



HEALTHY WASHINGTON SPORT AND ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Washington Interscholastic Activities Association

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(January 12, 2021) - The following is a summary of guidelines for school-based activities issued by the Washington State Department of Health on January 5 with further details added to the Governor's website on January 11. Please note that this document is intended to highlight key policies and add clarity to the DOH policies, it does not reflect WIAA policies. The full language issued on the Governor's website can be accessed [here](#).

The Governor's Office has declared school districts and organizations must follow these guidelines, unlike the recommendations issued in the Decision-Making Tree for schools to return to in-person learning. It is not mandated that schools return to in-person learning before taking part in extracurricular activities given the phase requirements are met. WIAA staff strongly encourages each school to work with their risk manager while planning for a return to participation.

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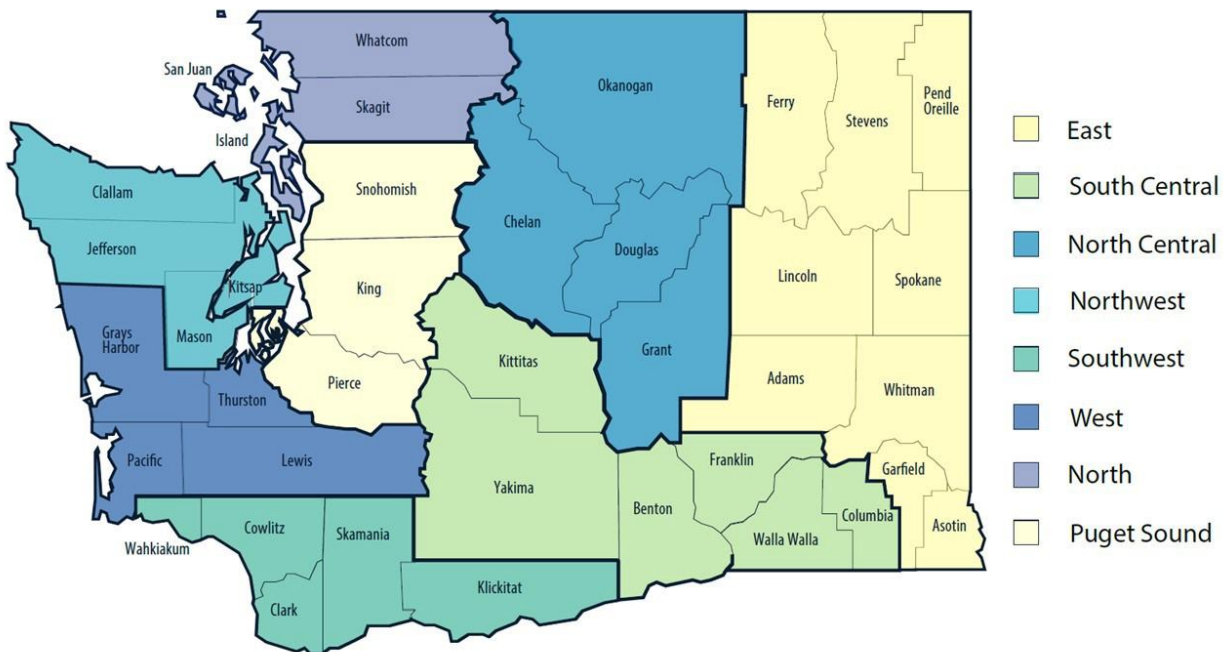
HEALTHY WASHINGTON SPORT AND ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: REGIONS

The plan separates the state's counties into eight regions based mostly on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) regions used for evaluating healthcare services. The eight regions are as follows:

- **CENTRAL:** King, Pierce, Snohomish
- **EAST:** Adams, Asotin, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Whitman
- **NORTH:** Island, San Juan, Skagit, Whatcom
- **NORTH CENTRAL:** Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Okanogan
- **NORTHWEST:** Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason
- **SOUTH CENTRAL:** Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Kittitas, Walla Walla, Yakima
- **SOUTHWEST:** Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Skamania, Wahkiakum
- **WEST:** Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, Thurston



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: PHASES

New metrics have been adopted by the Department of Health as well, to divide regions into either Phase 1 or Phase 2. Sports will maintain their previously assigned risk levels with the exception of gymnastics which now moved to low risk. Each sport's participation level will now be assigned to the phasing below.

