



## INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL SPORTS COMPETITIONS WITH FANS DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

**When you have read this document, you can affirm at the bottom.**

As of March 22, 2021

### **Purpose**

This Interim Guidance for Professional Sports Competitions with Fans or Spectators during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (“Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Professional Sports Competitions with Fans”) was created to provide owners and managers of professional sports teams, athletes, team personnel, owners and operators of arenas, stadiums and other professional sports venues and venue personnel, as well as contractors, vendors, and patrons, with precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19 as professional sports competitions resume with fans or spectators.

For the purposes of this document, professional sports are defined as any sporting event at which participants are paid (e.g., by a league, team, or sponsor) or are professionally organized (e.g., Olympic Committee). In addition to this guidance, participants in unarmed combative sports are also subject to the jurisdiction and rules of the New York State Athletic Commission. This guidance does not apply to youth or collegiate sports, which are each covered under separate guidance. This guidance also does not apply to horse racing or auto racing events, which are each covered under separate guidance. Finally, this guidance does not apply to events that are not professional sports competitions (e.g., concerts) that may occur in arenas, stadiums, and other professional sports venues, which are covered under separate guidance for performing arts and entertainment.

In accordance with this guidance, professional sports arenas, stadiums, and professional sports venues with an indoor or outdoor capacity of 10,000 attendees or greater may host professional sports competitions with a limited number of fans or spectators. Prior to hosting competitions with fans or spectators, such arenas, stadiums, and venues must submit a venue and event plan to the New York State Department of Health (DOH), including specific measures and/or resources in place to meet the standards set forth in this guidance on testing/immunization/health screening, social distancing, face coverings, controlled movement, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, and communication. Following receipt of the venue and event plan, DOH may request additional information and/or perform an on-site or remote inspection prior to approval to host competitions with fans or spectators. If there are material changes to the venue and event plan, they must be re-submitted for review. For each event, approved arenas, stadiums, and other venues must submit event details to DOH, at least 5 days in advance of the event date, and such details shall include but not be limited to (1) Responsible Parties’ contact information, (2) event name, (3) event address, (4) event date and time, (5) estimated event duration, (6) expected number of event fans or spectators, and (7) expected number of event staff, inclusive of venue personnel, contractors, and vendors.

Effective April 1, 2021, professional sports arenas, stadiums, and professional sports venues with an indoor capacity of 1,500 to 9,999 attendees or outdoor capacity of 2,500 to 9,999 attendees may host professional sports competitions with a limited number of fans or spectators. Prior to hosting competitions with fans or spectators, such arenas, stadiums, and venues must submit a venue and event plan to the respective county health department or local public health authority, including specific measures and/or resources in place to meet the standards set forth in this guidance on

testing/immunization/health screening, social distancing, face coverings, controlled movement, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, and communication. Following receipt of the venue and event plan, local health officials may request additional information and/or perform an on-site or remote inspection prior to approval to host competitions with fans or spectators. If there are material changes to the venue and event plan, they must be re-submitted for review. For each event, approved arenas, stadiums, and other venues must submit event details to the local health authorities, at least 5 days in advance of the event date, and such details shall include but not be limited to (1) Responsible Parties' contact information, (2) event name, (3) event address, (4) event date and time, (5) estimated event duration, (6) expected number of event fans or spectators, and (7) expected number of event staff, inclusive of venue personnel, contractors, and vendors.

Owners, operators, managers, team personnel, venue personnel, and any other individuals involved in the conduct of professional sports competitions with fans or spectators should reference relevant industry-specific DOH guidelines where appropriate. Specifically, any activities taking place in offices must operate in accordance with DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Offices During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#);" any activities taking place in professional sports training facilities must operate in accordance with DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Professional Sports Training Facilities During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#);" any activities related to massage therapy or spas must operate in accordance with DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Personal Care Services During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#);" any activities related to food service must operate in accordance with DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Food Services During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#);" and any activities related to retail, such as merchandise sales, must operate in accordance with DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Essential and Phase II Retail Business Activities During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)."

These guidelines are minimum requirements only and the management of any professional sports team, arena, stadium, or other professional sports venue is free to provide additional precautions or increased restrictions. These guidelines are based on the best-known public health practices at the time of publication, and the documentation upon which these guidelines are based can and does change frequently. The Responsible Parties – as defined below – are accountable for adhering to all local, state, and federal requirements relative to professional sports activities and professional sports venue operations. The Responsible Parties are also accountable for staying current with any updates to these requirements, as well as incorporating same into any professional sports team, arena, and/or stadium site safety plan(s).

## Background

On March 7, 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202](#), declaring a state disaster in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Since May 15, 2020, New York State has developed and deployed a phased economic reopening strategy based on science and data, which has allowed specific industries to safely resume or increase activities and operations while protecting public health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the following standards, all professional sports teams, arenas, and stadiums must continue to comply with the guidance and directives for maintaining clean and safe work environments issued by DOH.

Please note that where guidance in this document differs from other guidance documents issued by New York State, the more recent guidance shall apply.

## Standards for Responsible Professional Sports Competitions with Fans in New York State

No professional sports competitions with fans or spectators can occur without meeting the following minimum State standards, as well as applicable federal requirements, including but not limited to such minimum standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The State standards contained within this guidance apply to all professional sports competitions with fans or spectators during the COVID-19 public health emergency until rescinded or amended by the State. In addition to these standards, professional sports activities must adhere to the return-to-play guidance or adopted recommendations from their respective league or regulating body. The owner and/or management of the professional sports team or professional sports arena, stadium, or other professional sports venue (in either case, "the Responsible Parties"), shall be responsible for meeting these standards.

Given that professional sports competitions with fans or spectators involve a wide variety of individuals (e.g., athletes, coaches, trainers, regulators, timekeepers, judges, referees, medical personnel, media personnel, venue personnel, contractors, security personnel, vendors), this document will simply refer to "team staff, athletes, and venue personnel" for all individuals who may be necessary to stage, host, and, where applicable, broadcast a professional sports competitions with fans or spectators present, unless stated otherwise. For the purposes of this guidance, professional sports arenas, stadiums, and other professional sports venues will be referred to as "venues" and fans or spectators will be referred to as "patrons."

The following guidance is organized around three distinct categories: people, places, and processes.

