

# Montgomery County Swim League (“MCSL”) 2021 COVID-19 Meet Protocol

## Meet Protocols

### Meet Attendance Criteria

- All attendees, including athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers, must attest to compliance with each of the following criteria before they are allowed to attend:
  - The attendee does not have a body temperature greater than 100.4 degrees.
  - The attendee is not experiencing any symptoms associated with COVID-19, including, but not limited to, fever, cough, unusual fatigue, headache, nausea, or loss of taste or smell.
  - If the attendee has been experiencing any of the symptoms related to COVID-19, at least 24 hours have elapsed since cessation of symptoms and the attendee has obtained a negative COVID-19 test result.
  - If the attendee has tested positive for COVID-19, 10 days have elapsed from the date of the positive test result and the attendee has not experienced symptoms for a period of 24 hours.
  - If a member of an attendee’s household has tested positive for COVID-19 the attendee shall have obtained a COVID-19 test and, if such test comes back positive for COVID-19, 10 days have elapsed from the date of the positive test result and the attendee has not experienced symptoms for a period of 24 hours.
  - If a member of an attendee’s household has tested positive for COVID-19 the attendee shall have obtained a COVID-19 test and, if such test comes back negative for COVID-19, either: (1) the attendee has quarantined for 7 days and obtained a COVID-19 test after 5 days with a negative result; or (2) 10 days have elapsed following the last close contact and the attendee has not exhibited any symptoms of COVID-19.
  - If an attendee has been identified as a close contact of anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, the attendee is not currently subject to quarantine under federal, state or county guidelines.

### General

- Athletes shall arrive and depart in their suits. Locker rooms are available for emergency use only (e.g., use of the toilet and sink) but are not available for showering or changing.
- All attendees (athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers) must wear masks to enter the facility and at all times when inside the facility (including the parking lots), with the exception of athletes in the water.
- All attendees shall adhere to county requirements for physical distancing, currently a minimum of 6 feet of distance from all other meet participants, whenever possible.
- Traffic should move in one direction on the pool deck so that athletes, coaches, and volunteers do not pass each other in opposite directions.
- Only athletes, coaches, meet volunteers, and officials will be permitted on the pool deck or in areas designated for athletes, clerk of course, heat staging and meet administration, including automation.
- No food or drink services will be provided inside the facility. Athletes and volunteers may bring their own drinks and/or snacks as long as they are clearly labeled and properly stored. There shall be no sharing of food or drinks among volunteers or athletes.

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- No spectators will be permitted in the facility. Family members and other spectators, not otherwise participating in the meet as a volunteer or athlete, may remain in the parking lot or outside the facility fencing as long as physical distancing and mask requirements are met and only if those areas are not designated for athletes, clerk of course, heat staging or meet administration.
- Competition may be live streamed.
- With respect to the number of coaches, officials, timers, and other volunteers, any required number detailed herein applies only to MCSL A dual meets. Teams may elect to use fewer than the number of coaches, officials, and other volunteers stipulated here for other meets, including time trials, B meets, or intra-squad meets.

## Limit on Number of Athletes

- Each session will be limited to no more than 136 athletes. For dual meets, the 136 athletes shall consist of no more than 6 athletes per gender, per age group, per team for athletes under the age of 19 and no more than 4 athletes per gender, per team for athletes that have reached the age of 19. For intra-squad meets or time trials with one team present, each session shall be limited to no more than 136 athletes in total regardless of age or gender.
- Sufficient square footage, totaling the lesser of (1) the total number of athletes participating in the meet times 36 or (2) 4,896 square feet, must be available to create an Athlete Seating Area, or areas, to provide, at least, 6 feet of distance (36 square feet) between athletes.
- Athlete capacity limits, either based on required square footage as described above or as imposed by the HOA or pool itself, may not be exceeded. If such limitations restrict participation to less than the number of athletes signed up for the meet, not to exceed 136 athletes, teams must either agree to multiple sessions, virtual meet sessions or, if the visiting team has capacity, hold the meet at the visiting team’s pool. See section titled “Change in Location or Meet Format Due to Meet Capacity Limitations” for more detail.

