



PO BOX 4362, SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY 12866 • PHONE (518) 587-1337 • 501(c)3 TAX ID #14-652565

Saratoga Springs Little League

RETURN TO PLAY OPERATING GUIDE AND BEST PRACTICES

Overview:

This Return to Play Operating Guide was created in order to promote a safe environment for players, coaches, umpires, volunteers, and members of their household or immediate family while they are participating in activities that are part of Saratoga Springs Little League (SSLL). **Please review this entire document as there is important information throughout.** All players, coaches, umpires, volunteers, and families must adhere to these guidelines while at the facility or participating in League activities. Please take an active role and help us maintain a healthy environment for ourselves, our children, and our community as we enjoy little league baseball!

League Action:

SSLL has taken the following steps to promote a healthy environment.

- Developed / Adopted this Return to Play Operating Guide and Best Practices.
- Posting Signs in highly visible locations to promote awareness and everyday protective measures
- Enhanced sanitizing of public areas and frequently touched surfaces including restrooms, concession area and dugouts.
- Provided a structure (specific seating areas) to promote social distancing.
- Requiring social distancing and encouraging face coverings for volunteers and those visiting the park.
- Developed division specific guidelines and limited team sizes where feasible.
- Made schedule adjustments to stagger times and minimize the number of people present in the park at one time.
- Reviewed specific policies with coaches.
- Minimized the use of shared equipment.
- Provided hand sanitizer in common areas for easy use.
- Designated a specific Covid-19 point of contact

General League Guidelines

- Do not come to the park or participate in games or practices If you or a member of your household are feeling ill, or exhibiting any signs of fever (temp at or above 100.4 F), cough, sore throat, worsening respiratory symptoms, or any other symptoms of COVID-19.
- Anyone who has been exposed to a person with COVID-19 should not attend any Little League activity until cleared by a medical professional.
- Any individual, including players, at risk for severe illness or with serious underlying medical or respiratory condition should only attend Little League activities with permission from a medical professional.
- If you or a member of your household becomes sick or begins experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, notify the SSLL Covid-19 Point of Contact immediately.
- Practice social distancing (minimum of 6-foot separation) when outside at all times when not around your immediate family or other household members.
- Whenever social distancing cannot be maintained and whenever applicable, all players, staff, and spectators should wear PPE such as face masks covering your nose and mouth
- Wash your hands and/or use hand sanitizer before entering the facility, during the event, before and after you eat, and as you leave. Hand washing and hand sanitizer stations are provided.
- Should anyone need to speak with a League Official regarding Covid-19, the designated point of contact is Mr. Derrick Legall, League President, derricklegall@gmail.com.

Spectators

- Spectators are limited to two (2) spectators per player (NYS Requirement). A coach is not considered a spectator.
- Spectators should bring their own chairs for seating and sit in designated areas only. (*Refer to facility diagram attached*).
- Players/families/spectators are instructed not to show up to fields more than 40 minutes before game time.
- Families / spectators are encouraged to stay in their cars until 15 minutes before game time.
- Families / spectators should not enter player designated areas unless necessary due to injury.
- Players and families should vacate the field/facility as soon as is reasonably possible after the conclusion of their game to minimize unnecessary contact with players, coaches, and spectators from the next game, ideally within 20 minutes.
- Spectators should not touch a baseball hit or thrown out of play. Foul balls landing outside the field of play must be retrieved by participating players, coaches, and umpires.
- Spectators for T-Ball and Bantam games are encouraged to use the Walnut Street entrance.
- Spectators for minor and major games are encouraged to use the coach Waldron and Division Street entrances.