## I. PEOPLE

### A. Physical Distancing

#### 1. Patrons

- Responsible Parties must ensure that the total number of patrons at professional sports competitions occurring in indoor or outdoor venues is limited to no more than 10% of the maximum seated capacity for a fixed seating venue or 10% of the maximum occupancy for a flexible seating venue as set by the certificate of occupancy, exclusive of all team staff, athletes, and venue personnel.
  - Effective April 1, 2021, the total number of patrons at professional sports competitions occurring in outdoor venues must be limited to no more than 20% of the maximum capacity or occupancy, as applicable. If an outdoor venue does not have a set capacity or occupancy, Responsible Parties must limit capacity to no more than 1 patron per 100 square feet or a party of 4 patrons per 250 square feet, exclusive of team staff, athletes, and venue personnel.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that all patrons are only permitted entry to the venue if they wear an acceptable face covering at all times; provided, however, that patrons may remove their face covering when seated at their assigned seat/area to eat or drink. The face covering requirement applies to any patron over the age of two and able to medically tolerate such covering.
  - Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and disposable masks that cover both the mouth and nose.
  - However, cloth, disposable, or other homemade face coverings are not acceptable face coverings for workplace activities that typically require a higher degree of protection for personal protective equipment (PPE) due to the nature of the work. For those activities, N95 respirators or other PPE

used under existing industry standards should continue to be used, in accordance with [OSHA guidelines](#).

- The face covering requirement must be applied in a manner consistent with the federal ADA and New York State and City Human Rights Laws, as applicable.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that a distance of at least six feet is maintained among patrons at all times, with the exception of individuals who are members of the same immediate party/household/family.
  - Where practical, Responsible Parties should recommend that individuals from different parties/households/families maintain nine to twelve feet of distance. Distancing requirements greater than six feet will help Responsible Parties ensure more controlled movement throughout the venue and assist with compliance and enforcement of this guidance.
  - Responsible Parties must ensure patrons not from the same party/household/family maintain appropriate distance in any areas where individuals may congregate (e.g., parking areas, waiting lines/areas, entry/exit points, lobbies, concourses, lounges, viewing areas).
  - Responsible Parties must establish venue-specific protocols to ensure that patrons not from the same party/household/family maintain appropriate distance during parking, ingress, admissions, intermissions/breaks in play, and egress (e.g., open sufficient number of gates, deploy ushers to direct traffic, use timed waves of entry and/or assigned gates, modify parking areas to provide additional space between vehicles).
- Responsible Parties must develop an audience seating arrangement that ensures at least six feet of distance between patrons who are not in the same immediate party/household/family. Where practical, Responsible Parties should consider additional distancing of nine to twelve feet between parties/households/families.
  - Responsible Parties must require reservations and assign seats to patrons prior to entering the venue to ensure compliance with distancing requirements.
  - Within a row, Responsible Parties must limit seating such that at least two seats are unoccupied between each group of patrons unless the venue has seating that naturally allows six feet of distance between seats.
  - Responsible Parties must limit seating in traditional seating arrangements to every other row unless the venue has seating that naturally allows six feet of distance between rows.
  - Responsible Parties must encourage patrons to remain seated once the competition begins, unless patrons are traveling to use the restroom, purchase or pick-up items from the concession or retail area(s), or exit the venue. No loitering in common areas.
  - Where possible, Responsible Parties should minimize the number of groups in each row to avoid close contact when individuals leave their seat to use the restroom or visit a concession area.
- Further, Responsible Parties must consider the following factors when developing their audience seating arrangement:
  - Patrons must be separated from the area of play where team staff and athletes are located by 12 feet or an appropriate physical barrier.
  - Seats should be made available in small groups or “blocks” that allow members of the same party/household/family to sit together and remain appropriately distanced from other groups of patrons.
  - Where applicable, suites or boxes must have specific patron capacity limitations (i.e., lesser of 10 people or 25% of the maximum occupancy of such space).

- Responsible Parties must maintain sufficient venue personnel to direct or guide patrons to their seats to ensure adherence to social distancing requirements and avoid any unnecessary congregation.
  - Where applicable, Responsible Parties are encouraged to maintain adequate lighting in the venue for as long as possible before the competition so that patrons can be seated according to social distancing requirements.
- Where six feet of distance is not possible between venue personnel and patrons, Responsible Parties must enact physical barriers between venue personnel and patrons (e.g., ticket booths, registers, concessions, and ticket-taker stations).
  - If used, physical barriers should be put in place in accordance with [OSHA guidelines](#).
  - Physical barrier options may include: strip curtains, cubicles, plexiglass or similar materials, or other impermeable dividers or partitions.
- Responsible Parties should consider closing any patron/fan experience gathering areas that present risk of congregation and commingling of patrons immediately before, during, and after games. Responsible Parties must eliminate any pre- or post-game "on-field," area of play passes that may normally be made available to patrons and/or other individuals who are not essential to the professional sports operations and activities.
- Responsible Parties should discourage patrons from congregating outside the venue immediately before or after the game, to the extent practicable, and should implement a security plan to disperse individuals who gather in the immediate vicinity outside of the venue and violate social distancing requirements (e.g., individuals who are tailgating).
- For events that require bag security checks or other security inspections of personal items, Responsible Parties should implement a restriction on bags, or require patrons to bring items in clear bags to speed up queues and avoid need for frequent staff contact with personal items.
- Responsible Parties may consider closing any common seating areas at the venue that encourage congregation (e.g., shared seating, benches, couches). To the extent that such areas remain open, Responsible Parties must modify seating arrangements (e.g., chairs, benches) to ensure that patrons or groups of patrons are at least six feet apart in all directions (i.e., side-to-side and when facing one another).
- Responsible Parties must put in place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic using barriers, tape, or signs with arrows in narrow aisles (e.g., between rows of seats), hallways, or spaces, and post signage and distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas and any areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate (e.g., lobbies, restrooms, elevators, entrances and exits, ticket stations, box offices, health screening stations).
  - Where possible, Responsible Parties should place markers or barriers to encourage one directional traffic.
  - Responsible Parties must mark areas for six feet apart at commonly congested areas (e.g., common seating areas in lobbies, merchandise retail areas).
  - Responsible Parties should consider placing signage and markings outside and inside the venue to create one-way foot traffic to facilitate and ensure social distancing upon entry and exit, as well as through any concourse and high-traffic areas.
- Responsible Parties must prohibit "tailgating" and other unauthorized gatherings on and around their premises before or after the event. Parking areas at venues shall not open more than two hours in advance of any event to discourage such congregate activity.

- Responsible Parties should discourage any unnecessary physical contact among patrons who are not members of the same immediate party/household/family.
- Responsible Parties should establish a system of enforcement of the requirements within this guidance, including but not limited to face coverings and social distancing. Such system of compliance may specify penalties for patrons in case of violations (e.g., one face covering warning allowed before ejection from venue).

