



## MPA Baseball Committee

### Baseball Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations  
Governor's Office - State of Maine  
Maine Department of Education  
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development  
Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

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**The Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports have labeled the sport of baseball as a “Moderate Risk” activity. “Moderate Risk” activities are sports and activities that involve intermittent proximity but with protective equipment or mitigating measures in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants (e.g., wearing masks, modifying play to maintain 6 feet of physical distancing, cleaning, and disinfecting). The following recommendations are being made in accordance with the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.**

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Coaches and School Administrator(s) must hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

- **DISTANCING**

- Space players at least 6 feet apart whenever possible (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game). Physical distancing should also be maintained while teams conduct pre-game batting practice and infield.
- Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- Require individuals to maintain 6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group.

- **SPECTATORS**

- Organizers of school-based activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the [Governor's Executive Order](#) on gathering size limits. (Updated 11/6/20)
  - Players, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators count toward the gathering limit. (Updated 9/10/20)
  - If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the six-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
- All gathering limits as further established by the [Governor's Executive Order](#) are subject to the following limits: (Updated 3/5/21)
  - All indoor gatherings limits:
    - **Effective March 26, 2021 through May 23, 2021:** 50% of permitted occupancy or 50 persons, whichever is greater.
    - **Effective May 24, 2021 and thereafter:** 75% of permitted occupancy or 50 persons, whichever is greater.
  - Any outdoor gathering taking place at a facility or event that is subject to a permitted occupancy limit is subject to the following limits:
    - **Effective March 26, 2021 through May 23, 2021:** 75% of permitted occupancy.
    - **Effective May 24, 2021 and thereafter:** 100% of permitted occupancy.
- Face coverings must always be worn by athletes, coaches, staff, meet officials/workers, and spectators.
- Spectators must maintain 6 feet of physical distance between each other and athletes.

- **FACE COVERINGS**

- All individuals must wear face coverings, including athletes during competition.
  - Athletes must replace their face covering if it becomes wet or otherwise soiled.
- To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.
- Face coverings for pitchers may not be white or grey.

- **SCHEDULING**

- Organizers of outdoor contests are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the [Governor's Executive Order](#).
  - All individuals, including athletes, coaches, officials, workers, and volunteers count toward the gathering limit.
  - If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 6-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
  - Whenever possible competition should be scheduled between teams from a geographic area.

- **FACILITY**

- When possible, the host facility should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators to separate the teams from spectators.
- Medical staff must brief coaches on protocols and isolation space for if an athlete becomes sick during the meet.
- Host sites shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations.

- **VISITING TEAMS**

- Visiting teams should arrive in a self-sufficient manner.

- Come ready to compete dressed in uniform.
  - Medical kit with necessary athletic training supplies
    - This should include back up face coverings and gloves.
    - Visiting teams should plan to bring their own water jug for their student-athletes to refill their water vessels.
    - These jugs/refill station should be clearly marked with the team name and purpose of only for use by such school when possible.
    - Host site medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space if an athlete becomes sick during competition.
- **SCREENING**
    - Student-athletes must complete and pass a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
    - All game day staff/officials must complete and pass self-screening questions prior to arriving at the event.
    - Spectators must complete and pass a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, prior to attending any event.
  - **TEAM BENCHES**
    - Team areas may be expanded for players only toward the foul pole area, to promote physical distancing and player safety. The area should be clearly marked as an out-of-bounds area and protected by a fence or screen. Teams are allowed, depending on the facility, to use the area behind the backstop fence for team areas.
    - Limit bench personnel to observe physical distancing of 6 feet while prioritizing the safety of those athletes in the bench area.
    - There should be sanitizer available in each dugout.
    - Schools should maximize the number of bench seats for each team (seats may be arranged in such a way that one is behind the other.)
    - All participants and coaches must always wear face covering while in the bench area.
    - Mask may be removed while hydrating so long as the person hydrating is 6 feet from anyone else in/on the bench area.
  - **PRE-GAME CONFERENCE**
    - Limit attendees to the two umpires, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team.
    - Move the location of the pregame conference away from the home plate area. All individuals must be masked and maintain distancing of 6 feet during the conference.
    - Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference. Coaches and captains may use a good sportsmanship wave.
    - No pregame introductions. Send players to their field positions for the start of play.
  - **IN-GAME PROCEDURES**
    - Coaches, athletes, and all bench personnel, must always wear masks during the contest.
    - Athletes, coaches, and game personnel should sanitize hands after each half-inning.
    - Prohibit unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, chest bumps, hugs, or team huddles.
    - No handshakes post-game - utilize the good sportsmanship wave.
    - The home team is responsible for providing legal game balls. Each defensive team will put a new game ball into play from bench area when necessary.
    - Face masks worn by the pitcher may not be white or grey in color.
    - No chanting or singing in the team bench area.
    - No seeds or spitting.

- Shared equipment (bats, batting helmets, and catcher's gear) should be sanitized on a regular basis.
- If an athlete provides their own bat, helmet, or catchers equipment, they must meet the required safety certifications.
- Coaches must stop at the foul line to communicate with an umpire. This communication may only be for a rule interpretation or to ask the umpire to check with his partner.
- The pitch count should be communicated while still utilizing the 6' distancing.
- The pitcher may not go to their mouth, they may have a damp cloth, not white or grey, in their back pocket. Cloth must be dampened with water only. They must wipe their hand prior to touching the ball.
- The plate umpire will work from behind the mound.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSING/TRANSPORTATION**

- If transport vehicles (e.g., buses) are used, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, face coverings). Drivers should be a minimum of six feet from passengers to the extent possible; drivers must wear a face covering; consider physical barriers for driver.
- Open bus/vehicle windows open if weather allows.
- Masks/face coverings must be worn by everyone on the bus.
- Hand sanitizer should be available and used when entering and exiting the bus.
- To the extent possible, maximize the distance between individuals on the bus. Since vehicles have difference sizes and capacities, there is no single recommendation for spacing. That said, filling a vehicle to its maximum capacity even with masks/face coverings poses a public health risk and is inadvisable.
- Assign seating, individuals from the same household should sit together if space on the bus is limited.
- Minimize the number of people on the bus at one time within reason.
- To minimize contact between passengers, load the bus from back to front and unload the bus from front to back.
- Routinely clean and disinfect buses or other transport vehicles.
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation to competitions for athletes who have other options. Advise athletes who carpool to wear face coverings while in the vehicle, maximize outdoor air circulation, and open vehicle windows if weather allows.