



Return to Play Guidance

USA Ultimate

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Introduction

The following considerations are provided for general informational purposes only and are not intended as, and should not be relied upon as, specific medical or legal advice. You are strongly encouraged to consult with qualified medical personnel/public health officials for medical considerations and to local, state and federal orders and/or laws for legal considerations. If you use any considerations provided for herein, you do so at your own risk and you specifically release from any and all liability USA Ultimate and its directors, officers, employees, volunteers and agents in connection with your use of the enclosed considerations.

Overview

This document is intended to assist local disc organizations, teams, coaches, athletes, parents/guardians, event organizers and others with decision-making about returning to ultimate-related activities in an environment that continues to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Information in this document is drawn from and provides references to guidance and regulations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other public health agencies, medical professionals, other sports organizations and United States government agencies at all levels.

As of June 2020 and the initial release of this guidance, there are many different circumstances associated with different areas of our country, including population density, environmental conditions, healthcare system capacity, access to healthcare and other resources, and governmental decision-making. States, counties, cities and towns are approaching returning to activity in a variety of ways, often using phases to incrementally “re-open” while monitoring risk factors along the way. This makes it impossible to provide a one-size-fits-all set of guidelines, and makes it even more important that local organizers and participants pay close attention and adhere to local conditions and regulations.

It is also important to note that as of June 2020, with no vaccine and limited therapeutic options, guidelines for returning to activity should not be interpreted as providing “safe” conditions or avoiding all risk associated with transmission of the COVID-19 virus. This and other referenced documents outline actions that can be taken to reduce risk and can serve as a tool to assist with decisions about organizing or participating in certain activities. Local organizers and individuals will need to assess circumstances in their respective areas and in their own personal lives in order to determine what, when and under what circumstances activities might be offered based on relevant risk factors, risk tolerance and ability to institute risk mitigation measures.



Given the pandemic's global scope and its ability to move quickly through and between communities, it is especially important to consider the impact of contracting or spreading the virus beyond any one individual or small group. Each individual is part of a community and bears a share of the responsibility for helping to protect other members of their community, including those more vulnerable to significant negative health impacts. This means paying special attention to how activities might impact or be connected to members of higher risk populations, including older individuals, those with compromised immune systems or others with underlying health issues.

Ultimate is a sport that emphasizes and highlights character and community, and is guided by the ethos of Spirit of the Game, including principles such as personal responsibility, communication and adherence to the rules. This situation provides an opportunity for the ultimate community to practice those principles in a new context, both on and off the field of play. Together, as a national ultimate community and as part of various state and local communities, we can be part of the solution to this unprecedented global challenge by making informed decisions that prioritize the health and safety of participants in the coming months and into the future.

Finally, it is critical to understand that the COVID-19 situation is fluid. There are many factors that may influence the spread of the virus and the ability to mitigate its impacts. As scientists and healthcare professionals learn more, and as public health and government officials make new recommendations and decisions, these Return to Play guidelines will almost certainly evolve. USA Ultimate will continue to monitor these factors and rely on local ultimate organizations and participants to do the same.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated societal inequities that underserved communities endure on a daily basis. These inequities limit or deny access to opportunity and to basic freedoms, rights and services for traditionally underrepresented groups of people, including those with diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic and LGBTQ+ backgrounds. Nowhere is the impact more severe than with accessing opportunity in areas such as employment, healthcare, and educational and childcare options for families.

Sports, including ultimate, are not immune to these inequities. Barriers that prevent people marginalized by society because of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic or LGBTQ+ background from returning to play equitably are likely to manifest as playing opportunities are reintroduced and are subject to special guidelines and requirements put in place to help mitigate the risk of infection and viral spread.



As ultimate organizers, coaches and other decision makers begin reintroducing ultimate activity, based on the recommendations in this document and by following state and local regulations, it is critical they pay special attention to how those procedures may disproportionately affect or marginalize any group or groups of people. Areas where underserved and marginalized communities could face potential challenges include the following:

- Access to transportation
- Safe equipment
- Technology
- Playing space
- Adult supervision
- Language barriers
- Childcare options
- Financial assistance
- Healthcare
- Insurance
- Food and Housing Insecurity

Challenges and strategies to address inequities will differ with each stage of reintroducing playing activities based on local factors, some related to COVID-19 conditions, some related to pre-existing inequalities and some related to the local circumstances of each community. Spend time thinking about how to mitigate those challenges, while still keeping the individuals and the community as safe as possible, and incorporate inclusion strategies into your plans (see [Appendix A](#)).

Injury Prevention and Gradual Return to Activity

Many of the recommendations in this document are focused on health and safety related to COVID-19 and mitigating risks associated with infection, both for individuals and the larger community. A phased approach to reintroducing activity is important in this context, but also in the context of general fitness and injury prevention. It is important to recognize that, for the past several months, many individuals' level of activity has changed. Even if activity has been maintained at some level, it is unlikely ultimate players would be fully prepared to resume activities at the same level from where they left off.

With that in mind, a phased approach to reintroducing activity is important to not only mitigate risks associated with COVID-19 transmission, but also to decrease the risk of injury with adequate incremental physical training. It is important to follow a gradual plan for reintroducing activity in stages related to the duration and intensity of activity. In general, it is recommended that ultimate training sessions be limited to around 60 minutes for the first 10-14 days. Additionally, it is recommended that physical exertion be low-to-moderate intensity depending on individual fitness



levels. After a 10-14 day initial training period, duration and intensity of activity should increase gradually with respect to each individual's level of fitness. In all stages of activity reintroduction, proper warm-up is essential to prevent injury.

State and Local Regulations

USA Ultimate cannot support activities that do not comply with federal, state and local health department mandates. State and local regulations will provide key guidance about if, when and under what conditions sports and other activities may resume. State and local health departments will be important resources and partners in making decisions about returning to ultimate or disc sport-related activities, creating plans for mitigating risks in the local community and dealing with issues as they arise. Local organizers are expected to understand and follow state and local health department guidance and regulations when returning to activity, and should expect to do so in a phased, incremental fashion. Even given this local guidance, it is important to note there will still be risks associated with any activity, and risk tolerances and decisions on whether to host or participate in authorized activities will vary across organizations and individuals.

The CDC provides a [directory for state and territory, city and county, and tribal health departments](#) on its website. Please use this resource to access information from all relevant public health authorities in your area.