## Athlete Seating Area

- The Athlete Seating Area may be located anywhere on the facility grounds; however, the boundaries of the seating area shall not overlap the area of the pool used for competition, including the immediate pool deck surrounding that area (the “Competition Area”), and the seating position of any athlete within the Athlete Seating Area shall not be within 6-feet of any of the athletes, officials, timers or volunteers located in the Competition Area during the meet. The Athlete Seating Area shall also not impede the flow of athletes and or other volunteers to and from the Competition Area to other areas of the facility.
- Athletes may bring their own small chair, towel, or blanket on which to sit in the designated Athlete Seating Area.
- Athletes shall make every effort to not enter the “6-foot square” area surrounding another athlete’s seating position within the Athlete Seating Area or within any staging area.
- All athletes must remain in their designated Athlete Seating Area until they are called for warm-ups or their event.

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- Multiple non-contiguous areas of the facility may be designated as the Athlete Seating Area in order to maximize space available.
  - Teams may assign seating areas by age or household.

## Warm-Up Period

- During warm-ups, athletes will wear their masks until they arrive at their lane. They will put their mask in a labelled plastic zipper bag behind their lane. Once warm-ups are completed, athletes will immediately put their masks back on before returning to the Athlete Seating Area.
- Warm-up periods will be operated consistent with MCSL’s COVID-19 Policy applicable to practices and, if needed, will be broken down into multiple sessions with the number of athletes for each session limited to the number of available warm-up lanes, delineated with lane lines, times the maximum number of athletes per lane allowed (6) according to the policy.
- Practice starts shall be limited to a maximum of 3 lanes (the “Start Lane(s)”) and the lanes on either side must be used for the athlete to swim back to the start end of the pool (the “Return Lane(s)”). For example, when lanes 1, 3, and 5 are used as the Start Lanes, lanes 2, 4, and 6 are designated as the Return Lanes and may only be used by the athletes to swim back to the start end of the pool to minimize any athlete being on the pool deck without a mask.
  - Prior to the initiation of the portion of the warm-up period dedicated to practice starts, the athletes in the Start Lanes (lanes 1, 3 and 5 in our example) shall swim to the end of their lane, cross over to the Return Lanes (lanes 2, 4 and 6 in our example) closest to their lane and take their positions behind the athletes that are already in that lane. Athletes queued in the Return Lane shall maintain at least 6 feet of distance from each other throughout the practice start portion of the warm-up period.
    - Once the athletes are positioned in the Return Lane, the athlete closest to the start end will either (1) exit the pool and take their start position in front of the Start Lane for out of water starts or (2) cross over to the Start Lane and take their position against the wall for backstroke starts. For example, in the case of an out of water start, the athlete closest to the start end in lane 2, the Return Lane, will exit the pool and take their position at the start of lane 1, the Start Lane. Upon the first athlete exiting the pool the remaining athletes in lane 2 will move toward the start end while maintain 6 feet of distance from each other.
    - After the athlete positioned at the start of the Start Lane dives into the pool the athlete nearest the start end of the Return Lane will then take their start position in front of the Start Lane. The athlete rotation through the Return Lanes and Start Lanes will continue until the practice start portion of the warm-up period is completed.
    - Once each athlete has completed their practice starts, they will exit the pool at the end of the pool where they placed their labelled plastic bag with their mask.
- During the warm-up period only coaches (no more than 3 per team) are allowed on the deck area immediately surrounding the warm-up lanes.
  - Essential volunteers may also enter the deck area surrounding the warm-up lanes, when needed, to facilitate administration of the meet.
- All athletes must return to the Athlete Seating Area immediately following their warm-up session.

