



MPA Cheerleading Committee Sideline Cheer 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

The NFHS has labeled sideline cheerleading as a “Lower Risk” activity. “Lower Risk” activities are those that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.

The Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports has labeled sideline cheerleading as a “Moderate Risk” (Level 4) activity. “Moderate Risk” activities are sports and activities that involve intermittent close proximity or limited, incidental contact, 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 distance, cleaning and disinfecting).

The following recommendations are being made in accordance with NFHS and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) should 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 cheerleaders 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).
- 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 whenever possible.

- **SPECTATORS/CAPACITY**

The approval of spectators must follow the guidelines below.

- Organizers of community sports 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, currently set at 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors, or fewer if distancing rules cannot be accommodated.
- Players, coaches, volunteers, officials, cheerleaders, and spectators 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.
- Face coverings must always be worn by spectators.
- Spectators must maintain 6 feet of physical distance between themselves and others.

- **FACE COVERINGS**

- Face coverings must always be worn by cheerleaders, coaches, staff, and spectators.
- Unless the governing body for your sport has a specific recommendation regarding plastic face shields, do not wear them in place of a face covering given potential safety risks.

- **FACILITY PREPARATION MODIFICATIONS**

- Sideline cheerleading stations clearly marked.
- A roster of all participants sent electronically to the host school in advance of the contest to determine if any specific modifications are necessary.
- Signage in the activity area that encourages foundational components of lowering risk: masking, social distancing, monitoring one's personal health, hygiene
- When possible, schools should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators to separate the teams from the public.
- Home team medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space for if an athlete becomes sick during play.
- Home teams shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations at the scorer's table and each team area.

- **SANITATION AND HYGIENE**

- It should be the understanding of everyone involved in the contest that student-athletes and coaches have completed a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
- Participants do not share water bottles or towels
- Cloth face coverings are permitted for all coaches, team staff, cheerleaders, and for all game administration officials.
- Hand sanitizer must be available at the team area.
- Before, during, and after the contest, student-athletes, coaches, team personnel, and game administration should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
- Gloves are permitted for all coaches and team members.
- Only essential personnel are permitted into the team area.
- Team members must observe social distancing of 6 feet.
- All participants and coaches shall always wear face covering while on or 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.

- **IN-GAME MODIFICATIONS**

- All cheerleaders must wear masks throughout the contest.
- No stunting or tumbling.
- No giveaways (ex. T-shirts, prizes) to the crowd during the contest.
- No pregame or postgame handshakes, teams may use the good sportsmanship wave.
- No signs or banners for the team to run through prior to the contest.
- Halftime routines must maintain 6 feet of distancing, must have facemasks, and may not include tumbling or stunting.