CDC Considerations for Youth Sports

The CDC has issued guidance in the form of a web document titled "[Considerations for Youth Sports](#)." This CDC guidance document is divided into four areas: "[Guiding Principles](#)," "[Assessing Risk](#)," "[Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread](#)," and "[Maintaining Healthy Environments](#)." Organizers and participants should access the CDC document directly and should read and understand the detailed information that serves as a basis for this document's general and ultimate-specific recommendations. USA Ultimate is using these considerations as a primary guide not only for *youth*-focused sports activities, but also for other ultimate activities offered in a similar environment and under similar conditions (i.e., amateur competitive and recreational ultimate or disc-related activities for *both youth and adult* participants).

Risk Factors

It is important to understand that decisions about offering activities or participating in those activities are not binary choices between what is "safe" and what is "unsafe." Rather, decisions are made



along a spectrum of risk, with different conditions creating a higher or lower risk environment and different safety measures helping to reduce risk along that spectrum.

Risk increases with the number of people involved, their proximity, the duration of the interaction, the characteristics of the participants and the shared environment, including equipment. Different activities and decisions about how activities are organized will have an impact on associated risks.

Based on CDC guidance, the following seven key criteria have been identified to help assess risk for ultimate-related activities:

1. Physical distance between participants during play or drills.
 - a. Risk continuously increases the closer participants get to one another.
 - b. Risk continuously increases the longer participants remain in close proximity.
2. Physical distance between individuals when not engaged in play or drills.
 - a. Risk continuously increases the closer participants get to one another.
 - b. Risk continuously increases the longer participants remain in close proximity.
3. Size of the group.
 - a. Risk continuously increases with larger groups of participants.
 - b. Risk increases with the addition of external visitors, spectators and others.
4. Use of shared equipment.
 - a. Risk of infection substantially increases when hands or gloves that have contacted shared, unsanitized equipment are brought to the mouth or nose before being washed/disinfected.
5. Age of participants.
 - a. Risk increases as compliance with safety guidelines decreases. Younger participants may be less able to follow guidelines.
 - b. Risk of severe illness [increases with age, especially in older adults](#).
6. Participation by people at high risk of severe COVID-19 illness (or those directly or indirectly connected to the activity).
 - a. Risk of severe illness is increased for participants with [underlying health conditions](#).
 - b. Risk of severe illness [increases with age, especially in older adults](#).
 - c. These same increased risks exist for anyone connected to the participant or activity, including organizers, coaches, parents/guardians, and extended family.
7. Travel, including distance, duration and mode.
 - a. Risk increases with travel outside of a local community, either for the traveling players, the community to which they traveled, or both.

Risk Categories and Return to Play

The CDC outlines the following risk spectrum for youth sports activities, in general:



- Lowest Risk: Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family members.
- Increasing Risk: Team-based practice.
- More Risk: Within-team competition.
- Even More Risk: Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area.
- Highest Risk: Full competition between teams from different geographic areas.

Based on these risk categories, the following Return to Play stages are recommended for ultimate and ultimate-related activities. Additional descriptions and detailed recommendations for each stage are provided later in this document.

- **Stage 1 - Lowest Risk - Individual Skills Training**
- **Stage 2 - Increasing Risk - Small Group Skills Training**
 - **Stage 2a - Activities involving no disc sharing, per local regulations.**
 - **Stage 2b - Activities involving limited disc sharing, per local regulations, including regular cleaning and disinfecting.**
- **Stage 3 - More Risk - Small Group Interactive Drills and Competition**
- **Stage 4 - Even More Risk - Medium Group Local Competition**
- **Stage 5 - Highest Risk - Large Group or Travel Competition**

The conditions under which ultimate activity might resume within each of these risk categories will depend on local conditions, as determined by public health officials as well as the ability of an organization to implement safety measures and address risk factors in each of these environments. If an organization is not able to mitigate risk at one of these levels through appropriate safety measures, they should consider moving to a less risky level of activity.

The CDC developed a [decision tool for youth programs and camps](#) that can serve as a checklist for determining if and when to restart activities. While some of the guidelines are tailored to programs with permanent staff and facilities, the principles apply to youth sports programs, and following the steps in the decision tool will help with decision-making and reducing risk.

General Guidance on Risk Mitigation

The following recommendations should always be followed, regardless of Return to Play stage.

Local Regulations

- Be aware of and follow state, local, facility and other applicable regulations.
- Communicate directly with relevant authorities about plans for activities to ensure compliance and authorization.

Communication and Planning

- Designate a coach, organizer or other adult to be the point of contact for COVID-19-related concerns and communications.
 - List this person and their contact information in all team or organization-related communications.
 - Set up a system with local health officials for reporting COVID-19 cases through local organization-designated COVID-19 contacts.
- Ensure effective communication systems to disseminate information about safety measures and compliance with local regulations.
 - Send email and/or text notices to communication lists with reminders about safety measures prior to and between activity dates, including pre-activity screening requirements. The CDC provides a [customizable letter template](#).
 - Provide notification of closures or exposures to participants and staff.
 - Create durable, legible signage to be used and reused at your activity sites (e.g., laminated notices, corrugated plastic “yard” signs, banners).
 - Post signage in visible areas at your site (e.g., on or near restrooms, washrooms, trash cans, at facility entrances, along sidelines).
 - Make announcements to participants before, during and after activity to remind everyone of safety measures.
- Ensure training on safety protocols and applicable regulations are understood and implemented by all coaches and other relevant staff.
 - Create and distribute written materials outlining regulations and responsibilities.
 - Require written agreement to implement safety protocols.
 - Hold virtual meetings/training sessions to communicate expectations safely while maintaining physical distancing.
- Ensure effective planning to handle and report a sick participant or a known exposure.
 - If a participant is discovered to have COVID-19 symptoms while at the activity, immediately separate them and send them home or to a healthcare facility, depending on the severity of their symptoms.
 - Any participant, coach, staff member or spectator who had close contact with a symptomatic person should also be separated from others and sent home.
 - Have a plan for safely transporting a sick individual home or to a healthcare facility.
 - If severe symptoms (e.g., difficulty breathing, lethargy), call 911 and notify the emergency response team of suspected COVID-19 symptoms.
 - If mild symptoms (e.g., cough, fatigue, subjective fever), call a parent/guardian for youth, or for an adult, allow them to contact a household member for a ride or transport themselves home. While waiting, the sick person and any caregiver should don a mask and be separated from the group.