LOW RISK SPORTS: Cross Country, Golf, Gymnastics, Tennis, Track & Field, Sideline/No-Contact Cheerleading and Dance, Swimming & Diving (*Follow Pool and [Water Recreation Facility Guidelines](#)*)

MODERATE RISK SPORTS: Baseball, Bowling, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball, 7 on 7 Without Linemen/Flag Football (Although 7 on 7 and Flag Football are not WIAA sanctioned, they may be conducted by member school teams)

HIGH RISK SPORTS: Basketball, Football, Wrestling, Cheerleading w/ Contact, Dance w/ Contact

PHASE 1	PHASE 2
FACIAL COVERINGS REQUIRED AT ALL TIMES FOR BOTH PHASES 1 AND 2 *Exceptions apply to Cross Country, Gymnastics, Swim & Dive	
LOW RISK, WHEN CONDUCTED OUTDOORS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions allowed (no tournaments) • Maximum of 200 people • No Spectators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions allowed (no tournaments) • Maximum of 200 people including spectators
MODERATE RISK, WHEN CONDUCTED OUTDOORS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice and training only • Intra-team scrimmages allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions allowed (no tournaments) • Maximum of 200 people including spectators
HIGH RISK, WHEN CONDUCTED OUTDOORS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice allowed if athletes are limited to groups of 6, with each group separated by a buffer zone • Brief close contact (ex: 3 on 3 drills) is permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions allowed (no tournaments) • Maximum of 200 people including spectators
LOW RISK, WHEN CONDUCTED INDOORS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupancy of 500 square feet/person • Practice allowed if athletes are limited to groups of 6, with each group separated by a buffer zone • Brief close contact (ex: 3 on 3 drills) is permitted • Competitions allowed for Swim & Dive only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions allowed (no tournaments) • Venues at 25% capacity or 200 individuals, whichever is less
MODERATE RISK, WHEN CONDUCTED INDOORS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupancy of 500 square feet/person • Practice allowed if athletes are limited to groups of 6, with each group separated by a buffer zone • Brief close contact (ex: 3 on 3 drills) is permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions allowed (no tournaments) • Venues at 25% capacity or 200 individuals, whichever is less
HIGH RISK, WHEN CONDUCTED INDOORS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupancy of 500 square feet/person, separated by a buffer zone • Individual training and practice allowed for athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice and training only • Intra-team scrimmages allowed • Venues at 25% capacity or 200 individuals, whichever is less

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: METRICS

The previous guidelines for participation in athletics and activities were tied to county metrics of cases per 100,000 population. Movement between phases in the “Healthy Washington — Roadmap to Recovery” Plan will be tied to four new metrics.

Metrics for each region will be updated every Friday with an effective date of the following Monday. To date, the Department of Health has published a weekly “Roadmap to Recovery Report” on Fridays which have been posted under the “reports” [section of its COVID-19 Page](#).

To move forward from Phase 1 to Phase 2, regions must meet all four metrics:

1. Decreasing trend in two-week rate of COVID-19 cases per 100K population (decrease >10%)
2. Decreasing trend in two-week rate new COVID-19 hospital admission rates per 100K population (decrease >10%)
3. ICU occupancy (total — COVID-19 and non-COVID-19) of less than 90%
4. COVID-19 test positivity rate of <10%

To remain in Phase 2, regions must meet at least 3 metrics:

1. Decreasing or flat trend in two-week rate of COVID-19 cases per 100K population
2. Decreasing or flat trend in two-week rate new COVID-19 hospital admission rates per 100K population
3. ICU occupancy (total — COVID-19 and non-COVID-19) of less than 90%
4. COVID-19 test positivity rate of <10%.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Are face coverings required during practices and competition for all sports?

A: *Yes. Cloth face coverings that contact the face and cover the mouth and nose are required for all sports. Football face shields and/or masks that cover only the cage of the helmet are allowed, but cannot be the only covering - a cloth covering that touches the nose and chin area must be worn along with the face shield and/or mask covering the cage of a helmet if being used. Face coverings are not required for swimmers and divers while in the water during practice and competition, for cross country once their race begins, for gymnasts when competing or practicing on equipment.*

Q: What constitutes a permissible face covering?

A: *Per the DOH, cloth masks are recommended. Gaiters are an approved mask for use but they are not preferred. The WIAA does not have recommendations for the exact kind of mask besides a cloth mask. For football, splash guards or facemask guards do not take the place of a mask under the helmet. So players would need to wear a mask or gaiter that makes contact with the face, covering the nose and mouth and can additionally use a splash shield or cage covering if they wish.*

Q: Are there mask exemptions?