## 2. Team Staff, Athletes, and Venue Personnel

- Responsible Parties must ensure that team staff, athletes, and venue personnel practice physical distancing by maintaining at least six feet of distance from other individuals or groups of people, particularly while standing in lines, using elevators or escalators, or moving around the property, to the extent possible, and notwithstanding proximity or contact that may occur during the competition or other core activities. Provided that certain functions and core activities at professional sports venues require coming within six feet of other individuals, these functions shall be identified and a protocol for mitigation of risk for affected individuals shall be implemented.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that team staff, athletes, and venue personnel are only permitted entry into the venue if they wear an acceptable face covering at all times, except for athletes when engaged in training, warming up, or competition and broadcast media personnel when it interferes with the core activity. Athletes must wear a face covering while on the sidelines and not actively engaged in play. However, athletes on the sideline recovering from previous play, preparing to substitute into the game, or assigned to a team unit preparing to enter or currently on the field of play are exempt from this requirement.
- Responsible Parties must put in place protocols for team staff and athletes to limit the use of frequently shared spaces such as locker rooms, restrooms, lounges, team benches, or similar spaces to allow for proper social distancing when not on the field of play.
- Responsible Parties should ensure six feet of space between all lockers for athletes to accommodate social distancing.
- Responsible Parties must limit the number of individuals allowed on or near the field of play to only participating athletes and team personnel (e.g., coaches), and other essential personnel who Responsible Parties may deem necessary.
- Responsible Parties should consider establishing a tier system to control movement and access within the venue for all essential personnel (e.g., tier 1, 2, 3 individuals and associated rights of access within venue).
- Responsible Parties must ensure team staff and athletes on the sidelines are six feet or more apart to ensure appropriate social distancing at all times and minimize congregation of team staff and athletes on the sidelines. Teams may consider using ancillary seating (e.g., a row of empty stands) to accomplish this distancing requirement so long as 12 feet of space or an appropriate physical barrier separates patrons from the team staff and athletes.
- Responsible Parties should ensure appropriate social distancing during all team travel to and from the venue (e.g., team buses and planes), to the extent possible. All individuals must wear appropriate face coverings when in transit.



- Responsible Parties should establish separate entrance(s) to the venue for team staff and athletes to limit intermingling and congregation with patrons and venue personnel and to facilitate health screening.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that only essential team staff and athletes are allowed in designated team areas (e.g., locker rooms, athlete lounges, training areas, athlete medical areas). Media personnel should be prohibited from entering such team areas.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that media interactions, including post-game interviews, follow appropriate social distancing and/or physical barriers at all times.
- Responsible Parties should discourage any unnecessary physical contact that is not normally core to professional sports activities among team staff, athletes, and venue personnel.
- To the extent possible, Responsible Parties shall arrange physical layouts for fixed workstations to ensure appropriate distancing between team staff and venue personnel.
  - Responsible Parties should allow on-site media personnel to be spaced out within the venue to limit congregation in spaces that may not permit appropriate distancing or accommodate physical barriers (e.g., broadcast booths, media rooms).
- Responsible Parties may modify the use and/or restrict the number of workstations and seating areas, so that team staff and venue personnel are at least six feet apart in all directions (e.g., side-to-side and when facing one another) and are not sharing workstations without cleaning and disinfection between use. When distancing is not feasible between workstations, Responsible Parties may enact physical barriers, such as plastic shielding walls in areas where they would not affect air flow, heating, cooling, or ventilation, or present a health or safety risk.
- Responsible Parties should prohibit the use of small spaces (e.g., elevators, equipment rooms, mechanical areas, behind cash registers, storage rooms) by more than one individual at a time, unless all individuals in such space at the same time are wearing acceptable face coverings. However, even with face coverings in use, occupancy must never exceed 50% of the maximum capacity of the space, unless it is designed for use by a single occupant. Responsible Parties should increase ventilation with outdoor air in such areas to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors), while maintaining safety protocols.
  - Responsible Parties should take additional measures to prevent congregation in elevator waiting areas and limit density in elevators, such as enabling the use of stairs.
- Responsible Parties should consider assigning venue personnel into fixed pairs or small groups (i.e., cohorts) to limit the number of close or proximate contacts, where possible, particularly for maintenance and cleaning staff.
- Responsible Parties must post signs throughout the venue, consistent with DOH COVID-19 signage. Responsible Parties can develop their own customized signage specific to their workplace or setting, provided that such signage is consistent with the Department's signage. Signage should be used to remind individuals to:
  - Stay home if they are feeling sick.
  - Cover their nose and mouth with a face covering at all times, except while eating or drinking in assigned seat
  - Adhere to DOH travel advisory requirements.
  - Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE, including face coverings.

- Adhere to physical distancing instructions.
- Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19, and how they should do so.
- Follow hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
- Follow appropriate respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

## B. Gatherings in Enclosed Spaces

- Where applicable, Responsible Parties should limit in-person gatherings (e.g., team staff meetings, venue personnel briefings) to the greatest extent possible and consider the use of other methods such as video or teleconferencing, per CDC guidance "[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)". When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not preferable or possible, Responsible Parties should ensure meetings are held in open, well-ventilated spaces and ensure that individuals maintain six feet of social distance between one another (e.g., if there are chairs, leave space between chairs or have individuals sit in alternating chairs), notwithstanding professional sports practices or competitions.
- Responsible Parties should encourage social distancing by limiting occupancy or closing non-essential amenities and communal areas that do not allow for social distancing protocols. If open, Responsible Parties must make hand sanitizer or disinfecting wipes available next to equipment near such amenities (e.g., vending machines, communal coffee stations, break rooms).
- Responsible Parties must put in place practices for adequate social distancing in small areas, such as restrooms and break rooms, and should develop signage and systems (e.g., flagging when occupied) to restrict occupancy when social distancing cannot be maintained in such areas.
- Where possible, Responsible Parties should implement best practices for communal bathrooms, including but not limited to:
  - installation of physical barriers between toilets and sinks, if six feet of separation is not feasible (e.g., closing off every other stall or sink);
  - use of touch-free soap dispensers;
  - use of touch-free paper towel dispensers in lieu of air dryers; and
  - installing appropriate signage to encourage capacity restrictions in restrooms and distancing while waiting.
- To the extent practicable, Responsible Parties should stagger schedules for team staff and venue personnel to observe social distancing for any gathering (e.g., coffee breaks, practices, meals, and shift starts/stops).

## C. Operational Activity

- Where practical, Responsible Parties should consider shortening or eliminating, intermission(s) or game break(s) that feature incidental entertainment or attractions to reduce the amount of uncontrolled patron movement throughout the venue.
- Due to the increased risk that activities such as singing, shouting, projecting one's voice loudly, or playing wind instruments could potentially lead to increased production of respiratory droplets, Responsible Parties should consider ways to reduce the amount of high aerosol-producing programming at this time or implement appropriate risk mitigation measures (e.g., additional spacing, PPE, or testing).