- Close off areas used by the sick person and set aside any surfaces or objects, such as discs, chairs, benches, cones, bags, etc., for disinfection.
- If possible, wait up to 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting the area and objects. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning products.
- Adhere to local privacy laws and other regulations, notify health officials, program staff and affected families about any COVID-19 case associated with the activity.
- Advise those with close contact to a COVID-19 case to stay home and follow local health department and/or CDC guidance. Do not permit them to return to activity until after they have followed guidelines and been cleared to return by a medical provider.
- Create flexible staffing policies and backup staffing plans to account for sickness, exposure to COVID-19 or other risk factors.
 - Be clear with coaches and other staff about expectations and options to not participate in activities, with allowances for sickness, exposures or other risk factors without reprisal.
 - Develop plans for return to activity/work for anyone who has been sick, exposed or had a positive test.
 - Have backup plans in place to ensure adequate staffing by authorized coaches, chaperones or volunteers to meet supervision requirements.
- Provide support and coping materials and outlets for participants and staff.
 - Encourage healthy activity, sleep and eating habits outside of ultimate activities.
 - Encourage virtual social connections with friends and teammates.
 - Provide coach or organizer options for people to talk about their concerns.
 - Reference other local or national support programs (e.g., National Disaster Distress Hotline 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or text HOME to 741741)

Screening and Monitoring

- Educate organizers, volunteers, coaches, participants and families about when to stay home and when it is OK to return to activity [per CDC guidelines](#).
- Establish and communicate a requirement that individuals are prohibited from attending activities if they are sick, have [COVID-19 symptoms](#), have tested positive for COVID-19 or have had contact with a person with COVID-19.
 - Require individuals who meet the above criteria to notify activity's COVID-19 contact.
- Establish and implement screening procedures, in compliance with applicable privacy laws and regulations, that help identify potential risk factors for both staff and participants before interactions occur with others (see [Appendix D](#) for screening template).
- Subject to applicable privacy laws, have participants report any potential exposure to COVID-19, relevant symptoms or positive COVID-19 test within the last 14 days.



Hygiene

- Perform hand hygiene regularly throughout practice, especially after contacting shared equipment (e.g., after a drill) or if there is concern about contamination from respiratory secretions (e.g., after close proximity between individuals and before bringing hands to the mouth or nose).
- Require hand cleaning, prohibit spitting and encourage coughing/sneezing into tissues that are disposed of properly.
 - Teach and reinforce handwashing for 20 seconds with soap and water before and after activities, as well as after any coughing or sneezing.
- Ensure adequate supplies for hygiene are available.
 - Stock facility restrooms, if open, with soap and running water.
 - Ensure portable toilets, if available, are stocked with hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - Encourage staff and participants to bring their own hand sanitizer and tissues.
 - Bring a supply of hand sanitizer and tissues for backup use.
 - Provide trash cans for proper disposal of used tissues.
 - Establish a handwashing station stocked with water and soap and/or hand sanitizer (more relevant for larger events/activities).

High-Risk Individuals

- Adult participants should make decisions about participation based on their own personal health situation and that of their immediate family, workplace or personal sphere.
- Parents/guardians and coaches should consider and communicate about whether their child's health situation, or that of their immediate family or personal sphere, should impact participation in certain activities or impact the way in which activities are structured.
- [Older participants](#), including some in masters divisions, may have more risk factors that require less risky and more highly-modified activities.
- Create awareness of and flexibility for participants at greater risk.
 - Offer virtual practices or skill-development options for individuals with higher risks or high-risk family members.
 - Communicate and implement flexible attendance policies for individuals with higher risks or high-risk family members.

Stages for Returning to Play Ultimate

The stages described below are laid out based on a continuum of risk. Generally, one or more risk factors are introduced while public health restrictions are eased in the progression from one stage to the next. Decisions about if/when ultimate activities can progress, or possibly regress, from one stage to the next will be dependent on local conditions and regulations, as well as on the ability of the local



organizer and participants to adhere to risk mitigation guidelines. Likewise, detailed guidance related to group sizes will be specific to each local area. As a result, the description of group size for each stage is purposefully kept general (e.g., small, medium and large) and specific limits will likely vary across different locations.

Please see [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#) for visual depictions of stage progressions and the spectrum of primary risk factors. Note that these stages do not include detailed best practices for large scale tournament-style events, particularly involving extensive travel. While Stage 5 begins to account for larger groups and travel, comprehensive protocols for large events requiring extensive travel will need to be developed further as state and local conditions and regulations evolve.

Stage 1 - Individual Skills Training - Lowest Risk

- Stage 1 is characterized by training activities carried out alone or with members of the immediate household, either at home or at an authorized public space.
- Follow all relevant state, local, facility and other applicable regulations.
- Follow all guidance related to screening and monitoring, hygiene, communication and planning, and special considerations for high-risk individuals in the [General Guidelines on Risk Mitigation](#) section of this document.

Group Size and Makeup

- Activities are limited to individuals and immediate household members.

Location

- Activities take place at home or at an authorized public space, separate from anyone other than immediate household members.
 - Recommended that you play outdoors (lower risk).
 - If playing indoors (higher risk), ensure ventilation is working, use fans and open doors and windows.

Distancing

- Only use a public space if authorized AND if physical distancing (i.e., >6 feet) from non-household members can be maintained before, during and after activity.
- Wear a mask or cloth face covering in any situation where physical distancing from non-household members cannot be maintained.

Equipment

- Do not share equipment with non-household members.

Travel

- If using an authorized public space, do not travel outside of your local community.

Activity Recommendations

- See [Appendix E](#).
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Stage 2 - Small Group Skills Training - Increasing Risk

- Stage 2 is characterized by physically distanced activities within a small, consistent group of local participants. Stage 2 is further divided into the following:
 - Stage 2a, where local regulations do NOT allow shared equipment (e.g., throwing and catching a disc with another participant), and
 - Stage 2b, where local regulations do allow LIMITED shared equipment (e.g., throwing and catching a disc with another participant), along with regular cleaning and disinfecting.
- Follow all relevant state, local, facility and any other applicable regulations.
- Follow all guidance related to screening and monitoring, hygiene, communication and planning, and high-risk individuals in the [General Guidelines on Risk Mitigation](#) section of this document.
- Follow all guidance from earlier stages, unless new guidance is provided.

