



2020-2021 MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Officials

Mask/Face Covering Guidance and Information

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) requires that all persons in youth and adult sports wear a mask/face covering at all times, including practices, games or competitions. The Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) has developed this guidance document for member schools, administrators, coaches and students to clarify information regarding the mask/face covering requirements. All other individuals who attend a practice or competition are required to follow [*Executive Order 20 – 81*](#) regarding the requirements for wearing of mask/face coverings.

Mask/Face Covering Mandate and Exempted Sports

Per the requirements of the MDH's [COVID-19 Sports Practice Guidance for Youth and Adults](#) mask/face coverings must be **worn by all persons at all times within MSHSL athletics**, including practices and contests with only the following exceptions for athletes:

- **Wrestling** - During wrestling contact with another individual, a mask or face covering may become a choking or visual hazard and it may be removed. However, student athletes must wear a mask/face covering at all other times.
- **Gymnastics and Cheerleading** - During activities such as tumbling, stunting, flying, or using a certain apparatus where a mask or face covering may become a choking or visual hazard, or could get caught on other participants or objects, the mask or face covering may be removed. However, student athletes must wear a mask/face covering at all other times.
- **Swimming and Diving** - During swimming and diving activities when the student athlete is in the pool or on the diving board the mask or face covering may be removed. However, student athletes must wear a mask/face covering at all other times.

Appropriate Mask/Face Coverings

The MDH and MSHSL have approved the following mask/face coverings: paper or disposable mask/face coverings, cloth mask/face coverings, or neck gaiters.

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends using two layers of fabric when making a cloth mask/face covering. Mask/face coverings that are made of thinner single-layer fabric may not be as effective for blocking droplets that come out when speaking, coughing, or sneezing and should not be used unless there are no alternatives.
- A mask/face covering must cover the nose and mouth completely. The covering should not be overly tight or restrictive and should feel comfortable to wear.
- Any mask/face coverings that incorporate a valve that is designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh mask/face coverings, or mask/face coverings with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or

material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow droplets to be released from the mask.

- Shields by themselves are not an acceptable face covering, but a shield may be used in conjunction with a paper/cloth mask or face covering.
 - Alternatives for hockey are available in [COVID-19 Sports Practice Guidance for Youth and Adults](#) and will be shared in a sport-specific email.
- [Mask/Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations under Executive Order 20-81](#)

Mask Design and Logo Requirements

- Mask/face coverings shall be solid or mostly black. Mask/face coverings for all officials do not need to match.
- An association logo, MSHSL logo and or a manufacturer's logo may be present on the mask/face coverings and must not exceed four square inches (e.g. 2"x2").

Unique Rules for Sports Requiring Helmets

Per the requirements of the MDH's [COVID-19 Sports Practice Guidance for Youth and Adults](#) if a sport requires a helmet that interferes with wearing a face mask/covering safely or effectively (which is more likely with younger children), athletes or officials may consider alternatives to masks/face coverings that are specifically designed by helmet manufacturers to provide protection against the splashes, sprays, and aerosols that can lead to COVID-19 transmission (i.e., a full-face shield)

- A mask/face covering is still the most protective option and should be used to the extent possible, but a full-face shield may provide some protection.
- Any face shield used as a mask/face covering alternative must cover the entire face, extend to the ears and below the chin, and must not have exposed gaps or vents near the eyes, mouth, or nose.
- For more information, please see [Frequently Asked Questions About the Requirement to Wear Face Coverings](#)

Mask Exemption

Per the requirements of the MDH's [COVID-19 Sports Practice Guidance for Youth and Adults](#), people who have medical or other health conditions, disabilities or mental health, developmental, or behavioral needs that make it difficult to tolerate wearing a mask/face covering may be exempt from wearing a mask/face covering.

Those individuals seeking a mask/face covering exemption must obtain a written, medical exemption from a licensed physician who is registered, licensed, certified, or otherwise statutorily (MN Statute Chapters 147 & 148) authorized by the state to provide medical treatment and is practicing within the person's medical training and scope of practice.

The written, medical exemption must be provided to the school's Activities Administrator or another school administrator at each contest. *Additional information will be provided at a later date regarding sharing and availability of this information.*

COVID-19 Protocol Compliance

Officials are not expected to monitor participants for protocol compliance including the wearing of proper masks or face coverings. The school's administration and the coaches are directly responsible for requiring compliance from all participants or spectators in their school. Officials should work together with the coaches and the site administrators to assist the athletes in this area. Officials should treat masks in a similar fashion to equipment or uniforms that become "illegal" through play. In that way, when the play comes to a conclusion or the clock is stopped, officials should offer gentle reminders to participants about the mask. Please do not assess technical fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, deductions or any other sanctions for non-compliance with COVID-19 protocols. If a mask adjustment is required immediately (i.e. the mask slips over the eyes), please stop the contest as soon as possible so that situation can be rectified. Work together with school personnel on these items and file an incident report with the MSHSL so we can follow up with the school administration directly.

This guidance document will be updated as new information becomes available.