- Responsible Parties should minimize audience participation by requiring patrons to remain seated (with the exceptions of entry/exit, restrooms, and/or concessions).
- Responsible Parties must ensure that all team staff, athletes, and venue personnel receive training on COVID-19 safety, proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- Responsible Parties must take measures to reduce interpersonal contact and congregation, through methods such as:
  - limiting in-person presence to only those staff who are necessary to stage, accommodate, and broadcast a competition with spectators;
  - adjusting workplace hours;
  - shifting design (e.g., A/B teams, staggered arrival/departure times for venue personnel);
  - prioritizing tasks that allow for social distancing over those that do not;
  - avoiding multiple crews and/or teams working in the same area by staggering scheduled tasks and using signs to indicate occupied areas (e.g., maintenance crews); and/or
  - developing protocols to socially distance while using shared equipment, such as telephones and radios, mic packs, copiers, printers, registers, and to clean and disinfect shared equipment between users and/or encourage users to wear disposable gloves.
- Where applicable, Responsible Parties must stagger consecutive event times and provide sufficient time between events to avoid crowding at exits and entrances and ensure thorough cleaning and disinfection of the venue after the events end.
- At this time, Responsible Parties must prohibit any direct, close contact patron-athlete interactions (e.g., autographs, distribution of "match worn" sporting equipment).
- Responsible Parties may open outdoor and indoor food service areas in strict accordance with guidelines outlined in DOH's "Interim Guidance for Food Services During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency" for all restaurants, bars, and/or concessions at the arena, stadium, or venue, including any required separation between tables with seating and social distancing between parties of patrons. However, wherever this guidance applies stricter standards (e.g., capacity limit, face covering requirements), Responsible Parties must abide by this guidance.
  - In accordance with the aforementioned guidance, Responsible Parties must discontinue self-service food and beverage (e.g., condiments, soda), and only allow employee served food and beverages at concession areas.
  - Responsible Parties should ensure that food and beverages are served in pre-packaged or pre-filled containers, where possible, and are not shared between individuals.
  - Responsible Parties must abide by any applicable curfews on food and beverage services; as of March 18, 2021, such food and beverage services must cease operations by no later than 11:00 PM.
- Responsible Parties should implement security protocols to ensure that venue spaces not in use for the professional sports competition remain closed to patrons to prohibit congregation outside of controlled areas and ensure social distancing protocols throughout the venue.

#### **D. Movement and Commerce**

- Responsible Parties must ensure that all patrons are ticketholders, in order to appropriately manage capacity restrictions, plan and control for the movement of individuals, and prevent unnecessary congregation near entrances/exits.
- To the extent practicable, Responsible Parties must assign patrons designated entry times at particular gates to reduce congregation during ingress, and must communicate this information to guests ahead of arrival (e.g., color coded tickets, print information on tickets, send information via email or text).
- Responsible Parties must open a sufficient number of gates at the stadium/arena during ingress and egress to reduce congregation. Responsible Parties must ensure that all open gates are staffed to control movements.
  - Responsible Parties must ensure that all ushers or similar venue personnel are available to direct exiting patrons towards the nearest gate for departure.
- Responsible Parties must maintain sufficient venue personnel (e.g., security, guest services) on site to monitor traffic flow, limit the number of patrons to the allowed capacity, and ensure patrons adhere to social distancing and gathering restrictions, especially during ingress and egress.
- Responsible Parties should consider extending the perimeter and entryway to allow for additional space to validate patron entry credentials (e.g., valid ticket, proof of negative diagnostic test result or proof of immunization) and process patrons during ingress to reduce congregation.
- Responsible Parties must prohibit congregating and loitering by patrons (e.g., in concession areas) and must maintain sufficient venue personnel on site, including hiring or deploying additional staff, to eliminate congregating and loitering.
- Responsible Parties should limit on-site interactions (e.g., designate an egress for individuals leaving the venue and a separate ingress for individuals entering the venue) and movements (e.g., event personnel should remain near their workstations as often as possible).
  - Responsible Parties should provide clearly designated separate entrances and exits with one-way traffic flow, where possible.
  - Responsible Parties must develop a plan for people to maintain six feet of social distance while waiting inside or outside of the venue to provide proof of required diagnostic testing or immunization credential. Responsible Parties may use visual cues and/or queueing control devices (e.g., stanchions, line distance markers, arrows).
- Responsible Parties should rearrange patron waiting areas (e.g., queues, lobbies, parking areas) to maximize social distance among other patrons and minimize interaction with others in the area.
- Responsible Parties must ensure patrons/visitors are able to purchase tickets in advance, in order to manage and track the capacity limits. Responsible Parties must provide primarily contactless check-in ticketing, and pay-ahead options (e.g., online portal, mobile application, call-ahead, mail order, or physical pick-up at pre-arranged time) and should use touchless payment options, as available, to minimize handling cash, credit cards, reward cards, and mobile devices from patrons, where possible.
  - Responsible Parties must assign seats in the venue for patrons in accordance with the above requirements.
  - Responsible Parties must require patrons to purchase tickets in advance of the event.
  - Responsible Parties must place visual cues (e.g., cones, markers, signage) to mark six feet or more of distance in ticket pick-up and other venue waiting lines.

- Responsible Parties should limit handling of devices or shared objects between patrons and venue personnel during check-in (e.g., phones for troubleshooting digital tickets).
- Where possible, Responsible Parties should encourage patrons to order food and beverages in advance or remotely (e.g., phone, online, app, or other digital concession ordering) at the venue, and make items available in dedicated pick-up areas or provide delivery options for patrons.
- Responsible Parties must establish designated areas for pickups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.
- For deliveries, Responsible Parties should implement a touchless delivery system whereby drivers stay in the cab of the vehicle while delivery takes place or, where not practicable, Responsible Parties must provide acceptable PPE appropriate to the anticipated activities that includes, at a minimum, a face covering to personnel involved in the delivery at no cost for the duration of the delivery process.
- Responsible Parties must ensure team staff and venue personnel perform hand hygiene before and after transferring (e.g., from a delivery driver) a load (e.g., perform hand hygiene before starting to load items; and once all items have been loaded, finish by performing hand hygiene again).
- Responsible Parties should provide disposable or single-use programs, pamphlets, maps, etc. to patrons, if such items are used; and make these available digitally to be viewed on personal electronic devices, as practicable.
  - If single-use items cannot be provided, Responsible Parties must ensure reusable objects are cleaned and disinfected after each use.
  - Responsible Parties are encouraged to make digital programs and maps available (e.g., on mobile phones) where possible, rather than providing physical programs and maps.
- Responsible Parties must:
  - Close off self-serve bars and samplers widely-available to patrons;
  - Close off any common seating areas where social distance cannot be maintained; and
  - Close off all retail merchandising areas where social distancing cannot be maintained.