Group Size and Makeup

- Limit the number of players that attend training together, based on the maximum number allowed by local regulations and the minimum number necessary to achieve training goals.
- Split into sub-groups (cohorts) of players and coaches, based on the maximum number allowed by local regulations and the minimum number necessary to achieve training goals.
 - Assign a coach to be with each cohort.
 - Avoid mixing between cohorts.
 - Consider limiting each cohort to using a specific area of the field.
 - Smaller cohorts or sub-cohorts can also be created, to further limit interactions (e.g., in Stage 2b, if throwing between players is allowed, pair two players who only throw with each other).
- Adjust to smaller groups for younger participants, since younger participants may be less able to follow guidelines.
 - Establish a ratio of coaches/adults to kids that will ensure oversight appropriate to the age level.
 - Shorten activity times for younger participants.



- Limit spectators and support staff to minimize overall group size.
 - Limit non-essential personnel.
 - Require parents/guardians to drop their kids off and either remain in their cars or disperse to other areas of the facility.
- Limit potential interactions with other groups.
 - Avoid scheduling multiple small groups in your program unless there is adequate space, time and planning to maintain physical distancing
 - Schedule activities so departing and arriving groups do not overlap.
 - Check with the facility provider (e.g., school, parks department, etc.) to see who else is using the facility, particularly around your activity schedule.
 - Avoid overlapping with other outside groups. Be sure to check scheduling of groups that might be using the same facility.

Location

- Public facility, as authorized by state, local and facility regulations.
 - Recommended that you play outdoors (lower risk).
 - If playing indoors (higher risk), ensure ventilation is working, use fans open doors and windows.
- Be aware of other local sports organizations' policies, including local soccer, lacrosse, flag football or other similar field sport clubs and leagues.
- Communicate with other organizations using the field about combined efforts to mitigate risks or concerns about inconsistencies in policies and procedures that might create additional risks for your club or theirs.

Distancing

- Assign a coach or other adult to be responsible for monitoring and maintaining physical distancing. Ensure this person's role is clear.
- Schedule more time between training sessions to reduce interactions with subsequent users and allow for cleaning of discs and other equipment.
- Instruct participants to wait in cars, with household members only, before training sessions.
- Masks
 - Require masks be worn by staff, coaches and other non-participants at all times.
 - Masks should not have exhalation valves that allow unfiltered air to pass directly through the mask.
 - Require masks be worn by participants, except during physical exertion, if they have trouble breathing or are too young to wear masks properly.
- Adjust and control the environment to help maintain physical distancing at or around the activity.



- Use cones, tape and/or signage to create clear spaces in or around the activity area for participants, coaches, parents/guardians or other additional personnel to guide physical distancing.
- Space out cones or other markers six (6) feet apart and use them to remind players to stay apart while waiting.
- Don't use shared benches. Don't allow sharing of chairs. Spread chairs out at least six (6) feet from one other.
- If using tents or other shade (e.g., trees, shelters, umbrellas) during hot summer months, be aware of increased risk associated with group gathering and shared equipment. Do not use shade to store equipment/bags. Require physical distancing and encourage mask use when in shade. Consider additional shade tents to spread out use if heat mitigation is a concern. Don't allow sharing of individual umbrellas.
- Discourage use of locker rooms and maintain physical distance when indoors.
- Modify activities and behaviors to enable physical distancing.
 - Limit activities to drills and training that keep participants physically distanced (i.e., at least six (6) feet apart, further if feasible).
 - Use tape, signage and other physical indicators to guide positioning of players, coaches and spectators (if allowed).
 - Create individual activities such as sprints, push-ups or crunches to keep individuals separated, including when not participating in the primary group activities.
 - Prohibit high fives, fist bumps, spirit circles, huddles and other close contact.
 - Host team meetings virtually or via written communications (e.g., with coaches, parents and/or players).
 - Stage 2a - If sharing discs IS NOT permitted by local regulations:
 - Do physical training that will prepare players for game play at a later time.
 - Run drills that don't involve passing the disc between players (e.g., throw to space, make cuts without throws, throw to self).
 - Clean and disinfect discs with sanitizing wipes or spray before and regularly during practice (e.g., between drills where one person handles discs others will later handle).
 - Stage 2b - If sharing discs IS permitted by local regulations:
 - Limit throwing/catching drills to predetermined partners or sub-cohorts within the larger group. Don't mix partners.
 - Clean and disinfect discs with sanitizing wipes or spray before and regularly during practice (e.g., after drills where more than one person handled the same disc prior to it being cleaned and disinfected).

Equipment

- Survey facility and equipment, and identify frequently touched surfaces (e.g., water fountains, benches), as well as potentially shared equipment (e.g., discs, cones).

- Cleaning and Disinfecting
 - Assign a coach or other adult to be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting related to an activity.
 - Create a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting pre, during and post-activity.
 - Regularly and safely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared objects during or between activities (e.g., use a cleaning bucket or disinfectant spray/wipes).
 - Recommended for Stage 2 training sessions - Before and after each drill, or every 15 minutes (if continuous activity), whichever is more frequent.
 - Ensure safe storage and use of cleaning products, including use of gloves and preventing access by children.
- Equipment
 - Determine whether discs will be supplied by the organizer, brought by participants or both. This may depend on resources available to organizers and participants. Develop and communicate a clear plan for disc tracking, cleaning and disinfecting.
 - Stage 2a - If sharing discs is NOT permitted by local regulations.
 - Prohibit the use of shared discs by doing drills without discs.
 - Stage 2b - If sharing discs is permitted by local regulations.
 - Keep disc sharing to pairs or other small cohorted groups.
 - Do not use pinnies or allow other shared clothing. Require participants to bring light and dark shirts if needed for activities.
 - Create preset spaces, at least six (6) feet apart, for bags and personal gear; require that personal gear stay contained in bags.
 - Require players to bring their own water bottles. Do not allow sharing.
 - Do not provide food to participants. Participants may bring their own snacks, but they should not be shared with others. Participants should wash their hands before eating snacks. Any trash or waste should be properly disposed of.
 - In special circumstances where community water is needed, a single, designated staff person should sanitize their hands and disinfect the shared water source before dispensing water as needed to participants, while maintaining physical distancing and preventing contact between water bottles and the water source.
 - In special circumstances where food is needed, such as for participants who are unable to provide their own snacks, (see [Appendix A](#)), a single, designated staff person should sanitize their hands and provide pre-packaged, individually wrapped snacks, while maintaining physical distancing and preventing contact between water bottles and the water source.