Players

- Players / parents are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use. Players should use hand sanitizer before entering the facility, during the event, and immediately after the event.
- In T-Ball and Bantam Divisions, players must sit with their parents/family members between innings. Use of the dugouts is not permitted.
- Players must sit in designated player areas at all times and stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat. *(Refer to facility diagram attached).*
- Players should bring and use their own equipment and drinks/water bottles, and should not share equipment, drinks, water bottles or cooling towels with other players.
- Sunflower seeds and gum are prohibited at all times. Players should not eat or bring food into the player seating areas.
- Players should wear cloth face coverings when in close contact areas and in places where social distancing is not feasible.
- Players will be permitted to wear a cloth face covering on the field during game play, if physically able to do so based on a determination of the player/parent/guardian/caretaker.

Coaches

- As a role model, coaches are encouraged to wear face coverings during practices and games.
- All managers/coaches, volunteers, etc. must wear PPE such as face coverings when in close contact areas and in places where social distancing is not feasible, such as the dugout, or when providing close contact instruction or direction.
- Coaches are encouraged to sanitize their hands regularly during games.
- Teams may have up to (3) coaches/volunteers in the player/field areas.
- Each team must designate (1) coach/volunteer to oversee the player seating areas at all times to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- Player and Team equipment bags are to be placed within the player areas and kept separated from each other. They may be hung inside along the back of the dugouts if they can be kept separated.
- Coaches may remain outside the dugout while on offense or defense.
- On the minor and major fields, no more than (4) people (combination of players and coaches) are allowed in a dugout at one time, and 6' separation must be maintained unless face coverings are worn.
- Sharing of equipment is to be kept to an absolute minimum. When it is necessary to share critical or limited equipment, all surfaces of each piece of shared equipment must be cleaned and disinfected with an EPA-approved disinfectant against COVID-19 and allowed sufficient time to dry before used by a new player. Increased attention should be paid to detailed cleaning of all equipment directly contacting the head and face (catcher's mask, helmets).

- When catcher's equipment must be shared, Coaches are encouraged to use the same catcher for 2 consecutive innings to minimize sharing and the need to disinfect between uses.
- When a player's bat must be retrieved after a hit, coaches should retrieve the bat grabbing the barrel.
- If the catcher or home plate ump ever finds the need to clear someone else's equipment away prior to a play at the plate, this should be done by safely kicking the equipment away, not by grabbing it with their hand.
- During practices, all the same guidelines and protocols listed in this document apply. No more than (4) coaches/volunteers should be present, and coaches are encouraged to work with players in small groups.
- Coaches should share line up cards digitally (game changer, similar) as much as possible. Hard copies may be hung up in a visible spot for another coach to copy (remaining 6' from others) if necessary.
- Coaches should minimize visits to the mound. Mound conferences should be limited to just the coach and the pitcher. The catcher can be included when the coach deems necessary. No other players are permitted to join.

