

01/25/2021

FOLLOWING REVIEW OF NY FORWARD SPORTS AND RECREATION GUIDANCE, ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ANNOUNCES HIGHER-RISK SPORTS CAN PROCEED

ERIE COUNTY, NY – The Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) is providing the following information for schools, coaching staff, athletes, parents of student-athletes and youth and adult amateur sports leagues in Erie County.

ECDOH and its Office of Epidemiology reviewed the New York State (NYS) Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation revisions announced by Governor Cuomo on Friday, January 22, 2021. These revisions allow local health departments to determine if non-professional and non-collegiate sports, such as wrestling, ice hockey, basketball, contact lacrosse, and volleyball, can proceed with individual and group training, and competitions and tournaments. Updates were also made to low- and moderate-risk sports and recreation activities.

After extended internal discussions and consultation with the New York State Association of County Health Officials, ECDOH has determined that it will allow higher-risk and moderate risk sports to proceed, with the following conditions and recommendations:

- For moderate- and higher-risk sports, if an athlete or coach has a positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, all in-person team or group activities (e.g., practices, scrimmages, games, meetings) will be cancelled for a 10-day period.
- As with all positive COVID-19 cases in Erie County, contact tracing will be conducted for players and coaching staff, and coaches and teammates identified as close contacts will be placed in quarantine.
- Travel for games and competitions outside the Western New York (WNY) and Finger Lakes regions is strongly discouraged. All current NYS Travel Advisory guidance for quarantine will apply to athletes, coaches and family members who choose to travel to non-contiguous states.
- ECDOH gives its permission for sports and recreation activities in Erie County's orange "microcluster" zones to travel for games and activities within the WNY region (Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany counties), and to the Finger Lakes region (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties). This permission will be periodically reviewed to consider regional and county-level rates of transmission and other epidemiological data. In addition, teams from other counties with the WNY and Finger Lakes regions may travel into Erie County to participate in games and other activities.

- Athletes are required to wear an appropriate cloth face covering/mask when not playing or practicing. For children under the age of 18, at a parent's direction a child may wear a mask when playing or practicing.
- The use of locker rooms is strongly discouraged. If locker rooms are used, they must be cleaned/disinfected as per NYSDOH guidance.
- Each team is responsible for screening all athletes and coaches for COVID-19 symptoms for every team event, including practice, scrimmage, or tournaments. Individuals who were exposed to a COVID-19 case or diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 10 days are not allowed to participate in the sport or join spectators.
- Spectators are limited to two per player. In addition, indoor sports facilities are limited to allow 50% of capacity into their facility.
- Vaccination status does not alter regulation requirements.
- All other requirements outlined in the January 2021 update to the Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation must be followed by sports teams, recreation activities, and facilities where games and practices are held.
- League staff, school athletic directors, sports facility directors, coaches and parents are strongly encouraged to review this guidance and take steps to make sure current team and league operations align with this updated guidance.

Coaching staff and recreation officials with questions about this announcement may contact the ECDOH Division of Environmental Health at (716) 961-6800.

For more information:

- **Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH), COVID-19:** www.erie.gov/covid19
- **ECDOH, COVID-19 Information Line:** (716) 858-2929 – foreign language interpretation available
- **ECDOH, COVID-19 & Schools:** www.erie.gov/covid19/schools
- **NY Forward: Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency** (Jan. 22, 2021): [SportsAndRecreationMasterGuidance.pdf \(ny.gov\)](https://www2.erie.gov/health/index.php?q=press/following-review-ny-forward-sports-and-recreation-guidance-erie-county-department-health-annou)