



Arkansas Department of Health

4815 West Markham Street • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205-3867 • Telephone (501) 661-2000
Governor Asa Hutchinson
José R. Romero, MD, Secretary of Health

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Amended July 23, 2020

Amended August 10, 2020

Amended August 21, 2020

Amended February 15, 2021

Changed February 26, 2021 from Directive to Guidance

Revision converting mask requirement to guidance, effective April 1, 2021

Guidance for Community and School Sponsored Team Sports

The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, has sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation, and restrictions on commerce and travel throughout Arkansas, as necessary and appropriate to control disease in the state of Arkansas as authorized by Ark. Code Ann. §20-7-109--110.

Community spread of COVID-19 remains active within the State. Therefore, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) makes the following recommendations for how to best prevent transmission of COVID-19 at sporting events or practices.

This guidance does not include intercollegiate athletic team sports nor apply to bands, orchestras, or choirs. Please see the [Guidance for Community and School Sponsored Music and Theater](#).

General Recommendations

- Maintain minimum physical distancing of six (6) feet between participants at all times, except when actively participating in the sports activity.
- Tournaments or sports leagues could consider requiring testing for SARS-CoV-2 by antigen or PCR prior to the event or even regularly during a season.
- The more people on a team or at a game who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, the less likely it will be for a large outbreak to occur. ADH strongly recommends teams and leagues encourage all eligible players and coaches to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible. Currently, vaccination is available to all those aged 16 years and older.
- Athletes, coaches, officials, and all staff should be screened prior to any activity by asking the following questions and excluded if the response is affirmative.
 - Have had a fever of 100.4°F or greater in the last 2 days?
 - Have a cough, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle aches (myalgias), sore throat, headache, recent loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea?

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- Had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days when they themselves are not fully vaccinated?
 - Had a positive COVID-19 test in last 10 days?
 - Waiting on the results of a test for COVID-19?
- Coaches, officials, and all staff (includes all workers in any capacity) should, in addition to the above screening process, have temperature checked by digital thermometer prior to entry, and those whose temperature is 100.4°F or greater should be excluded. It is recommended those with temperature of 100.4°F or greater seek evaluation by a medical professional to be tested for SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- ADH recommends wearing face coverings according to the [Face Coverings Guidance](#). For sports, ADH recommends wearing face coverings at all times, except for people actively participating in athletic activities when a six (6) feet distance is not achievable and when a face covering is inhibitory to the activity or active exercise.
 - Athletes
 - For outdoor sports, face coverings should be worn when not actively participating in an outdoor sports activity and there is not ample space to maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet between persons. Face coverings should be worn while actively participating, if the face covering is not inhibitory to the activity.
 - For indoor sports, face coverings should be worn at all times, except when a face covering is inhibitory while actively participating.
 - Coaches and Staff
 - Face coverings should be worn when six (6) feet physical distancing cannot be assured.
- Outdoor activities pose less risk of spread than indoor activities. Therefore, minimize the amount of time spent indoors. If it is necessary to be inside, ensure the facility has proper [ventilation and air filtration systems](#) and open windows and doors to increase airflow throughout the space.
- Physical distancing of six (6) feet should be maintained in the locker room. Face coverings must be used in locker rooms; it is acceptable to remove face coverings temporarily for washing or bathing.
- Participants should consider refraining from participation if:
 - They are 65 years of age or older.
 - They have underlying health conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma or weakened immunity.
- An alcohol-based hand sanitizer or adequate handwashing facilities should be provided for use by all attendees.
- Sports equipment, restrooms, lockers, water fountains and other high touch surfaces should be sanitized frequently during each event.
- Avoid non-sport-related personal contact at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, huddles, high-fives, hand shaking, fist bumping, and chest bumping.
- For games, competitions, tournaments, meets, and other athletic events held in a facility, the facility hosting the event should follow the current Guidance for [Large Indoor](#) or [Outdoor](#) Venues. Spectators are covered under those guidances.
- For training and conditioning held in an athletic facility, the facility should follow the current [Guidance for Gyms, Fitness Centers, Athletic Clubs and Weight](#)

Rooms.

- Concession Stands should follow all applicable sections of the guidance for [Restaurant Dine-in Operations](#).
- Admission and gate ticket sales should be taken online, when possible.
- Group size should be sufficiently limited to maintain six (6) feet between each person while not actively participating in activity, including staff, whenever in an indoor or outdoor enclosed space. Even when not in an enclosed area, those not actively participating should maintain six (6) feet distance between each person.
- When using weight rooms, practicing calisthenics, running, or other training where vigorous exercise occurs and close contact is not necessary, participants should maintain proper spacing from others by working out with twelve (12) feet between each person. This may require closing or moving some equipment.
- Spotters are allowed on the outside of weight bars on each side for safety reasons. Physical distancing should be maintained when not actively performing spotting duties.
- When appropriate, participants should provide their own equipment. If shared equipment is used, disinfection is required frequently during each event or between each use when possible. This would not preclude activities such as playing catch where a ball is tossed back and forth between players.
- Running events (marathons, 5 or 10Ks, and endurance races) - event starts should be staggered and starting places marked to maintain a physical distance of six (6) feet between participants at the start of the event. Participants should be encouraged to maintain twelve (12) feet physical distance during the race unless actively attempting to overtake another competitor.

ADH will continue to closely monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation.

Resources

- [CDC Guidance for Youth Sports](#)
- EPA-Approved COVID sanitizers: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/giwiz/disinfectants/index.cfm>
- All ADH COVID-19 Guidance: <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/covid-19-health-guidances>