Game Guidelines

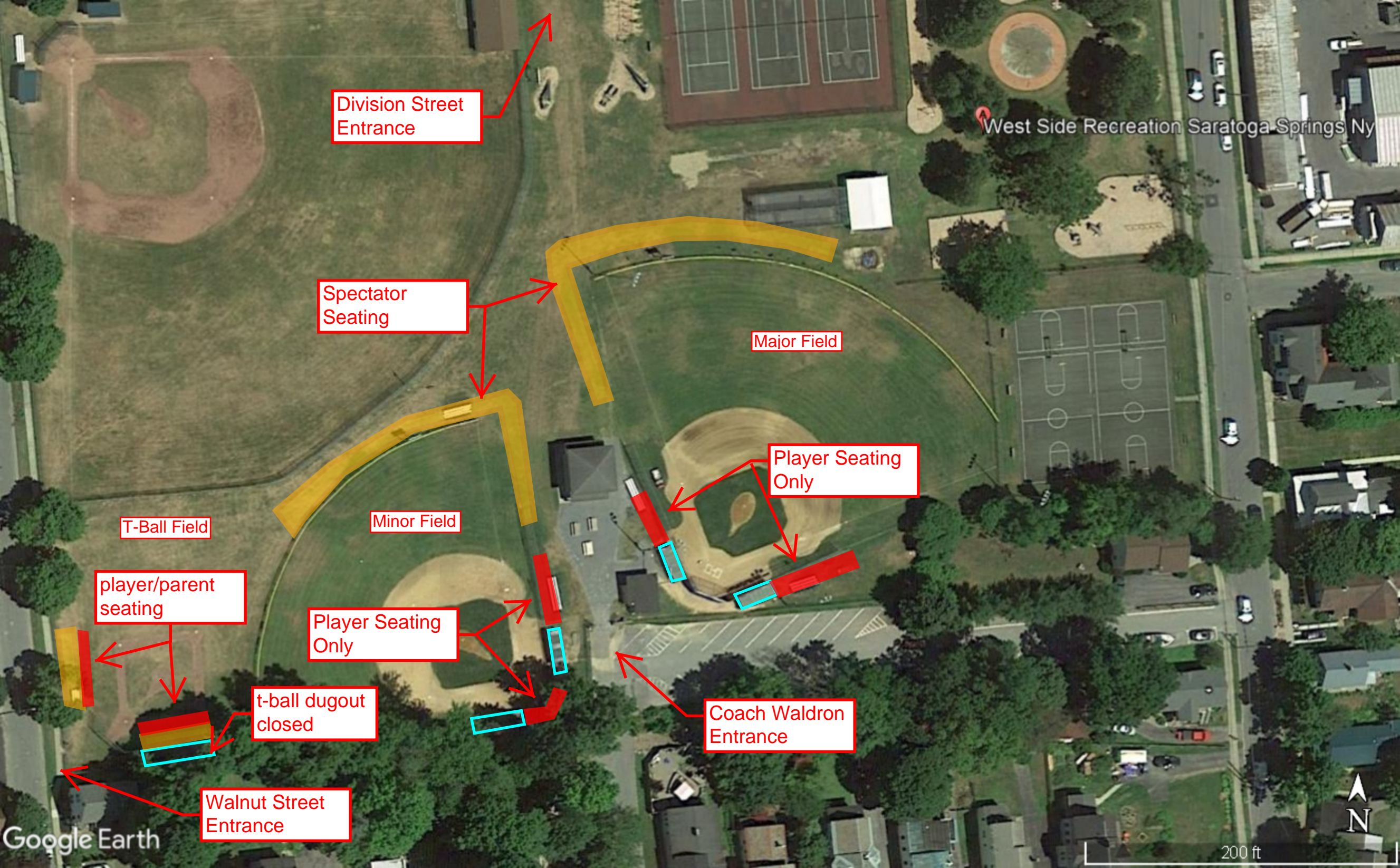
- A 15-minute maximum pre-game warm-up is suggested for each team.
- The pre-game plate meeting should be minimized as much as possible and should only include (1) coach from each team and the umpire. All participants must maintain 6' of separation, wear face coverings or both.
- Each team should use their own game balls and rotate them every two innings.
- The same baseballs should be used for infield/outfield warm-ups each inning and they should be kept separate from the larger ball container. Each team must use their own baseballs.
- Foul balls landing outside the field of play must be retrieved by participating players, coaches, and umpires. No spectators are permitted to retrieve the baseball.
- No physical contact celebrations are permitted. (i.e. high fives, fist bumps, shaking hands, etc.).
- After the game, players should line up along the baselines 6' apart and tip their caps to the opposing team as a sign of good sportsmanship.
- At the conclusion of each game, teams must clean their dugout by disinfecting and wiping down all hard surfaces and removing all trash and other items.
- Players and families should vacate the field/facility as soon as is reasonably possible after the conclusion of their game to minimize unnecessary contact with players, coaches, and spectators from the next game.
- Teams for the next game should not enter the dugout / player areas until players and coaches from the previous game have left.

Supporting Information and Guidelines

The protocols and best practices listed above have been compiled from resources including the US CDC, Little League International, New York State Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation, and other youth sports governing bodies.

