This document provides guidance to professional athletes, teams, and organizations to mitigate transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Executive Order 21-01 defines a “professional athlete” as an athlete who earns more than de minimis compensation for performance. While compensation can be derived from multiple sources (e.g., salary or wages, contracts, prize purses, or monetary compensation from sponsors), the following is not “compensation” under Executive Order 21-01:

- Reimbursement or payment for equipment, sports-related travel, or other performance-related expenses;
- The provision of developmental or recruitment opportunities;
- Waiving league fees or not charging league fees to participate.

In general, professional athletes are overseen by organizations that have independent legal and ethical obligations to protect their athletes and that have developed rigorous measures and protocols to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Each professional sports organization must have a protocol in place that meets or exceeds the minimum requirements in this guidance document.

This guidance does not apply to teams or athletes participating in organized recreational, amateur, or collegiate sports. These sectors are permitted to operate according to relevant industry guidance, including the COVID-19 Sports Practice and Games Guidance for Youth and Adults found on the Stay Safe Guidance for Organized Sports webpage (https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/organized-sports.jsp) and the COVID-19 Intercollegiate Sports Guidance for Higher Education found on the Stay Safe Guidance for Schools, Colleges, and Universities webpage (https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp).

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan (“Plan”) requirements for professional sports organizations

Professional sports organizations must develop and implement a Plan to comply with this guidance and other relevant industry guidance. This Plan can be separate from or incorporated into existing protocols.
Professional sports organizations are encouraged to work with the Minnesota Department of Health ("MDH"), the Department of Labor and Industry, and other relevant state agencies to ensure that their health and safety protocols are consistent with current state public health requirements.

MDH does not approve Plans but is available for technical assistance if organizations have questions about their Plans.

Plans should be updated when there are changes to official public health guidelines, including but not limited to state Executive Orders.

Incorporate and follow relevant industry and association guidance

Professional sports entities are often multi-faceted organizations that have multiple Minnesota industry guidance obligations to address in their Plans, in addition to mandatory guidance set by their national associations or governing bodies. For example, professional sports teams may have administrative office spaces, hold competitions in event and entertainment venues, and host workouts in gyms and fitness facilities. Each of these settings has corresponding state guidance documents that apply, including but not limited to:

- Guidance for Requirements for All Businesses and Other Entities found on the Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities webpage (https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp).

Each professional sports entity Plan must address at least the following elements:

- Health screening for all persons (including athletes, workers, and visitors) entering a business, facility, or venue, and procedures for addressing those who may be infectious.
- Protocols for identification and isolation of sick persons, for the quarantine of close contacts, and requiring sick athletes, workers, and visitors to stay home.
  - For close contact recommendations, see What to Do if You Have Had Close Contact With a Person With COVID-19 (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf).
  - For isolation recommendations, please see If You Are Sick (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html).
- Social distancing requirements.
- Hand hygiene practices and face covering requirements.
- Facility ventilation.
• Cleaning and disinfecting.
• Drop-off, pick-up, and delivery practices.
• COVID-19 communications and trainings.
• Risk and mitigation strategies associated with the sport, considering:
  ▪ The more physical or close contact that occurs the greater risk there is in spreading illness.
  ▪ Sports or trainings that take place indoors are riskier than outdoors.
  ▪ Travel creates risk, particularly if it is to areas of high transmission.
• Any other requirements in specific industry guidance, such as customer or spectator capacity, or food service, concessions and merchandizing.

• Maintain a plan administrator/COVID-19 coordinator for your organization’s Plan.
• Communicate your Plan to workers, volunteers, contractors, vendors, interns, and athletes
• Plan templates are available at Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities (staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp).
• Have protocols that are considerate of those at highest risk of complications from COVID-19.
  ▪ Executive Order 20-55, Protecting the Rights and Health of At Risk Populations during the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency (www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-55.pdf)

Address alternative means of protecting athletes and certain workers

For athletes and coaching or training staff that work directly with athletes

Organizations may develop and implement protective measures that differ from industry guidance, provided that these alternative measures are detailed in the organization’s Plan and guidance from applicable governing associations. Any alternative mitigation measures must provide an equivalent or superior level of protection than otherwise provided in state industry guidance.

• For example, an organization may choose to allow their athletes to practice, compete, or workout without face coverings or the strict social distancing required by industry guidance applicable to sports facilities and venues.
  ▪ At minimum, an organization that chooses to relax face covering, social distancing, or other core mitigation strategies must ensure that it is testing its athletes and workers at least as frequently as the “optional testing program” detailed in the COVID-19 Intercollegiate Sports Guidance for Higher Education found on the Stay Safe Guidance for Schools, Colleges, and Universities webpage (https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp).
  ▪ Organizations are encouraged to implement additional measures in addition to testing to mitigate transmission risk, including but not limited to limiting athlete interactions in the
community, or creating “pods” of athletes and workers that only interact with members of their pod.

For all other workers, volunteers, contractors, vendors, interns, visitors, and customers/spectators

Professional organizations must meet the minimum requirements of applicable state industry guidance, including but not limited to face covering requirements, social distancing, and customer/spectator capacity limitations. MDH encourages teams and associations to implement additional protective measures that exceed what is required by applicable industry guidance.

If a member of your team or organization has COVID-19

- Professional sports organizations are required to report cases of COVID-19 to MDH. This includes cases of COVID-19 in anyone tested by the organization, whether they are residents of Minnesota or not. Organizations must report to MDH using one of the following methods:
  - Laboratory report containing case contact information;
  - Case specific data via secure, online REDCap survey: https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=KKWLDH3ARC; or
  - Report directly to their designated MDH sports team epidemiologist.

- MDH is available to answer questions and provide guidance. MDH also has template notification letters for close contacts or others on the team who may have questions about their risk of COVID-19. Once you hear of a case on your team, follow your organization’s plan for identifying potentially exposed persons. Team officials can consult with MDH or their affiliated association to discuss exposure assessment or any other concerns.

- A 14-day quarantine is recommended for people who have been exposed to COVID-19. In some circumstances, a shortened quarantine period may be possible.
  - For close contact recommendations, see What to Do if You Have Had Close Contact With a Person With COVID-19 (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf).
  - For isolation recommendations, please see If You Are Sick (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html).