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### Competition

- During competition, only 26 volunteers and coaches, including 6 officials, 1 Head Timer, 12 timers, 4 coaches (2 per team), 2 runners and 1 announcer may be located within the Competition Area.
  - Team Representatives (2) may also enter the Competition Area, when needed, to facilitate administration of the meet or resolution of any disputes or protests.
- MCSL dual A Meets shall have two breaks. The first break (the “Long Break”) will last no more than 10 minutes and will occur after completion of the backstroke events and before the Open Age Medley Relays. The second break, (the Short Break”), will take place after completion of the butterfly events and before the Graduated Freestyle Relay.
- Only one heat of athletes, located either at the start or in the pool, will be allowed in the Competition Area at any given time.
  - For each of the 66 individual events, each heat will consist of no more than 6 athletes in addition to the full complement of 26 volunteers and coaches.
  - For each of the 4 relay events only one heat will be swum and each heat will consist of 8 athletes, 2 relay teams with 4 athletes each.
- Athletes will wear their masks until they arrive at their lane and they will then take the mask off, put it in their labeled plastic bag, and place it behind the starting area of their lane. Athletes will immediately put their masks back on at the completion of their swims before they leave the starting area.
  - For 25 meter events, one of the runners will collect the labeled plastic bags in a container and deliver them behind the finish end of the appropriate lane for the athletes to retrieve their masks. If needed, the runner will confirm the name of the athlete with the name on the bag with the lane’s timer(s) to avoid cross contamination.
- Relay Specific Protocols:
  - Relay teams will be assigned to lanes 3 and 4 only.
  - During the Open Age Medley Relay events, the only timers utilized will be the two timers assigned to each of lanes 3 and 4 and one timer from each of lanes 1 and 6. The lane 1 and lane 6 timers will function as Take-Off Judges for these events while the remaining 6 unassigned timers from lanes 1, 2, 5 and 6 shall move away from the starting area while maintaining 6 feet of distance from other meet participants.
  - During the Graduated Freestyle Relay events, the only timers utilized will be the two timers assigned to each of lanes 3 and 4. The two Stroke & Turn Judges at the Start End will also serve as Take-Off Judges during these events. The remaining 8 unassigned timers from lanes 1, 2, 5 and 6 shall move away from the starting area while maintaining 6 feet of distance from other meet participants.
  - When the athletes are called to take their positions at the start, the first relay athlete for each team will take their position at the start end of their assigned lane while the remaining 3 athletes of each relay team will take their position in the vacant starting spaces in adjacent lanes in the order in which they will swim, with the fourth swimmer in a vacated timer space near lanes 1 and 6.

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- The 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> athlete of each relay team shall remain at their position until the athlete preceding them has started their leg of the relay. At that point, the remaining athletes on the pool deck shall move to their next correct position and the athlete who will swim the next leg of the relay shall remove their mask, place it in their labeled plastic bag and place the bag behind the starting area of their lane.
- For the athletes swimming the last leg of the Graduated Freestyle Relay one of the runners will collect their labeled plastic bags in a container and deliver them behind the finish end of the appropriate lane for the athletes to retrieve their masks. If needed, the runner will confirm the name of the athlete with the name on the bag with the lane’s timer(s) to avoid cross contamination.
- Once a relay athlete has completed their leg of the relay, the athlete shall promptly exit the pool, put their mask back on, exit the area immediately behind the starting end of the pool and begin making their way back to the Athlete Seating Area. If there is adequate space to maintain the required physical distancing, athletes may remain near the start end of the pool to watch the remainder of the event.
- All athletes must return directly to the Athlete Seating Area immediately following their event.

## The Clerk of Course and Heat Staging Area

- An area shall be set aside for the Clerk of Course with sufficient space to hold the athletes entered in the next two heats being readied to move to the Competition Area (the “Clerk of Course and Heat Staging Area”). This area shall have sufficient space to allow 6 feet of distancing between athletes and the Clerk of Course. The Clerk of Course and Heat Staging Area shall be located outside the Competition Area and neither the Clerk of Course nor any of the athletes in the staging area shall be positioned within 6 feet of any of the athletes, officials, timers or volunteers located in the Competition Area during the meet.
- Once athletes are initially called to the Heat Staging Area by the Clerk of Course, traffic will move from the second heat in the Staging Area to the first heat in the Staging Area to the starting area within the Competition Area.
- Square footage, totaling 468 square feet, must be available in the Clerk of Course and Staging Area to provide, at least, 6 feet of distance (36 square feet) between athletes (12) and the Clerk of Course (1).
- When relays are being staged, only one heat of relay athletes may be located in the Clerk of Course and Staging Area.
- The staging area will be set up to facilitate staging without shared touch objects such as benches and chairs. Cones, tape or other markings are suggested.

## Meet Administration and Athlete Monitoring

- In addition to the 26 officials, coaches and volunteers working in the Competition Area and the Clerk of Course, the only other volunteers and coaches allowed in the facility during the meet include 2 team representatives, 1 computer operator, 1 scorer, 1 verifier, 2 ribbon writers, 2 marshals and 2 coaches (1 from each team).
- At least 180 square feet must be available outside the Competition Area in the area, or areas, set aside for the 5 volunteers handling automation, recording of meet results, and ribbons.

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- Marshals and coaches will be monitoring the Athlete Seating Area to ensure compliance with MCSL COVID-19 protocols as well as assisting with the staging of heats.
- Team representatives will be present to aid in meet administration.