## II. PLACES

### A. Air Filtration and Building Systems

For venues with indoor areas:

- Responsible Parties must ensure building HVAC system filtration meets the highest rated filtration compatible with the currently installed filter rack and air handling systems, at a minimum MERV-13, or industry equivalent or greater (e.g., HEPA), as applicable, and as certified and documented by a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, ASHRAE-certified professional, certified retro-commissioning professional, or New York-licensed professional building engineer.
  - Responsible Parties should also consider adopting additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations, particularly for buildings with air handling systems older than 15 years, including:
  - Performing necessary retro-commissioning of central systems, as well as testing, balancing, and repairs as needed;

- Increasing ventilation rates and outdoor air ventilation to the extent possible;
  - Keeping systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy;
  - Disabling demand-controlled ventilation, where reasonable, and maintain systems that increase fresh air supply;
  - Maintaining relative humidity between 40-60% where possible;
  - Opening outdoor air dampers to reduce or eliminate recirculation to the extent possible;
  - Sealing edges of the filter to limit bypass;
  - Regularly inspecting systems and filters to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are appropriately installed, serviced and within service life;
  - Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort;
  - Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI-C) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or
  - Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), considering units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts.
- For venues with central air handling systems that cannot handle the abovementioned minimum level of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater), Responsible Parties must have a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, ASHRAE-certified professional, certified retro-commissioning professional, or New York licensed professional building engineer certify and document that the currently installed filter rack is incompatible with abovementioned minimum level of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater) and/or the air handling system would be unable to perform to the minimum level of heating and cooling that it was otherwise able to provide prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency if such a high degree of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater) was installed.
    - Further, Responsible Parties must retain such documentation for review by state or local health department officials to operate at a lesser filtration rating with additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols.
    - In addition, Responsible Parties with venues that have a central air handling system who are unable to meet a filtration rating of MERV-13 or greater must adopt additional ventilation and/or air filtration mitigation protocols per [CDC](#) and [ASHRAE](#) recommendations, including:
      - Performing necessary retro-commissioning of central systems, as well as testing, balancing, and repairs as needed;
      - Increasing ventilation rates and outdoor air ventilation to the extent possible;
      - Keeping systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy;
      - Disabling demand-controlled ventilation, where reasonable, and maintain systems that increase fresh air supply;
      - Maintaining relative humidity between 40-60% where possible;
      - Opening outdoor air dampers to reduce or eliminate recirculation to the extent possible;
      - Sealing edges of the filter to limit bypass;
      - Regularly inspecting systems and filters to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are appropriately installed, serviced and within service life;
      - Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort;

- Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI-C) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or
  - Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), considering units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts.
- For venues that do not have central air handling systems, Responsible Parties must adopt additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per [CDC](#) and [ASHRAE](#) recommendations, including:
  - Regularly inspecting any room ventilation systems (e.g., window units, wall units) to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are appropriately installed, serviced and within service life.
  - Keeping any room ventilation systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy;
  - Setting room ventilation systems to maximize fresh air intake, set blower fans to low speed and point away from occupants to the extent possible;
  - Maintaining relative humidity between 40-60% where possible;
  - Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort;
  - Setting any ceiling fans to draw air upwards away from occupants, if applicable;
  - Prioritizing window fans to exhaust indoor air where possible;
  - Avoiding using fans that only recirculate air or only blow air into a room without providing for appropriate exhaust;
  - Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI-C) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or
  - Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), considering units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts.
- Before occupants return to a venue that has been entirely closed, Responsible Parties must complete pre-return checks, tasks, and assessments to ensure a healthy and safe environment. These systems include, but are not limited to, mechanical systems, water systems, elevators, and HVAC systems.
  - Depending on the length of time equipment has been inactive, Responsible Parties should run systems with careful observation to ensure machinery (e.g., valves and switches) are operating correctly.
  - Specific system actions may be required to restart systems after prolonged shutdown. Responsible Parties may determine necessity for each of these items based on length of shutdown and condition as inspected.
  - As appropriate and applicable, Responsible Parties should flush building with fresh air based on the design of the makeup/outside air system for a minimum of 24 hours.
  - Responsible Parties must ensure air filters are replaced as needed (e.g., after flushing the building).
  - Responsible Parties must ensure maintenance and monitoring of cooling towers have been conducted in accordance with state regulations and that chemical and microbial levels are within defined ranges for any closed water systems and/or water features, and drain any devices that may contain stagnant water.
  - Responsible Parties must flush cold- and hot-water systems in accordance with building water management plan, if applicable.

- Responsible Parties must ensure any water filters are replaced as needed after flushing the building's water systems.
- For buildings that were entirely closed, Responsible Parties should ensure that the operation of all mechanical equipment and systems has been restored prior to reopening the building.

## B. Protective Equipment

- Responsible Parties must ensure that all individuals, including team staff, athletes, venue personnel, and patrons are only permitted entry into the venue if they wear an acceptable face covering; provided that the individual is over the age of two and able to medically tolerate such a covering.
  - Per [Executive Order 202.34](#), as extended, Responsible Parties may deny admittance to individuals who fail to wear face coverings.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that all individuals wear acceptable face coverings at all times when within the venue, except as otherwise authorized within this guidance (e.g., patrons eating or drinking while seated and socially distanced from individuals who are not members of their same party/household/family, athletes in practice or competition).
- Responsible Parties should encourage the use of gloves and/or eye protection for team staff or venue personnel that have regular, close or proximate interactions with athletes or patrons (e.g., athletic trainers, physicians, conditioning coaches, ball handlers, attendants, trainers, medical staff, ticket takers, check-in staff, security staff, restroom attendants). If gloves are not worn, staff must perform hand hygiene before and after such interactions.
- Responsible Parties must install physical barriers between workstations where team staff and venue personnel are frequently interacting with other team staff and venue personnel and/or patrons (e.g., check-out registers, ticket stations/kiosks, concessions, information services desks, health screening stations), as feasible and where social distancing cannot otherwise be maintained.
  - As mentioned above, if used, physical barriers (e.g., plexiglass or similar materials) should be put in place in accordance with [OSHA guidelines](#).
- In addition to any necessary PPE as required for certain workplace activities, Responsible Parties must procure, fashion, or otherwise obtain acceptable face coverings and provide such coverings to team staff, athletes, and venue personnel within the venue at no cost to the individual. Responsible Parties should have an adequate supply of face coverings, masks and other required PPE on hand should any individual need a replacement. Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use and may not be shared. Please consult the CDC [guidance](#) for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of PPE, as well as instructions on use and cleaning.
  - Note that cloth face coverings or disposable masks shall not be considered acceptable face coverings for workplace activities that typically require a higher degree of protection for PPE due to the nature of the work. Responsible Parties must adhere to [OSHA standards](#) for such safety equipment.
  - Responsible Parties must advise employees to regularly clean or replace their face coverings if they become wet or soiled.
- Responsible Parties must allow team staff, athletes, and venue personnel to use their own acceptable face coverings but cannot require team staff, athletes, and venue personnel to supply their own face coverings. Further, this guidance shall not prevent team staff, athletes, and venue personnel from wearing their personally owned protective coverings (e.g., surgical masks, N95 respirators).



