet from non-household members.

Hygiene and Equipment Sanitation

- Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected before use by another person, group, or team.
- When equipment is shared during an activity, participants should perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before play, during breaks, at half time, and after the conclusion of the activity.
 - Balls or other objects or equipment can be touched by multiple players and used during practice and play if the above hand hygiene practices are followed.
- Drink bottles must not be shared, and other personal items and equipment should not be shared.

Cohorting

- Athletes and coaches should cohort by team, and refrain from participating with more than one team over the same season or time period (notwithstanding competitions permitted as outlined below).

Observers

- For youth sports (age 18 years and under), immediate household members may observe practices and games as needed for age-appropriate supervision, but observers should be limited to ensure physical distance can be maintained, reduce potential crowding, and maintain indoor and outdoor capacity limits allowed by Tiers.
- Observers must stay at least 6 feet from non-household members and wear face coverings.

Indoor Venues

- Limit indoor sports venue capacity for athletes, coaches, and observers to CDPH Gym & Fitness Center Guidance Capacity (25% in Tier 3 [Orange/Moderate], and 50% in Tier 4 [Yellow/Minimal]).
- Ventilation in indoor sports venues should be increased to the maximum extent possible.

Additional Recommendations

- For adult sports, spectators are not permitted at this time.
- Local health departments and school districts may have stricter rules and should be consulted to confirm what is allowed.

Permitted Youth and Recreational Adult Sports by County Tier

- Physical conditioning, practice, skill-building, and training that can be conducted outdoors, with 6 feet of physical distancing, and within stable cohorts are authorized regardless of county tier status. Such activities may be conducted indoors consistent with restrictions by Tier in the Gym & Fitness Center Guidance Capacity.
- The Table below provides information on which categories of competitions are permitted in each Tier.
- The Table is not exhaustive, but provides examples of sports with different levels of contact so that the level of risk and appropriate Tier can be assessed for other sports.

Inter-Team Competitions

- As transmission rates are increasing significantly in California, communities across California must act with caution and state agencies will carefully monitor epidemiological trends.
- Inter-team competitions (i.e., between two teams) may resume in California beginning January 25, 2021, based on the guidelines outlined in this document. The status of return-to-competition is subject to change at any time given the level of COVID-19 transmission in California.
- Teams must not participate in out-of-state tournaments; several multistate outbreaks have been reported in CA residents and around the nation.
- Inter-team competitions, meets, races, or similar events are authorized only if (a) both teams are located in the same county and the sport is authorized in the Table below; or (b) teams are located in immediately bordering counties and the sport is authorized in both counties in the Table below.
- The county-based authorizations outlined in the Table below applies to the locations/counties in which the teams, schools, clubs, leagues, and similar organizations are functionally based (e.g., where the players reside, where facilities are located, etc.).
- Any tournaments or events that involve more than two teams are not currently permitted in California. Exceptions may be made, with authorization from the local health department, for the following sports where individual competitors from multiple teams are routine: track and field; cross-country; golf; skiing/snowboarding; tennis; and swimming/diving.

Returning to sports after infection (1)

- Children and teens with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend practices or competition. They should consult their physician for testing and notify their coach, athletic trainer and/or school administrator of their symptoms.
- Youths recovering from COVID-19 will have different paths to return to sports based on the severity of their illness. Those who are asymptomatic or have mild symptoms should not exercise until cleared by a physician. See the American Academy of Pediatrics Interim Guidance on Return to Sports for additional guidance for more serious infections.

Table: Youth and Adult Recreational Sports* Permitted by Current Tier of County

Widespread Tier (Purple) 1†	Substantial Tier (Red) 2†	Moderate Tier (Orange) 3†	Minimal Tier (Yellow) 4†
Outdoor low-contact sports • Archery • Badminton • Biking • Bocce • Corn hole • Cross country • Dance (no contact) • Disc golf • Golf • Ice and roller skating (no contact) • Lawn bowling • Martial arts (no contact) • Physical training programs (e.g., yoga, Zumba, Tai chi) • Pickleball (singles) • Rowing/crew (with 1 person) • Running • Shuffleboard • Skeet shooting • Skiing and snowboarding • Snowshoeing • Swimming and diving • Tennis • Track and field • Walking and hiking	Outdoor moderate-contact sports • Baseball • Cheerleading • Dodgeball • Field hockey • Gymnastics • Kickball • Lacrosse (girls/women) • Pickleball (doubles) • Softball	Outdoor high-contact sports • Basketball • Football • Ice hockey • Lacrosse (boys/men) • Rugby • Rowing/crew (with 2 or more people) • Soccer • Volleyball • Water polo Indoor low-contact sports • Badminton • Curling • Dance (no contact) • Gymnastics • Ice skating (individual) • Physical training • Pickleball (singles) • Swimming and diving • Tennis • Track and field • Volleyball	Indoor moderate-contact sports • Cheerleading • Dance (intermittent contact) • Dodgeball • Kickball • Pickleball (doubles) • Racquetball • Squash Indoor high-contact sports • Basketball • Boxing • Ice hockey • Ice skating (pairs) • Martial arts • Roller derby • Soccer • Water polo • Wrestling

*This Table is not exhaustive, but provides examples of sports with different levels of contact so that the level of risk and appropriate Tier can be assessed for other sports.

†All sports permitted in lower tiers, are also permitted in higher tiers.

¹<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/>

California Department of Public Health
PO Box, 997377, MS 0500, Sacramento, CA 95899-7377
Department Website (cdph.ca.gov)