Travel

- Limit activity to local participants.
- Limit travel outside the local area.
- Discourage carpooling with those outside the immediate household.



Activity Recommendations

- See [Appendix E](#).
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Stage 3 - Small Group Interactive Drills and Competition - More Risk

- Stage 3 is characterized by closer and more frequent interactions between participants, who are sharing the same disc on a limited basis but are still within a small, consistent group of local participants. This might include modified intra-group competition or modified drills that simulate competition (e.g., marking, defense).
- Follow all relevant state, local, facility and other applicable regulations.
- Follow all guidance related to screening and monitoring, hygiene, communication and planning, and high-risk individuals in the [General Guidelines on Risk Mitigation](#) section of this document.
- Follow all guidance from earlier stages, unless new guidance is provided.

Group Size and Makeup

- Follow Stage 2 guidance for group size and makeup with the following modifications:
 - Smaller cohorts or sub-cohorts can also be created, to further limit interactions (e.g., for drills, pair players who only cover each other; for intra-group competition, create small-sided teams).

Location

- Follow Stage 2 guidance for location.

Distancing

- Follow Stage 2 guidance for distancing with the following modifications:
 - When participating in activities where physical distancing is difficult, modify activities and behaviors to limit close interactions and the duration of those interactions.
 - Spend more time on activities that keep participants “physically distanced” (i.e., at least six (6) feet apart, further if feasible) and less time on interactive drills or competition.
 - Reduce the number of players engaging in drills or competition (e.g., 4v4, 2v2).

Equipment

- Follow Stage 2 guidance for equipment with the following modifications:



- *Increase* cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces and shared objects during or between activities (e.g., use a cleaning bucket or disinfectant spray/wipes), based on increased use of discs by more than one person in an activity.
- Create a schedule for cleaning, monitoring and disinfecting pre-, during and post-activity.
 - Recommended cleaning schedule for Stage 3 training sessions and competition - beginning and end of each half, and after every five (5) points during a game.

Travel

- Follow Stage 2 guidance for travel.

Activity Recommendations

- See [Appendix E](#).

Stage 4 - Medium Group Local Competition - Even More Risk

- Stage 4 is characterized by the same, potentially modified activities in Stage 3, but expands the small, consistent group of participants to a medium-sized group of local participants. This medium-sized group could result from expanding a small group or from combining two small groups (e.g., competing teams), but the participants must be from the same local area.
- Follow all relevant state, local, facility and other applicable regulations.
- Follow all guidance related to screening and monitoring, hygiene, communication and planning, and high-risk individuals in the [General Guidelines on Risk Mitigation](#) section of this document.
- Follow all guidance from earlier stages, unless new guidance is provided.

Group Size and Makeup

- Follow Stage 3 guidance for group size and makeup, with the following modifications:
 - Ensure a clear understanding of participant protocols to be followed by the new group with whom your group will be interacting, including the maximum allowed number of participants and roles and responsibilities.

Location

- Follow Stage 3 guidance for location.



Distancing

- Follow Stage 3 guidance for distancing with the following modifications:
 - Ensure distancing protocols are consistent between the two groups and are following local regulations.
 - Ensure clarity about roles and responsibilities associated with setup and enforcement of physical distancing requirements for both groups, including modified rules, field setup, masks and on- and off-field interactions.
 - During competition, limit sideline interactions between opposing players by limiting each team to one sideline or one half of one sideline.
 - Prohibit off-field (i.e., sideline) interactions between opposing players before, during and after a competition.
 - Continue to limit off-field (i.e., sideline) interactions between players on the same team.

Equipment

- Follow Stage 3 guidance for equipment with the following modifications:
 - Ensure clarity about roles and responsibilities associated with equipment for both groups, including supplying, monitoring and cleaning and disinfecting equipment.

Travel

- Follow Stage 3 guidance for travel.

Activity Recommendations

- See [Appendix E](#).

Stage 5 - Large Group or Travel Competition - Highest Risk

- Stage 5 is characterized by the same, potentially modified activities in Stage 4. It also introduces several factors that increase risk, including travel, interactions with groups outside the local area and larger groups, depending on local regulations. Each of these factors increases risk in different ways beyond that of Stage 4 activities, and mitigation recommendations are provided separately for each factor that increases risk.
 - Note that combining all of these increased risks into a larger, travel event (e.g., many traditional ultimate tournaments) increases risk in multiple ways. Stage 5 guidance can be applied to mitigate risk in each of these areas but is not intended to provide a comprehensive set of best practices for returning to large-scale travel tournaments. USA Ultimate will evaluate requests to host such



activities in conjunction with local health regulations and will work to develop additional guidance for these highest-risk events in the coming months.

- Follow all relevant state, local, facility and other applicable regulations. Note that this will need to take into account and meet regulations across multiple jurisdictions.
- Follow all guidance related to screening and monitoring, hygiene, communication and planning, and high-risk individuals in the [General Guidelines on Risk Mitigation](#) section of this document.
- Follow all guidance from earlier stages, unless new guidance is provided.

Group Size and Makeup

- Follow Stage 4 guidance for group size and makeup with the following modifications:
 - Ensure a clear understanding of participant protocols being followed by the new group or groups with whom your group will be interacting, including numbers of participants and roles and responsibilities. This may also include an event organizer, in addition to other groups/teams.

Location

- Follow Stage 4 guidance for location with the following modifications:
 - The location may be a local facility where your group is hosting a group or groups from another location, or a facility where your group is traveling.

Distancing

- Follow Stage 4 guidance for distancing.

Equipment

- Follow Stage 4 guidance for equipment.

Travel

- Check state and local guidelines for quarantine or other requirements or restrictions related to travel by individuals into or out of the community.
- Pay attention to the incidence of COVID-19 in your own community and in communities with whom you may consider interacting.
- For any carpooling and/or overnight travel, we recommend people be grouped in pods of no more than four (4), and that these groupings be maintained for the duration of the trip to minimize the total number of close contacts for each individual participant.

Activity Recommendations

- See [Appendix E](#).

Resources

The following resources were used to create the guidance provided in this document or are provided as a way to access more detailed, supplemental information about COVID-19 and related health and safety policies and procedures.