- Responsible Parties may require team staff, athletes, and venue personnel to wear more protective PPE due to the nature of their work. Employers should comply with all applicable OSHA standards.
- Responsible Parties must train team staff, athletes, and venue personnel on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate face coverings.
- Responsible Parties must put in place measures to limit the sharing of objects (e.g., check-out registers, ticket scanners), as well as the touching of shared surfaces, such as handrails or touchscreens; or, require team staff, athletes, and venue personnel and patrons to wear gloves (trade-appropriate or medical) when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched surfaces; or, require team staff, athletes, venue personnel, and patrons to perform hand hygiene before and after contact.

### C. Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection

- Responsible Parties must ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including "Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19," and the "STOP THE SPREAD" poster, as applicable. Responsible Parties must maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.
- Responsible Parties must provide and maintain hand hygiene stations on site, as follows:
  - For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
  - For sanitizer: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
  - Responsible Parties must make hand sanitizer available throughout common areas in the venue (e.g., lobbies, entry points). Touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers should be installed where possible.
    - Responsible Parties should place signage near hand sanitizer stations indicating that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands.
  - Responsible Parties should place receptacles around the venue for disposal of soiled items, including PPE.
- Responsible Parties must provide appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies for shared and frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g., ticket scanners, microphones, radios, railings, elevator buttons) and encourage team staff and venue personnel to use these supplies following manufacturers' instructions, before and after use of these objects and surfaces, followed by hand hygiene.
- Responsible Parties must conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of the arena, stadium, or professional sports venue and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces. Cleaning and disinfection must be rigorous and ongoing and should occur at least after each game, daily, or more frequently as needed. Please refer to DOH's "Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19" for detailed instructions on how to clean and disinfect facilities.

- Responsible Parties must ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day when there is an event/competition at the venue, or more often depending on frequency of use.
  - Responsible Parties must ensure distancing rules are adhered to by using signage, occupied markers, or other methods to reduce restroom capacity where feasible.
  - Responsible Parties must ensure that all athlete and team staff areas (e.g., locker rooms) are appropriately and effectively cleaned and disinfected after each practice and competition.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that shared workstations (e.g., check-in desks) are cleaned and disinfected between use by different employees.
- Responsible Parties should have personnel, who are visible to patrons, designated for the cleaning and disinfection of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that equipment and tools used by team staff, athletes, and venue personnel are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants. Refer to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) [list of products](#) registered in New York State and identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19.
- If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfection causes safety hazards or degrades the equipment, tools, and/or materials, Responsible Parties must put in place hand hygiene stations for the user to access between use and/or supply disposable gloves and/or limitations on the number of individuals using such equipment, tools, or other objects.
- Responsible Parties must provide for the cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 among any individual at or within the venue, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all nearby heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., seats, kiosks, elevators, sporting equipment, shared surfaces, vehicles, handles, doorknobs).
- CDC guidelines on "[Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)" if someone is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 are as follows:
  - Close off areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
    - Responsible Parties do not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off the affected areas.
  - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
  - Wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
  - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared equipment.
  - Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it can be reopened for use.
    - Team staff and/or venue personnel without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the work area immediately after cleaning and disinfection.
    - Refer to DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure](#)" for information on "close or proximate" contacts.
  - If more than seven days have passed since the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the venue, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.

- Responsible Parties must clean and disinfect all seating (e.g., chairs, armrests) after each event, to the extent possible.
- For activities involving the handling of shared objects (e.g., payment devices, cash registers, ticket kiosks), areas and/or surfaces (e.g., doors), Responsible Parties must ensure that such areas and objects are cleaned and disinfected daily, at a minimum.
  - Responsible Parties should ensure that venue personnel are given adequate time throughout the day to periodically clean and disinfect their equipment (e.g., ticket scanners, radios, workstations).
- Responsible Parties must ensure that all saunas, hot tubs, cryotherapy chambers or similar enclosed spaces remain closed to all athletes, team staff, and venue personnel, unless medically necessary and authorized by the respective professional sports league, association, or governing body, in which case, such spaces must be cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- Responsible Parties must clean and disinfect any medical areas, including tables and surfaces, between each use or exam.
- Responsible Parties must prohibit sharing of any personal items (e.g., water bottles, equipment, towels, toiletries, clothing) among athletes, team staff, and venue personnel.
- To the extent practicable, Responsible Parties should prohibit any spitting within the venue at any time and any products that require spitting (e.g., smokeless tobacco, sunflower seeds).
- Responsible Parties must regularly clean and disinfect sporting equipment that is handled by multiple athletes or team personnel throughout a competition (e.g., soccer balls, baseballs, tennis balls, basketballs, baseball bats).
- Responsible Parties should encourage athletes to shower at their hotel or residence following a competition rather than at the locker room provided at the venue.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that athletes perform hand hygiene before and after inserting or removing mouthguards.
- Responsible Parties must prohibit any passing of food/drink among patrons not from the same party/household/family (e.g., passing snacks down a row).
- Responsible Parties should collect and launder linens (towels, uniforms, clothing) on site if possible and should encourage athletes to deposit used linens in designated bins without handling by other individuals such as equipment managers or attendants.
  - Team staff or venue personnel who handle used or dirty towels, linens, and other items that go in the laundry must adhere to the following CDC precautions: do not shake dirty laundry, wear disposable gloves when handling laundry and hampers, use the warmest appropriate water setting in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for the items, clean and disinfect hampers after each use, and wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol after handling laundry and removing and disposing of gloves.
- Responsible Parties should assign cleaning staff to certain areas of the venue (e.g., locker rooms) in order to limit cross contamination throughout the facility.

- Responsible Parties may consider closing or limiting access to communal fixtures or amenities in the venues that might present a risk of patron congregation or multiple touchpoints, such as promotional brochure stands in favor of individual distribution upon request.
- Responsible Parties must prohibit shared food and beverages among team staff, athletes, and venue personnel (e.g., self-serve meals and beverages) and reserve adequate space for team staff, athletes, and venue personnel to observe social distancing while eating meals.

#### **D. Phased Reopening**

- Responsible Parties are encouraged to phase-in reopening activities so as to allow for operational issues to be resolved before resumption of professional sports competitions and venue activities at normal levels.
  - Responsible Parties should consider prioritizing early access to the facility for season pass holders and/or local patrons as visitation increases during the beginning days and weeks of operation.
  - Responsible Parties should consider any appropriate revisions to their ticket cancellation and refund policies to encourage any ill patrons to stay home.