Please refer to the Guidelines and Best Practices by Little League International that are attached to this document for supplemental information. Additional information from the CDC, Considerations for Youth Sports can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>, and from NYS at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/SportsAndRecreationMasterGuidance.pdf>

Refer to the Facility Diagram on the following page.



Division Street Entrance

Spectator Seating

Major Field

Player Seating Only

T-Ball Field

Minor Field

player/parent seating

Player Seating Only

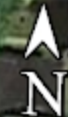
t-ball dugout closed

Coach Waldron Entrance

Walnut Street Entrance

Google Earth

West Side Recreation Saratoga Springs Ny



200 ft

Organizing, Playing, and Watching Games



As local Little League programs are considering a return to the field, it is recommended that each league and district adheres to the guidelines set forth by their respective state and local government and health officials in terms of public gatherings, organized youth sports, and sporting events when determining when it is safe to return to Little League activities. Local league volunteers should thoroughly review the Season Resumption Guide ([LittleLeague.org/SeasonResumption](https://www.littleleague.org/SeasonResumption)) and the Little League Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions for General Information, Insurance, and Tournament before returning to play. Once your league is able to resume activities, below are some best practices for helping to provide a safe place to play, while stressing the importance of mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

These best practices have been compiled from resources and direct guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), The Aspen Institute, among others.

Leagues are encouraged to, first and foremost, follow all directives and guidance from their state and local government, and should ask their state governmental and health officials for any information available regarding resuming youth sports within the state. All Little League managers, coaches, umpires, league officials, and families are strongly encouraged to review these guidelines.

This guidance was last updated on May 18. Little League will continue to update these comprehensive resources to provide additional best practices guidance as information is further developed around COVID-19 mitigation.

In addition to state and local guidance, we encourage leagues to consider the following when returning to play.

General Guidance

Wash Your Hands Often:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or about the time it takes to recite the Little League Pledge twice, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Leagues are encouraged to provide handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizer, if possible.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Players are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use. Hand sanitizer should be placed in all common areas off-field for easy use.



Key Audiences

Players
Parents/Guardians/Caregivers
and
Other Children
Managers/Coaches
Umpires
League and District Officials
Fans/Spectators

CDC Resources

[How to Protect Yourself & Others \(PDF Download\)](#)

[Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 \(PDF Download\)](#)

Cover Your Mouth and Nose with a Cloth Face Covering When Around Others:

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face covering when they have to go out in public, for example, in public areas around your Little League fields and parks.



- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face covering is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker, as it is important for these facemasks are available for those professionals needing that personal protective equipment.
- Continue to keep six feet between yourself and others. The cloth face covering is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cover Coughs and Sneezes:

- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash immediately.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

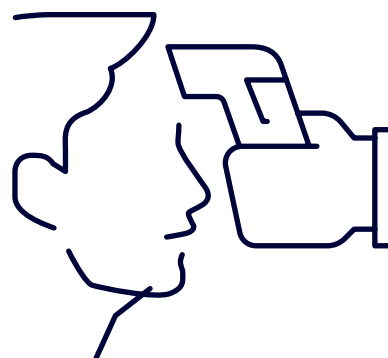
Social Distancing:

- All players, coaches, volunteers, independent contractors, and spectators should practice social distancing of six feet wherever possible from individuals not residing within their household, especially in common areas. For situations when players are engaging in the sports activity, see On-Field Guidance below for more information.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home as much as possible.



Self-monitoring and Quarantine:

- All individuals should measure their body temperature to ensure that no fever is present prior to participating or attending each Little League activity. Anyone with symptoms of fever, cough, or worsening respiratory symptoms, or any known exposure to a person with COVID-19 should not attend any Little League activity until cleared by a medical professional ([CDC Resource: If You Are Sick or Caring For Someone | PDF Download](#)).
- Any individual, including players, at risk for severe illness or with serious underlying medical or respiratory condition should only attend Little League activities with permission from a medical professional.