## Officiating, Timing and Rules

- All officials, timer, take-off judge and scratch meetings held prior to the beginning of competition shall not be held in the area of the pool being used for warm-ups.
  - In each case, meeting participants shall maintain 6 feet of physical distancing.
- Officials: The referee and starter shall be positioned on the side of the pool at the start end. The referee and starter shall maintain 6 feet of distance between them. The referee shall use an electric whistle. Two stroke and turn judges shall be positioned at each end of the pool and shall always be at least 6 feet from each other.
- Take-Off Judges: Timers and/or stroke and turn judges shall be used to judge take-offs for relay events and shall make sure they maintain at least 6 feet of spacing from official and timer volunteers. Only two Take-Off Judges, positioned at opposite sides of the pool, will be assigned to judge relay take-offs.
- Timers: Two timers will be assigned to each lane. Timers shall stand at least 6 feet back from the start end of the pool and 6 feet from each other, prior to the start and during the majority of each race. Timers shall step up to the edge of the pool when the athlete in their lane is at the flags about to complete the race. Once they have stopped their watches at the completion of the race, the timers shall return to the area 6 feet from the start end of the pool, record their times, and maintain 6 feet of distance from the athletes and other timers.
  - Official Times will be calculated in accordance with Rule 10(a) and 10(b) of the MCSL Rules for Competition
- Backstroke Starts: Athletes must place both hands on the pool edge or gutter at the start. Use of an assistant’s legs is prohibited.

## Change in Location or Meet Format Due to Meet Capacity Limitations

- By no later than May 15<sup>th</sup>, each MCSL member team must provide the MCSL Rules Committee with confirmation as to the maximum number of athletes that can participate in a meet at their facility based on the lesser of: (1) the MCSL meet athlete capacity limit of 136 as approved under these protocols; (2) any Facility Specific Athlete Capacity Limit based on facility available space or (3) any applicable Facility Specific HOA or Parent Pool Imposed Athlete Limit.
  - Facility Specific Athlete Capacity Limit shall be calculated by subtracting 648 from the total facility square footage available to support the (a) Athlete Seating Area(s), (b) Clerk of Course and Heat Staging Area and (c) Meet Administration and Automation Area and dividing the result by 36.
    - For example, if total available square footage for the Athlete Seating Area(s), Clerk of Course, and Meet Administration and Automation Area equals 5,000 sq ft, the resulting Facility Specific Athlete Capacity Limit would equal 4,352 divided by 36 which equals 120 athletes.



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- The Facility Specific HOA or Parent Pool Imposed Athlete Limit, if such a limit is imposed, shall be calculated by subtracting the number of non-athlete volunteers and coaches, totaling 38, from the total number of participants allowed.
  - For example, if the HOA or Parent Pool imposed a total facility capacity limit of 175, the athlete limit would equal 175 minus 38 which equals 137 athletes.
  - If the HOA or Parent Pool Imposed Limit includes pool staff, the number of pool staff will also have to be deducted from the limit to determine the maximum allowed number of athletes.
- In the above scenario the athlete limit for any meet held at the facility would be 120 and, unless the meet has no more than 120 athletes expected to participate, the home team, in conjunction with the visiting team, would have to utilize an alternative option, including switching venues to the visiting team facility, holding the meet in two gender specific sessions or holding the meet virtually.
- If the calculation of the Facility Specific Athlete Capacity Limit results in an athlete participation limit below 136, the home team may designate a portion of the facility parking lot(s) as an extension of the Athlete Seating Area as long as the area is clearly marked, roped off and at least 10 feet from the remainder of the parking lot.
  - The Facility Specific Athlete Capacity Limit may then be recalculated to account for the added square footage.
- If there is a change in venue or meet format the home team must notify the Rules Committee in advance of the meet date.

## Home Team Facility Meet Hosting COVID Supplement

- Prior to hosting a competition, each MCSL member team shall create and provide to participants a copy of a meet supplement, specific to their facility and consistent with the meet protocols delineated herein, that describes in sufficient detail: (1) parking restrictions, if any, (2) athlete pick up and drop off procedures, (3) the beginning and end time of each team’s warm-up sessions, (4) the location of the Athlete Seating Area(s), (5) the flow of athletes, coaches, officials and other volunteers throughout the meet, (6) the location of officials, timer, take-off judge and scratch meetings, (7) the location of the Clerk of Course and Heat Staging Area, (8) the location of the Meet Administration and Automation Area, (9) any specific procedures related to emergency use of the bathrooms and (10) any other information the home team deems relevant.
  - The meet supplement may take the form of a text document, facility schematic or picture with appropriate markings or combination of both.

