



25 Years in 2020

NENSA BKL COVID-19 Best Practices Guide

Published 11/7/2020

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I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this Best Practices Guide is to provide some direction and guidance to you and your club as you plan for the upcoming season. We know that many clubs have different limitations and functional set-ups and we hope that this Guide will provide some useful ideas regardless of your club's location and the state and local guidelines you must follow. Please reach out to NENSA with any questions and concerns at staff@nensa.net and we will do our best to address them or point you in a helpful direction.

This NENSA BKL COVID-19 Best Practices Guide should be considered a "living document." This document's criteria and recommendations are based on known factors at the time of writing (November 7, 2020). As more information becomes available, this Guide will be updated accordingly. Please be aware that this Guide is designed to reduce potential exposure and to mitigate risk of viral transmission. However, it is not all encompassing and while it provides guidance for a wide range of scenarios, it does not account for every variable. Until a vaccine or other therapeutics are widely available, there will be an underlying, inherent risk of COVID-19 exposure and contraction when leaving the confines of one's home. Preventative measures cannot eradicate the possibility of COVID-19 infection.

These guidelines are to help you keep your community as safe as possible. Additional information follows, but notably: all athletes/children and accompanying family members should practice physical distancing at all times while at practice; have a mask/face covering on their person at all times; avoid congregating in parking lots or other areas; and agree to follow all posted/communicated guidelines.

Per [CDC considerations](#), the risk of COVID-19 spread increases in sports settings as follows:

- **Lowest Risk:** Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family
- **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

Per the USOPC's [Return to Event Considerations](#), skiing is an outdoor sport and, in many circumstances, can account for physical distancing and proper sanitization procedures, and therefore can be planned according to public health mandates.

Definitions:

Close Contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

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Physical Distancing: minimum 6 feet at rest and minimum 10 feet while exercising.

II. FACILITY LOGISTICS RECOMMENDATIONS

Registration

- If not already the case, move all club and practice registration online.
- Consider asking all athletes/children, family members, coaches/leaders, and parent helpers to review and sign a COVID-19 Contract before attending the first training session (sample contract [HERE](#)). We recommend using Google Forms and saving responses to a Google Sheet.

Parking

- Care should be taken to spread out parking to enable different households to maintain appropriate distance from each other.
- Avoid congregating in parking areas.

Building / Facility Use Recommendations

- Avoid using indoor space if provided. Have athletes/children base out of vehicles and not buildings.
- Provide an indoor warming space in the event of an emergency.
- Consider operating outdoor fire pits.
- Provide porta potties near the parking lot or create a plan for indoor bathroom use with limited numbers allowed in at any given time and masks/face coverings required at all times.
- Designate an indoor emergency phone if there is no cell service at your practice location.

Safety and First Aid

- Keep first aid supplies outside during practice in a location that all coaches/leaders, athletes/children, and parents/guardians are aware of.
- If possible (and injury is mild), have the athlete/child treat themselves with verbal guidance. Otherwise, treat the athlete/child first but make sure to wear a mask and maintain hand hygiene as well.
- Consider having hand and toe warmers available on very cold days.
- Consider asking athletes/children to bring extra layers to practice.

Transportation

- No club or team transportation of athletes/children except in cases of emergency.
- Discourage carpooling for athletes/children who are not in the same household.

III. PRACTICE

Monitoring / Screening for Symptoms

- Ask all athletes/children and their families to diligently self-screen for symptoms of illness.
- Ask athletes/children and coaches/leaders to fill out a Health Screen/Attendance Form either each week or prior to every practice session (form example [HERE](#)). We recommend using Google Forms and saving responses to a Google Sheet.
- No one should attend practice if they or any of their household members:
 - Have a current pending COVID-19 test prompted by symptoms within the past 14 days.
 - Have received a positive COVID-19 test result within the past 14 days.
 - Have not followed the required quarantine and testing procedure if returning from travel.
 - Have been on a plane or other form of public transportation in the past 14 days.
 - Were in [close contact](#) with a person with confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
 - Had any one of the following symptoms in the past 14 days:
 - Fever or feeling feverish
 - Sore throat
 - Cough (not related to chronic condition)
 - Nasal congestion or runny nose (not related to seasonal allergies)
 - Muscle or body aches (not related to training or racing)
 - Loss of taste or sense of smell
 - Shortness of breath (not related to chronic condition)
 - Had any two of the following symptoms in the past 14 days:
 - Headache
 - Nausea and/or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Fatigue
- If coaches/leaders notice an athlete/child showing symptoms of illness, request that athlete/child leave practice.

Physical Distancing - Everyone must maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet between each other at all times (10 feet when exercising).

Equipment

- All athletes/children are expected to maintain their own personal equipment and to avoid sharing equipment with others whenever possible.
- Coaches/leaders should ensure that any shared equipment is properly cleaned after use/before the next use.