On-Field Guidance

Healthy Practices:

- All players and coaches should practice good general health habits, including maintenance of adequate hydration, consumption of a varied, vitamin-rich diet with sufficient vegetables and fruits, and getting adequate sleep.

No Handshakes/Personal Contact Celebrations:

- Players and coaches should take measures to prevent all but the essential contact necessary to play the game. This should include refraining from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, etc. Little League International suggests lining up outside the dugout and tipping caps to the opposing team as a sign of good sportsmanship after a game.
- Players and families should vacate the field/facility as soon as is reasonably possible after the conclusion of their game to minimize unnecessary contact with players, coaches, and spectators from the next game, ideally within 20 minutes.

Drinks and Snacks:

- Athletes, managers/coaches, and umpires should bring their own personal drinks to all team activities. Drinks should be labeled with the person's name.
- Individuals should take their own drink containers home each night for cleaning and sanitation or use single-use bottles.
- There should be no use of shared or team beverages.
- Teams should not share any snacks or food. Players should bring individual, pre-packaged food, if needed.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- All managers/coaches, volunteers, umpires, etc., should wear PPE whenever applicable and possible, such as cloth face coverings.
- Players should wear cloth face coverings when in close contact areas and in places where recommended social distancing is challenging or not feasible, such as in dugouts.
- Players should not wear protective medical gloves on the field during game play.
- Players, especially at younger divisions, are not required to wear a cloth face covering while on the field during game play.
- Players will be permitted to wear a cloth face covering on the field during game play, if physically able to do so, based on any directive of a medical provider or individual determination of the player/parent/guardian/caretaker.

- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Dugouts:

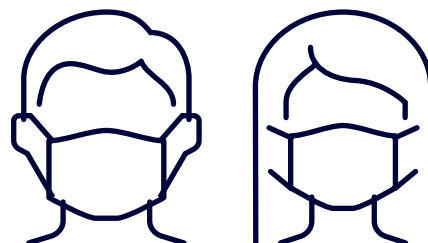
- Managers/coaches and players should be assigned spots in the dugout or on the bleachers so that they are at least six feet apart and must be placed behind a fence.
- Players are to stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat.
- Players and managers/coaches should wear a cloth face covering while in the dugout.

Player Equipment:

- No personal player bat bags/equipment bags should be allowed in the dugout. Player equipment should be spaced accordingly outside the dugout to prevent direct contact.
- Players should have their own individual batter's helmet, glove, bat, and catcher's equipment.
- Measures should be enacted to avoid, or minimize, equipment sharing when feasible.
- Some critical equipment may not be able to be obtained by every individual. When it is necessary to share critical or limited equipment, all surfaces of each piece of shared equipment must be cleaned first and then disinfected with an EPA-approved disinfectant against COVID-19 and allowed sufficient time to dry before used by a new player. Increased attention should be paid to detailed cleaning of all

Key Audiences

Players
Parents/Guardians/Caregivers
Managers/Coaches
Umpires



equipment directly contacting the head and face (catcher's mask, helmets).

- Player's equipment (e.g. bags, helmets, bats, gloves, etc.) should be cleaned and disinfected after each use by a parent/guardian/caretaker, where applicable.
- Individuals disinfecting equipment are encouraged to use gloves while using disinfectants and follow the manufacturer's directions for use. All disinfectants should be stored properly, in a safe area, out of the reach of children.
- Players should not share towels, clothing, or other items that they may use to wipe their face or hands

Baseballs and Softballs:

- Baseballs and softballs should be rotated through on a regular basis, at least every two innings, to limit individual contact.
- Umpires should limit their contact with the ball, and catchers should retrieve foul balls and passed balls where possible.
- Balls used in infield/outfield warm-up should be isolated from a shared ball container.
- Foul balls landing outside the field of play should be retrieved by participating players, coaches, and umpires. No spectators should retrieve the ball.