A: *Per the DOH and Governor's Office, if a student requests a mask exemption for medical reasons, the student would need a medical note from their primary physician that states the need for the exemption. Each school district has the authority to allow the exemption based on district policies. As always, we encourage districts to check with their risk managers for guidance.*

Q: Can schools cross state borders for competition?

A: *Competitions between league opponents that require teams to cross state borders has been deemed essential. Non-league competitions requiring schools to travel across state borders has been deemed non-essential.*

Q: Can a school hold practices for traditional indoor sports, outside?

A: *Yes, if a traditional indoor sport is moved outdoors it would then follow the outdoor guidelines for that sport's assigned risk level. Ex. If a volleyball team (moderate risk) was to practice outdoors, they would adhere to the moderate risk outdoor policies.*

Q: Can the traditional format or location of a sport or activity be modified to meet certain guidelines?

A: *It is highly recommended that schools consult their risk manager if any modifications are being considered. WIAA approval is also required.*

Q: If a school were to follow the WIAA schedule with traditional fall activities beginning on February 1, can practices held prior to February 1 count toward pre-contest practice requirements?

A: *Practices held prior to the beginning of a school's season (ie. "Summer 2.0") may not count toward the pre-contest requirement.*

Q: What are the rules surrounding "Summer 2.0"?

A: *With the first day of practice during the first season at that school, "Summer 2.0" would conclude for all sports played during the subsequent season(s), but would continue for the remaining sports scheduled to be held during the first season until that sport begins.*

Q: Do practices conducted in pods of 6 during Phase 1 count toward pre-contest practice requirements?

A: *Yes, once the season has begun, practices in either phase would count toward the pre-contest practice requirement. *Football will still need to conduct three non-padded practices before contact can begin, regardless of phase.*

Q: Are schools able to waive pre-contest practice requirements if seasons overlap?

A: *If students have participated in a sport prior to the next season and there is overlap between the seasons, up to five practices may still be waived. *Football will still need to conduct three non-padded practices before contact can begin.*

Q: Can any competitions be played in Phase 1?

A: *Yes, low risk sports can be played outdoors in Phase 1.*

Q: What is the participant maximum in Phase 1 Outdoor?

A: *The DOH and Governor's Office does not consider low risk outdoor activities as team sports, therefore you may not have more than 200 people (athletes, coaches, event staff) at any one time at an event. There is no restriction on the amount of teams at these events, just the total number of people.*

Q: What football drills and equipment are acceptable in Phase 1?

A: *All equipment and drills are permitted, given they are limited to no more than six-person pods and brief close contact. The WIAA encourages schools to work with their risk management departments to determine the acceptable threshold for brief close contact.*

Q: Is 7-on-7 Football considered Moderate risk like Flag Football?

A: *Yes, 7-on-7 has been classified as a moderate risk outdoor activity as long as there is no line play.*

Q: What is considered "individual training" for high risk sports conducted indoors?

A: *A student doing individual training/drills in his/her own 500 square feet of space.*

Q: If the local county/region has updated stats, can those be used instead of the state dashboard?

A: *No*

Q: Where can we find what phase each region is in?

A: *Metrics and phase information will be maintained on the Department of Health website. To date, the DOH has published a weekly report with updates which can be found under the "reports" section [here](#).*

Q: Are the pod requirements still in place as they were with the old guidelines?

A: *Pods of 6 or fewer are required in Phase 1 for high risk outdoor sports as well as low and moderate risk indoor sports.*

Q: Can a school modify a sanctioned sport to fall under a different risk category (i.e. flag football, sand volleyball)?

A: Any sport not sanctioned by the WIAA would need to follow the appropriate guidelines issued by the Department of Health. Those guidelines and risk categories can be [found here](#).

Q: Can a school travel out of our DOH Region for a scheduled contest?

A: Yes, given that both regions are in the appropriate phase for competition to begin.

Q: Are there rules about cleaning protocols, athlete spacing, equipment sharing and other logistics?

A: Full guidance for hygiene, cleaning, ventilation, etc. can be found in the document issued by the Department of Health. The WIAA strongly encourages each school to work with its risk manager when putting plans in place.

Q: What are the guidelines for weight room activities?

A: Weight rooms should follow the indoor fitness guidelines issued by the DOH. Those can be found [here](#).