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Masks/Face coverings

- Everyone is expected to have a mask/face covering on their person and easily accessible at all times.
- Masks/face coverings should be worn when not actively exercising or at all times depending on state, venue, and/or club guidelines.

Considerations for Young Athletes/Children

- Ask a parent/guardian to attend practice so they can help put on and take off equipment and pick up their child if they fall or need any other form of physical assistance.
- Formulate and set-up activities/games/challenges that young athletes/children and their parents/guardians can complete on their own time.

Group Structure Considerations

- If possible, consider creating groups at the beginning of the season each with their own coach/leader.
- If possible, have different groups practice at different times or on different days to meet gathering size limits and to limit potential exposure between different groups.

Parents / Guardians - Even if not a BKL coach/leader, or otherwise actively engaged in practice, ask parents to stay at the venue throughout practice in case their child gets cold and needs a warm car to heat up in or in case their child exhibits symptoms at practice and needs to be isolated from other children and return home.

Food and Water

- Athletes/children should bring their own drinks and snacks and should not share with one another.
- Encourage athletes/children to bring warm drinks to practice in thermoses if possible.

No Contact Game Recommendations

IV. BEST PRACTICES OUTSIDE OF TRAINING

Compliance with all COVID-19 recreation-related state, local, and organizational guidelines

- Athletes/children and families must regularly review and comply with all COVID-related guidelines and updates, including outdoor recreation guidelines, set forth by the state in which they are reside and practice: [MA](#) | [ME](#) | [NH](#) | [NY](#) | [VT](#)
- Athletes/children and families must also review and comply with the COVID policies of the ski center at which their club/program practices.

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V. GENERAL

Health Screening / Attendance

- Given the complicated logistics of providing a safe training environment in the time of COVID-19, coaches/leaders should know exactly who is attending practice.
- Consider asking all athletes/children and coaches/leaders to fill out the previously mentioned Health Screen/Attendance Form (form example [HERE](#)).

Travel

- Athletes/children and families are expected to follow their state's travel guidelines: [National CDC](#) | [MA](#) | [ME](#) | [NH](#) | [NY](#) | [VT](#)
- Consider asking athletes/children to inform coaches/leaders if they plan on travelling and create a return-to-practice plan if their travel location necessitates quarantine upon reentering their home state.

Awareness and Community Concerns

- Ask athletes/children to remember that they are representing their club/program whenever and wherever they are training or recreating.
- Ask athletes/children and families to be considerate of the concerns of other families in the club/program, and remember that different individuals/families may perceive different levels of risk or have different concerns around COVID-19. The best approach is to be cautious and compassionate
- Ask athletes/children and families to remember that everything is tentative and based on the current state of the pandemic. Remain flexible and be willing to adapt as needed to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Accountability

- Athletes/children and families must agree to follow all presented guidelines.
- Those who repeatedly fail to follow guidelines will lose the opportunity to participate.

VI. SICKNESS PROCEDURES

The goal of the following procedures is to ensure the safety of program athletes/children and families. These procedures are also intended to protect the privacy of program participants.

In the event that an athlete/child is sick they must:

- Communicate their symptoms with a coach/leader as soon as they occur.
- Communicate if any other family or household members are experiencing symptoms.
- Communicate if they have been, or may have been, exposed to someone who has tested positive for Covid-19
- Stay home and quarantine (the siblings of sick athletes/children should also remain at home until symptoms subside).

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- Receive clearance from a healthcare provider and coaches/leaders before returning to practices.

In the event an athlete/child is not sick, but has had a known exposure to COVID-19 they must:

- Communicate this with a coach/leader as soon as possible.
- Stay home and quarantine (siblings should also remain at home and quarantine).
- Receive clearance from a healthcare provider and coaches/leaders before returning to organized practices.

If an athlete/child tests positive for Covid-19, or has consulted a healthcare provider and is presumed to be positive:

- Athletes/children must communicate this information with a coach/leader as soon as possible.
- Coaches/leaders will inform athletes/children if someone in their training group, or someone from another group they may have trained with, is presumed or confirmed COVID-19 positive. This communication, and any following communication, will not mention sick individuals by name.
- Affected training groups will be shut down for two weeks.
- Individuals who test positive cannot return to practice until they have gone two weeks without symptoms, receive a negative test, and receive clearance from a healthcare provider and coaches/leaders.

VII. Hosting BKL Events

See [NENSA's COVID-19 XC Ski Event Host Guide](#)

Gathering Guideline Resources:

[MA](#) | [ME](#) | [NH](#) | [NY](#) | [VT](#)

VIII. CONTRIBUTING SOURCES

Craftsbury Nordic Ski Club's Athlete & Family COVID-19 Guidelines

CSU COVID Training Guidelines and Protocols

[U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

[U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee \(USOPC\)](#)

[U.S. Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 Cross Country Ski Domestic Competitions Guidance](#)