#### **E. Communications Plan**

- Once approved by DOH to host professional sports competitions with patrons, Responsible Parties with venues that have an indoor or outdoor capacity of 10,000 attendees or greater must, for each event, submit event details to DOH, at least 5 days in advance of the event date, and such details shall include but not be limited to (1) Responsible Parties' contact information, (2) event name, (3) event address, (4) event date and time, (5) estimated event duration, (6) expected number of event patrons (i.e., fans or spectators), and (7) expected number of event staff (i.e., team staff, athletes, venue personnel). If there are material changes to the event details, they must be re-submitted to DOH.
  - Events/competitions may be subject to inspection by state and/or local health authorities to ensure compliance with all provisions of the guidance.
- Once approved by the respective county health department or local public health authority to host professional sports competitions with patrons, Responsible Parties with venues that have an indoor capacity of 1,500 to 9,999 attendees or outdoor capacity of 2,500 to 9,999 attendees must, for each event, submit event details to the respective county health department or local public health authority, at least 5 days in advance of the event date, and such details shall include but not be limited to (1) Responsible Parties' contact information, (2) event name, (3) event address, (4) event date and time, (5) estimated event duration, (6) expected number of event patrons (i.e., fans or spectators), and (7) expected number of event staff (i.e., team staff, athletes, venue personnel). If there are material changes to the event details, they must be re-submitted to the respective county health department or local public health authority.
  - Events/competitions may be subject to inspection by state and/or local health authorities to ensure compliance with all provisions of the guidance.
- Responsible Parties must affirm that they have reviewed and understand the State-issued industry guidelines, and that they will implement them.
- Responsible Parties must develop a communications plan for all team staff, athletes, venue personnel, and patrons that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent

means to provide individuals with information. Responsible Parties may consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and social media.

- Responsible Parties must encourage individuals to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically face coverings, through verbal communication and signage.
- Responsible Parties must post signage inside and outside of the venue to remind individuals to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- Responsible Parties should distribute clear and concise information to patrons about safety/health precautions, including a pre-event announcement outlining safety and health protocols in effect at the venue.

### III. PROCESSES

#### A. Screening and Testing

- Responsible Parties must require and ensure that all patrons, public-facing venue personnel, athletes, and team staff over the age of two have received a negative diagnostic test result for COVID-19 using a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or DOH authorized polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or other nucleic acid amplification test (NAATs) of comparable analytical sensitivity performance that was performed on a specimen (e.g., swab) collected within 72 hours of the event/competition start time. Responsible Parties may also accept negative test results for COVID-19 from an FDA authorized antigen test performed on a specimen collected within 6 hours of the event start time.
  - All patrons must present proof of the negative diagnostic test result (e.g., mobile application, paper form) to designated venue personnel prior to, or immediately upon, arrival to the event/competition.
  - Responsible Parties may offer to perform FDA-authorized antigen testing for patrons, venue personnel, athletes, and team staff to obtain test results of specimens collected within 6 hours of the event/competition on premises; provided, however, such antigen testing must meet all requirements and standards set forth by DOH, including timely and complete reporting of results to the Department's Electronic Clinical Laboratory Reporting System (ECLRS).
    - To minimize potential exposure while waiting for PCR, NAAT, or antigen test results, individuals should monitor for symptoms of COVID-19, wear a face covering when in public, maintain social distancing, and should avoid extended periods in public, contact with strangers, and large congregate settings.
  - As an alternative to the testing requirement, patrons, venue personnel, athletes, and team staff may provide proof of having completed the COVID-19 vaccination series at least 14 days prior to the date of the event/competition. However, as DOH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to evaluate the effect of immunization on potential COVID-19 transmission, diagnostic testing is still recommended, and Responsible Parties may choose to require testing. DOH, in consultation with CDC, will continue to monitor vaccination developments and revise guidance accordingly.
  - As detailed above, venue personnel and team staff must be tested for COVID-19 through a diagnostic test prior to their first event/competition and must be tested weekly thereafter for as long as they are actively working at the events/competitions at the venue and interacting in close

contact with patrons and/or athletes. Alternatively, venue personnel and team staff may provide proof of having completed the COVID-19 vaccination series at least 14 days prior to the date of event(s)/competition(s).

- Any individual who fails to present a negative diagnostic test result or proof of immunization, as required, must be denied entry to the event/competition by the Responsible Parties. Any team staff, athlete, or venue personnel who receives a positive diagnostic test result for COVID-19 must be excluded from the event/competition until they have consulted with the appropriate health authorities and received clearance to return to work. Further, any patron who receives a positive diagnostic test result for COVID-19 must be denied entry to the event/competition, as well as any members of the patron's party who may have been in close contact with the positive patron within the past 10 days (e.g., family members, individuals who share the same residence).
- Responsible Parties must implement mandatory health screening for all individuals, including team staff, athletes, venue personnel, and patrons prior to any in-person professional sports activities, including practices and competitions. Such screening is recommended but not required for delivery personnel.
  - Screening may be performed remotely (e.g., by e-mail, by telephone, electronic survey, at ticket purchase, via signage), before entrance to the venue, to the extent possible.
  - Screening should be coordinated to prevent individuals from intermingling in close or proximate contact with each other prior to completion of the screening.
  - As part of the health screening, Responsible Parties must require temperature checks using contactless thermometers or thermal cameras for all patrons. Any patron who presents with a temperature of 100.4° F or greater must be denied entry to the event/competitions, as well as any members of the patron's party who may have been in close contact with the febrile patron within the past 10 days (e.g., family members, individuals who share the same residence).
    - Responsible Parties may allow patrons who present with a temperature of 100.4° F or greater on their first temperature check to temporarily step aside from the screening line, wait a few minutes for their body temperature to normalize, and then perform a second temperature check. If the second check confirms the results of the first check, the individual must be denied entry; however, if the second check does not indicate a temperature of 100.4° F or greater than the patron may be admitted to the event/competition.
    - Temperature checks must be conducted in accordance with U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or DOH guidelines. Responsible Parties are prohibited from keeping records of individual health data (e.g., the specific temperature data of an individual) but are permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g., pass/fail, cleared/not cleared), unless expressly given permission to do so by the individual.
- At a minimum, screening must use a questionnaire that determines whether the individual has:
  - COVID-19 Symptoms: Is currently experiencing, or has recently (within the past 48 hours) experienced, any symptoms of COVID-19;
    - CDC advises that COVID-19 symptoms may include fever or chills, cough, 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, or diarrhea; however, a few of these symptoms may occur with pre-existing medical conditions, such as allergies or migraines, that have been diagnosed by a health care practitioner. In those cases, individuals should only answer "yes" if symptoms are new or worsening.