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
 - [Health Department Directories](#)
 - [COVID-19 Cases in the U.S.](#)
 - [Considerations for Youth Sports](#)
 - [Guidance for Administrators in Parks and Recreational Facilities](#)
 - [Examples of Screening Methods](#)
 - [Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)
 - [If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone](#)
 - [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#)
 - [Quarantine and Isolation](#)
 - [People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness](#)
 - [When and How to Wash Your Hands](#)
 - [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)
 - [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(Environmental Protection Agency\)](#)
 - [Social Distancing](#)
 - [Cloth Face Coverings](#)
 - [Coronavirus in the United States—Considerations for Travelers](#)
 - [Videos \(English/Spanish\) \(searchable\) - includes presentations on youth programs/sports](#)
 - [Public Service Announcements \(English/Spanish\) \(audio/transcripts\) - includes general COVID-19 info, high risk individuals, travel](#)
 - [Guidance Documents \(searchable\)](#)
 - [Info Graphics and Print Resources](#)
 - [Youth Programs and Camps Decision Tool](#)
 - [Checklist for Coaches](#)
 - [Keep Youth Athletes Safe \(Poster\)](#)
 - [Youth Sports Game Plan \(Assess Your Risk\)](#)
 - [Letter Template for Sports Administrators and Coaches](#)
 - [How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
 - [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
 - [Face Covering Do's and Don'ts](#)
 - [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)
- [United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee \(USOPC\)](#)



- [Aspen Institute Project Play](#)
- [National Council of Youth Sports](#)
- [Guidance for Daily COVID-19 Screening of Staff and Visitors \(State of Washington\)](#)
- USA Ultimate Staff Contacts
 - Will Deaver - Managing Director, Competition and National Team Programs - will@hq.usultimate.org
 - Questions about USA Ultimate competition divisions and related events, medical working group, rules/SOTG, national teams
 - Stacey Waldrup - Director, Member Services and Community Development - stacey@hq.usultimate.org
 - Questions about USA Ultimate-sanctioned events, state organizations and local affiliates, education and outreach programs, EDI programs and activities
 - [Other USA Ultimate Staff Contacts](#)
- USA Ultimate Medical Advisory Working Group
 - Justine Crowley, D.O. (Chair)
 - Josh Berkowitz, M.D.
 - Cindy Endicott, D.P.T.
 - Kim Hinton, A.T.C.
 - Harris Masket, M.D.
 - Bill Rodriguez, M.D.
 - Alex Senk, M.D.
 - Ravi Ved, D.O.
 - Leslie Yen, M.D.



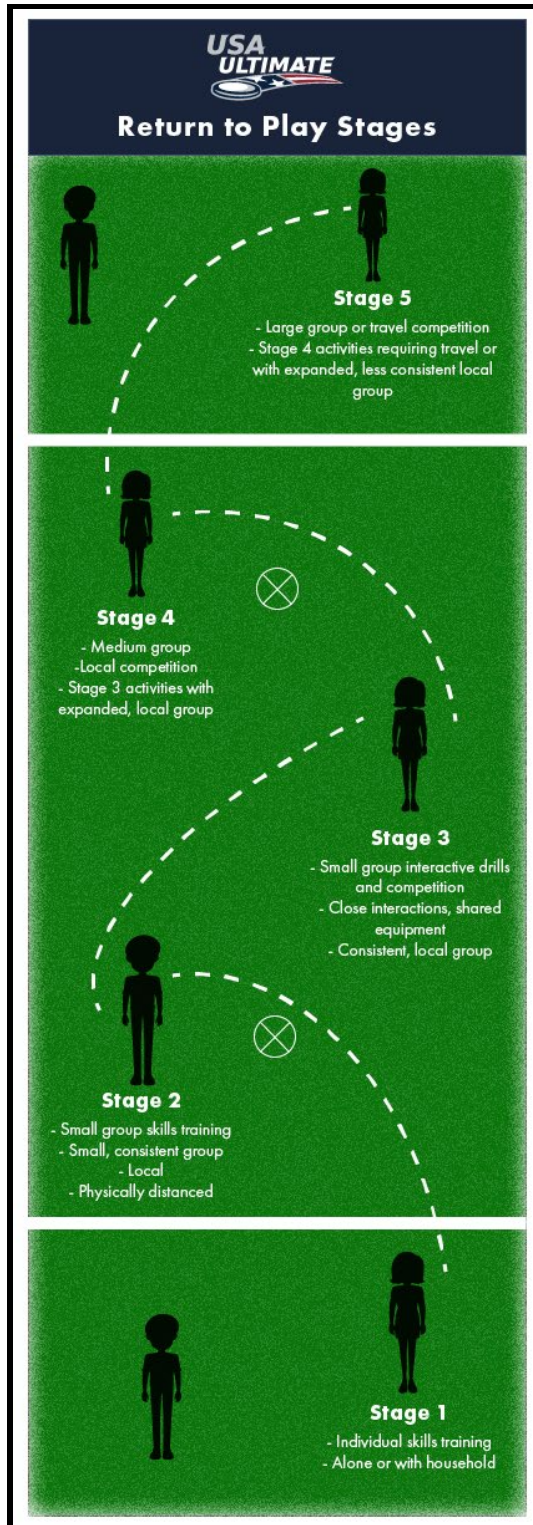
Appendix A: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

- Access to Transportation
 - Some players may have relied on public transportation to get to and from team activities, but those means of transportation may be unavailable or too risky during this time.
 - When coordinating practice sessions and cohort groups, stay conscious of the impact limited access to transportation may have on some of your players' ability to attend and participate in team activities, especially if considering activities in stages 3-5.
- Playing Space and Location
 - Available space may be limited due to multiple organizations looking to restart playing activities.
 - Some of your players may have trouble accessing previously used playing spaces and locations due to limited transportation.
- Safe Equipment
 - Refrain from making it a *requirement* for players to bring their own disc and cleaning/disinfecting materials (i.e., hand sanitizer) as not everyone may have access to them. Also be mindful that not every player has access to their own mask or cloth face covering. If possible, provide new or sanitized cloth face coverings or masks that the participant can keep. Do not collect, clean and reuse cloth face coverings or masks for participants.
 - While you may make it a requirement for participants to bring their own water bottle, as a general rule, pay attention to participants who may have difficulty meeting that requirement. Consider solutions such as providing a new or sanitized water bottle for them to keep.
- Technology
 - When sending out communication to your players, don't assume all of them and their families have access to a cell phone or internet. You should be aware of any adjustments players have had to make due to the impact of COVID-19, and be prepared to make accommodations for those whose means of sending and receiving communication have changed.
- Language Barriers
 - If possible, have a local contact who would be open to the idea of translating documents or assist with lowering the language barrier for any players and their families where English isn't their first language. Possible documents include the screening questionnaire ([Appendix D](#)) and the checklist for players and parents/guardians ([Appendix H](#)).
- Childcare Options