## COVID-19 Meet Protocol Training and Communication

- At least one coach, one team representative and any team officials that will serve as Deck Referee during the 2021 season must attend the MCSL training on these protocols in order for a team to be eligible for any Letter of Approval granted by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.
- Additionally, all coaches, volunteers, parents, guardians and athletes must receive a copy of the COVID-19 Considerations section of this document as well as any other pertinent information that will facilitate compliance with these meet protocols.

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### COVID-19 Meet Protocol Compliance and Reporting

- In order to facilitate contact tracing, when needed, and in accordance with existing MCSL procedures, Team Representatives shall retain copies of team rosters, meet entries and meet cover sheets that identify all athletes, coaches and volunteers present at the meet.
- Each facility used for hosting an MCSL meet will have appropriate signage outside the facility entrance and at various locations inside the facility that reminds attendees of appropriate health and safety protocols.
- Coaches, team representatives, and assigned volunteers will ensure that distancing requirements are complied with by all attendees during the meet.
- Attendees must follow all directions as posted and adhere to all coach, team representative or assigned volunteer directions.
- Any athlete, coach, team representative, or volunteer not following the meet protocols will be subject to immediate removal from the meet.
- If an attendee tests positive for COVID-19 after attending a meet, attendee shall notify their team’s coach or representative, who shall notify MCSL and the other team, as soon as possible, that an attendee from their team tested positive for COVID-19 after attending the meet. The team representative also shall notify their pool board so that any required notifications to DHHS are made.

### Facilities with Multiple Indoor or Outdoor Pools and/or 50 Meter Pools

- The Meet Protocols described herein are intended to cover the area of a facility utilized by the meet participants, including the Competition Area, the Athletes Seating Area(s), the Clerk of Course and Heat Staging Area, the Meet Administration and Automation Area and any other area designated for use by meet participants.
- In the case where a team’s facility has multiple indoor or outdoor pools and/or a 50-meter pool, has space not utilized by meet participants and has an overall facility capacity limit, as defined by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, in excess of the number of MCSL meet attendees, these Meet Protocols are not intended to restrict activities in areas of the facility not utilized for the meet.

### Integration with Other Federal, State and Montgomery County COVID-19 Regulations for Outdoor Pool Facilities

- The intent of these COVID-19 Meet Protocols is to establish a set of protocols that, to the extent possible, substantially mitigates the risks associated with holding MCSL meets during the COVID-19 pandemic and obtain the required Letter of Approval that grants member teams the ability to host these meets.
- Unless specifically addressed herein, each member team’s facility will still be required to abide by all other county, state or federal regulations, including cleaning, disinfection and other relevant operations. However, with respect to any facility capacity limits imposed by Montgomery County, the facility will be allowed to exceed the facility capacity limit during the period of time an MCSL meet is being held.



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## COVID-19 Considerations

- An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. COVID-19 is a contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens and individuals with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable.
- Neither MCSL nor any MCSL team, can prevent you (or your child(ren)) from becoming exposed to, contracting, or spreading COVID-19 while participating in an MCSL meet or practice. It is not possible to prevent against the presence of the disease. Therefore, if you choose to participate in a MCSL meet or practice, you may be exposing yourself to and/or increasing your risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.
- BY ATTENDING OR PARTICIPATING IN A MCSL MEET OR PRACTICE, YOU VOLUNTARILY ASSUME ALL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO COVID-19 AND FOREVER RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS MCSL, ANY MCSL TEAM, ANY FACILITY OWNER OR OPERATOR, AND EACH OF THEIR OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AGENTS, EMPLOYEES OR OTHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM ANY LIABILITY OR CLAIMS INCLUDING FOR PERSONAL INJURIES, DEATH, DISEASE OR PROPERTY LOSSES, OR ANY OTHER LOSS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO CLAIMS OF NEGLIGENCE AND GIVE UP ANY CLAIMS YOU MAY HAVE TO SEEK DAMAGES, WHETHER KNOWN OR UNKNOWN, FORESEEN OR UNFORESEEN, IN CONNECTION WITH EXPOSURE, INFECTION, AND/OR SPREAD OF COVID-19 RELATED TO YOUR PARTICIPATION.
- We have taken enhanced health and safety measures for all attending MCSL meets and practices, however we cannot guarantee that you will not become infected with COVID-19. All attending an MCSL meet or practice must follow all posted or verbal instructions and this Protocol while in attendance. An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. By attending an MCSL meet or practice, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19.
- By choosing to attend an MCSL meet or practice you agree to comply with all health and safety mandates and guidelines of MCSL, the State of Maryland, and Montgomery County.