- COVID-19 Contacts: Has had close contact (or proximate contact as determined by health authorities) in the past 10 days with any person confirmed by diagnostic test, or suspected based on symptoms, to have COVID-19;
  - DOH advises that close contact is being within 6 feet of an individual for 10 minutes or more within a 24-hour period, starting from 2 days before their symptoms developed or if asymptomatic, 2 days before they were tested. (Close contact does not include individuals who work in a health care setting wearing appropriate, required personal protective equipment.)
  - This exclusion shall not apply for individuals who (1) have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 – defined as 14 days after completion of the vaccine series – within the past 90 days or (2) fully recovered from a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case within the past 3 months. (In lieu of quarantine following close contact, such individuals will need to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days following an exposure.)
- COVID-19 Positive Test: Has tested positive for COVID-19 through a diagnostic test in the past 10 days; and/or
- Recent Travel: Has traveled to New York State from a noncontiguous state, United States territory, or CDC level 2 or greater travel advisory country within the past 10 days and failed to follow the State’s travel advisory.
  - Effective April 1, 2021, the State’s travel advisory will no longer require domestic travelers to quarantine after entering New York from another US state or territory. Federal CDC requirements for international travelers remains in effect.
- Responsible Parties must require team staff, athletes, venue personnel, and patrons to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any of the aforementioned questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms.
- Responsible Parties should coordinate with all necessary team staff and venue personnel to facilitate the screening process. Screening best practices include:
  - Communicating in advance to patrons that they cannot enter the venue if they fail the screening, which may impact the other members of their party if they have had close contact with the individual who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 based on symptoms or positive test result.
  - Identifying individuals who have completed and passed their screening questionnaire in advance.
  - If space and building configuration allows, screening individuals at or near the venue entrance to minimize the impact in case of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.
  - Allowing for adequate social distancing while individuals queue for screening and/or venue entry.
- Responsible Parties must implement pre-travel screening questionnaires for any teams traveling domestically or internationally. International travel must comply with all federal, state, and local guidelines including quarantine of travelers upon their return as necessary.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that any team staff or venue personnel performing screening activities, including temperature checks, are appropriately protected from exposure to potentially infectious individuals entering the venue. Personnel performing screening activities should be trained by employer-identified individuals who are familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols.
  - Screeners must be provided and use PPE, including at a minimum, an acceptable face covering, and may include gloves, a gown, goggles, and/or a face shield.

- Responsible Parties must deny venue entry for the event/competition to any patron who fails the screening questionnaire or who receives a positive diagnostic test result for COVID-19, as well as any members of the patron’s party who may have been in close contact with such patron within the past 10 days (e.g., family members, individuals who share the same residence).
  - Patrons who are denied entry for failing the screening questionnaire or receiving a positive diagnostic test result should contact a healthcare provider for assessment and, if appropriate, diagnostic testing.
- Responsible Parties must deny venue entry to any team staff, athlete, or venue personnel who fails the screening questionnaire or who receives a positive diagnostic test result for COVID-19. Such team staff, athlete, or venue personnel must be sent home or to a designated accommodation with instructions to contact a healthcare provider for assessment and, if applicable, diagnostic testing.
  - Responsible Parties should remotely provide the team staff, athlete, or venue personnel with information on healthcare and testing resources.
  - Responsible Parties must immediately notify the state and local health department about the case if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.
- Responsible Parties should refer to DOH’s [“Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure”](#) regarding protocols and policies for team staff, athletes, and venue personnel seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the team staff, athlete, or venue personnel had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.
- Responsible Parties must designate a central point of contact or contacts, which may vary by activity, location, shift or day, responsible for receiving and attesting to having reviewed all team staff, athlete, and venue personnel questionnaires, with such contact or contacts also identified as the party for team staff, athletes, and venue personnel to inform if they later are experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms, as noted on the questionnaire.
  - Identified point(s) of contact for the venue should be prepared to receive notifications from individuals of suspected or positive cases and, in consultation with the site safety monitor, initiate the respective notification, communication, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfection procedures, as applicable for the situation.
- Responsible Parties must designate a site safety monitor whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the site safety plan and guidance.
  - When notified of a confirmed positive COVID-19 case through a diagnostic test result for an individual who is currently or was recently present at the venue, the site safety monitor must:
    - notify the state and local health department of the confirmed positive case,
    - assist with contact tracing efforts to identify close or proximate contacts who may need to quarantine,
    - communicate to known individuals who may have been exposed to the positive case at the venue that a positive case was reported, contact tracing will be performed, close contacts will be notified, and additional cleaning and disinfection of the exposed area will be performed, and
    - dispatch appropriate staff or personnel to clean and disinfect the exposed areas, in accordance with the above protocols.
- Responsible Parties must maintain a log of every person, including team staff, athletes, and venue personnel who may have close or proximate contact with other individuals at the venue; excluding

deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means and patrons whose attendance will be separately maintained by the Responsible Parties.

- The log should contain contact information, such that all contacts may be identified, traced, and notified in the event an individual is diagnosed with COVID-19.

## **B. Tracing and Tracking**

- Responsible Parties must notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by any individual currently or recently at the venue.
- Responsible Parties must cooperate with state and local health department contact tracing efforts by identifying individuals at the venue who may have been in, or around, the same area at, or around, the same time as the positive individual within the 48 hours before such individual began experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or had their sample collected for the diagnostic test, whichever is earlier. Such tracing efforts may include review of information captured before or during the event/competitions, such as parking information, screening records, and video footage of common areas (e.g., entry/exit, lobbies).
  - Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations.
  - If an athlete, team staff member, or venue personnel with access to areas used by team staff or athletes receives a positive diagnostic test result, Responsible Parties must ensure that neither practices nor competitions proceed until contact tracing is completed and isolation of infected persons and quarantine of exposed persons has been implemented, in coordination with state and local health departments, as appropriate.
  - In the case of team staff, athlete, or venue personnel showing symptoms of COVID-19 while in the venue, Responsible Parties must notify individuals in the surrounding area(s) or individuals who may be considered a close contact immediately with information on where the individual has been throughout the venue and further notify them if the symptomatic person tests positive for COVID-19 through a diagnostic test.
- State and local health departments may, under their legal authority, implement monitoring and movement restrictions of COVID-19 infected or exposed persons including isolation or quarantine, as applicable.
- Team staff, athletes, and venue personnel who are alerted that they have come into close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19, and have been alerted via tracing, tracking or other mechanism, are required to self-report to their employer at the time of alert and shall follow the protocol referenced above.
- Responsible Parties must require each patron (or, if patron is a minor, an adult from their party/household/family) in attendance to provide contact information before or immediately upon arrival to the event, providing their full name, date of birth, address, and phone number or e-mail for use in potential contact tracing efforts. To the extent practicable, such patron information should also include seat assignment at the event/competition.
  - The contact information collection process may be conducted through any means that the Responsible Parties establish to collect the above information, including but not limited to: at point of ticket purchase, through a digital application or paper form, through a test/laboratory provider designated by the venue, or through a ticket management system.

- o Responsible Parties must maintain a record of the aforementioned sign-in data for a minimum period of 28 days and make such data available to State and local health authorities upon request. Responsible Parties do not need to retain individual proof of recent negative diagnostic test result or proof of immunization for COVID-19.

## IV. EMPLOYER PLANS

Responsible Parties must conspicuously post a completed site safety plan(s) on site for team staff, athletes, and venue personnel. The State has made available a business reopening safety plan template to guide business owners and operators in developing plans to protect against the spread of COVID-19.

### **Additional safety information, guidelines, and resources are available at:**

New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website  
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

### **At the link below, affirm that you have read and understand your obligation to operate in accordance with this guidance:**

<https://forms.ny.gov/s3/ny-forward-affirmation>