- With many childcare options (schools, daycares, camps, etc.) closed down across the country, be mindful of your players' ability to attend and participate in team activities if they have a child, younger sibling or other family member to look after.
- Adult Supervision
 - Similar to childcare options, you may face a situation where you have fewer chaperones or adult volunteers to assist with different group activities. Take this into account when deciding what type of activities to offer to your players.
- Financial Assistance
 - There is a likelihood some players' and their families' income streams have been impacted by COVID-19. Be sensitive to this reality when asking for team fees to compete in activities.
- Healthcare and Insurance
 - Avoid making assumptions about the level of access to healthcare of participants or their families as disparities in access to healthcare, which existed before the pandemic, are now exacerbated. Some families will have lost their employer-sponsored health insurance and may or may not be able to register for Medicaid or other alternative insurance options.
 - In addition, accessible COVID-19 testing isn't available in all communities.
 - This may not impact specific activities or decisions you make for your group, but may impact how you communicate with individuals or families if there is an incident that requires healthcare for a participant.
- Food and Housing Insecurity
 - Some players and their families may be experiencing food and/or housing insecurity. Take the time to check in with players to see if major changes are taking place in their home lives. While food should not be shared, consider providing individual wrapped snacks and, if possible, identifying local service organizations that may be able to assist families with food and shelter.

Appendix B: Ultimate Return to Play Stages Diagram





Appendix C: Assessing Risk Diagram



Appendix D: Screening

It is important to establish a pre-participation process to screen all individuals, including staff and participants, before allowing them to come into contact with a group. The purpose of this screening is to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission between sick and healthy individuals*. Screening may help reduce risk by identifying whether an individual has symptoms, has been sick, has been exposed to others who have been sick or has been in areas where there is a higher risk of exposure prior to interactions with others. As of June 2020, the CDC does not recommend the use of COVID-19 diagnostic tests as a screening tool for return to youth sports, for child care programs, or for general business activities.

**Note: A certain percentage of individuals infected with the COVID-19 coronavirus will have no symptoms or non-respiratory symptoms.*

A screening questionnaire is provided on the following page for use by organizers. It is also available as a [printable download](#).

How to Utilize Screening Questionnaire:

- At least one day prior to any planned activity, inform participants of the need to complete the questionnaire in order to participate and explain its importance to keep the group safe.
- Screening questionnaire should be completed no sooner than the morning of the planned activity and should be completed on each day of a multi-day activity.
 - If possible, implement a no-touch strategy to complete the questionnaire. This may include having participants respond with an email or text including an image of completed, signed and dated questionnaire.
- All participants must complete the questionnaire before being allowed to join a group.
- Set up a screening station at the entrance of the activity area so interaction between non-household members can occur only after being screened.
 - Mark waiting spots, separated by six (6) feet, to maintain physical distancing while awaiting screening.
 - If paper and pens are used for screening, pens should be cleaned between uses and/or hand sanitizer should be made available for hand cleaning at the screening station.
- All participants should wear masks at all times prior to activity per distancing guidelines in each stage, and especially while awaiting screening.

Be prepared to manage those who screen positive. This may include a designated zone where the next steps are explained. Refer to the [Communication and Planning](#) section of this document, and to the CDC website for information on the relative [prevalence of cases in the U.S.](#)



TEAM NAME:

TEMPERATURE:

USAU COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire

1. Have you or anyone in your household tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
2. In the past 2 weeks, have you traveled out of state?
 - a. If yes, what state(s) did you go to?
3. Have you or any close contacts experienced any one (1) of the following symptoms in the last 14 days?
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fever or chills
 - New loss of taste or smell

OR, at least two (2) of the following symptoms:

 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Sore throat
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
 - New rash

***If yes to any of the above, further assessment is needed and participation is prohibited until cleared by a medical provider. ***

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: (parent or guardian if under 18 y.o.) _____



Appendix E: Activity and Program Options

The following are some basic activity ideas suited for different Return to Play stages.

- Stage 1 - Individual Skills Training
 - Create or find and send out online training videos to players.
 - Have virtual team meetings and video watch sessions.
 - Do skills/training work alone or with members of household.
 - USA Ultimate Skills Challenge (coming soon!) will provide further ideas.
 - Play individual disc sports (e.g., disc golf, freestyle).
- Stage 2 - Small Group Skills Training
 - Physical training for endurance, speed, quickness, power, etc.
 - Stage 2a - Activities involve no disc sharing, per local regulations.
 - Drills where a thrower throws multiple throws to space. Discs are retrieved and cleaned before given to the next thrower.
 - Drills where cutters make cuts to space for “phantom” throws and practice clearing.
 - Practice walking/running through plays and offensive or defensive sets with physical distancing.
 - Stage 2b - Activities may involve limited disc sharing, per local regulations, including regular cleaning and disinfecting.
 - Create pairs or small groups in order to do throwing/catching practice or active throwing/cutting drills.
 - Do not introduce marking, stalling or defense.
 - USA Ultimate Skills Challenge (coming soon!) will provide further ideas.
- Stage 3 - Small Group Interactive Drills and Competition
 - Introduce marking and defense, but in a limited capacity, with modifications to meet local distancing regulations.
 - Consider more zone defense work and related drills.
 - Consider small-sided games (e.g., 4v4).
 - Consider modified rules (see [Appendix F](#)) to help limit close or extended contact and to allow for regular cleaning of discs and other shared equipment.
- Stage 4 - Medium Group Local Competition
 - Stage 3 activities with an expanded local group based on local group size regulations.
 - Possibly begin playing full-sided (7v7) games.
- Stage 5 - Large Group or Travel Competition
 - Stage 4 activities requiring travel or with expanded, less consistent local group.
 - Games between teams from different towns.
 - Possibly begin events/activities involving more than two teams.



Appendix F: Rules Modifications

The following are some suggested ideas for basic rules modifications, which may be appropriate for Return to Play Stages 3-5. If allowed by local regulations to enter into Stage 3 or above, it is recommended that organizers adapt the game in some form to continue to reduce risk by limiting close or extended contact, and by allowing for regular cleaning of discs and other shared equipment. Much of this won't look or feel like the game of ultimate you're used to; however, these suggested modifications may reduce risk and provide opportunities for exercise, skills development and some fun, alternative styles of play. Organizers, coaches, participants and others are encouraged to be flexible in their thinking under these unprecedented circumstances.

- Increase marking (of thrower) distance to 6 feet (two big steps).
- Increase marking (of thrower) distance to 10 feet (same as double team distance).
- Allow stalling from anywhere* on the field.
 - *Note: This is the rule for goaltimate.*
 - Must be audible by thrower.
 - Must be maintained by same "staller;" stall restarts if staller switches.
- Disallow person defense (i.e., require zone defenses, with increased marking distance).
- No bidding on defense (to minimize potential for contact).
- Any contact, even incidental, is a foul (to discourage proximity).
- Change and clean discs at the beginning and end of each half, and after every five (5) points during a game.
 - Treat this stoppage as an equipment timeout.
 - Replace used disc with cleaned/disinfected disc.
 - Restart play with acknowledgment from defense and a ground tap.
- Require set offensive and defensive lines be established before play and remain the same during the duration of any play.
 - Ex: No player can play on both lines. The same offensive and defensive lines will match-up against each other for the duration of play.
- Require same person matchups.
 - No switching on defense.
 - During injury timeouts, substitute both the injured player and the opponent matched up against them.
- Separate teams on sidelines (sideline players and coaches).
 - Two different sidelines, OR
 - Two halves of same sideline.
- No rushing the field during a celebration after a goal.
- Expand pick rule to allow for a pick to be called if a player's path would not allow for a 6-foot radius to be maintained.



Appendix G: Checklist for Organizers and Coaches

- Follow all relevant state, local, facility and other applicable regulations.
- Use USA Ultimate Return to Play guidelines as a decision-making tool for activities.
- Make informed decisions that prioritize the health and safety of participants.
- Ensure awareness by participants of CDC guidance, risk factors and behaviors that increase or decrease risk.
- Designate a coach, organizer or other adult to be the point of contact for COVID-19-related concerns and communications.
- Ensure effective communication systems to disseminate information about safety measures and compliance with local regulations.
- Ensure training on safety protocols and applicable regulations are understood and implemented by all coaches and other relevant staff.
- Ensure effective planning to handle and report a sick participant or a known exposure.
- Create flexible staffing policies and backup staffing plans to account for sickness, exposure to COVID-19 or other risk factors.
- Provide support and coping materials and outlets for participants and staff.
- Educate organizers, volunteers, coaches, participants and families about when to stay home and when it is OK to return to activity.
- Establish and implement screening procedures.
- Teach and encourage important hygiene practices, including requiring hand cleaning, prohibiting spitting and encouraging coughing/sneezing into tissues that are properly disposed of.
- Ensure adequate supplies for hygiene are available.
- Create awareness of and flexibility for participants at greater risk.
- Limit group size and makeup based on local regulations.
- Implement physical distancing measures on and off the field based on local regulations.
- Implement equipment management, cleaning and disinfecting protocols based on local regulations.
- Limit travel and interactions outside the local area based on local regulations.
- Modify activities and rules to accomplish goals in each area of risk.
- Use a phased approach to reintroducing activity to decrease the risk of injury.
- Consider how new procedures may disproportionately affect or marginalize any group or groups of people and work to mitigate negative impacts, while maintaining health and safety.



Appendix H: Checklist for Players and Parents/Guardians

- Follow all relevant state, local, facility and other applicable regulations.
- Use USA Ultimate Return to Play guidelines to inform decisions about participation.
- Make informed decisions that prioritize the health and safety of participants.
- Be aware of CDC guidance, risk factors and behaviors that increase or decrease risk.
- Check with your local organization or team about how to reach their point of contact for COVID-19-related concerns and communications.
- Follow screening procedures and provide accurate information about illness and other risk factors.
- Notify activity's COVID-19 contact if you or your child are sick, have COVID-19 symptoms, have tested positive for COVID-19 or have had contact with a person with COVID-19.
- Understand if you or your child are at [higher risk for infection or severe illness](#). Communicate as appropriate with organizers and make informed decisions about participation.
- Follow guidelines set by local activity organizers, in compliance with local regulations.
- Perform hand hygiene regularly throughout activity, especially after contacting shared equipment (e.g., after a drill) or if there is concern about contamination by respiratory secretions (e.g., after close proximity between individuals), and before bringing hands to the mouth or nose. Refrain from spitting. Cough/sneeze into tissue and dispose of properly.
- Bring your own hand sanitizer, if available.
- Bring your own water bottle and other equipment or clothing as directed.
- Bring your own cloth face covering and wear when and where in accordance with local guidance and rules for activities. Notify activity's COVID-19 contact if unavailable.
- Follow distancing rules and rules modifications as instructed, on and off the field.
- No high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, hugs, spirit circles, etc.
- Follow rules about sharing and cleaning of equipment.
- Follow rules about pick-up and drop-off for activities, as well as limits on additional spectators, parents or other personnel.
- Communicate with organizers about issues or concerns.
- Limit travel and interactions outside the local area, including any quarantine rules, based on local regulations.
- Use a phased approach to reintroducing activity to decrease the risk of injury.
- Consider how new procedures may disproportionately affect or marginalize any group or groups of people and how you might help to mitigate negative impacts, while maintaining health and safety.



Appendix I: USA Ultimate Sanctioning Requirements

The following steps are required in order to receive approval for sanctioning by USA Ultimate.

1. Organizers must check all applicable national, state, and local health and safety regulations and ensure their event or activity will be in compliance.
2. Organizers must contact the facility and any applicable local authorities to get pre-approval for their event or activity.
3. Organizers must submit a complete sanctioning application to USA Ultimate within the required time frame, along with any relevant sources of state and local health regulations. In their application, organizers must agree to adhere to any and all applicable health and safety regulations in effect at the time their event takes place.
4. USA Ultimate will review the application and may communicate with organizers to verify plans to adhere to applicable regulations.
5. If the organizer meets all health and safety requirements, as well as other requirements for sanctioning, the event will be approved for sanctioning.
6. All sanctioned event participants are required to sign USA Ultimate's infectious diseases waiver through their member accounts.