Spitting, Sunflower Seeds, Gum, etc.:

- Sunflower seeds, gum, etc., should not be allowed in dugouts or on the playing field.
- All players and coaches are to refrain from spitting at all times, including in dugout areas and on the playing field.

Game Operations and Umpire Guidance

Key Audiences

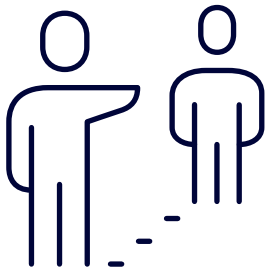
Managers/Coaches

Umpires

League/District Officials and Volunteers

Pre-Game Plate Meetings:

- If possible, plate meetings should be eliminated.
- Social distancing of six feet between individuals should be implemented during all pre-game plate meetings between teams and umpires.



- Plate meetings should only consist of one manager or coach from each team, and game umpires.
- All participants should wear a cloth face covering.
- No players should ever be a part of plate meetings.

Equipment Inspection:

- Players should place their individual equipment in a well-spaced out manner for inspection. Umpires should avoid direct contact with equipment where possible but, when required, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol after the inspection of each individual piece of equipment.



Limit League/Game Volunteers:

- For each game, there should only be the required team managers/coaches, umpires, and one (1) league administrator (i.e. Safety Officer, player agent, etc.) in attendance.
- Practices should be limited to the managers/coaches and players.
- Scorekeeping should be done by team coaches or team parent/guardian via GameChanger. Proper social distancing should be practiced.
- Press boxes should not be utilized unless there is ample room for social distancing to occur within them.

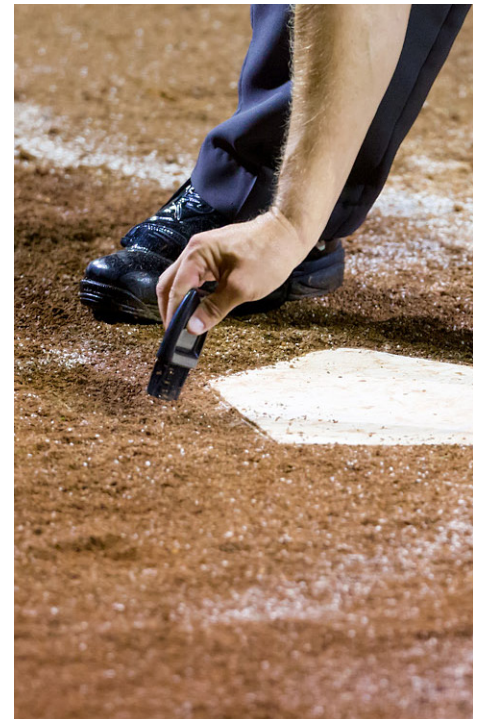
Field Preparation and Maintenance:

- Fields should be mowed, raked, and lined prior to teams and spectators arriving at the complex and after they depart. It is encouraged that volunteers already participating in the game (managers/coaches, umpires, and league administrator) perform these tasks to limit individuals at the site.
- It is recommended that any shared field preparation equipment be sprayed or wiped with cleaner and disinfectant before and after each use.



Umpire Placement:

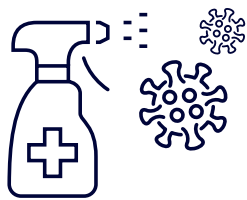
- Umpires are permitted to be placed behind the pitcher's mound/circle to call balls and strikes. Umpires are encouraged to keep a safe distance from players as much as possible.
- If physically able, umpires are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings while umpiring.



Facility, Fan, and Administrative Guidance **Part 1**

Clean and Disinfect Shared Equipment and Surfaces:

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily and in between all facility uses, including practices and games. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, facility equipment, dugouts, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are visibly soiled or dirty, they should be cleaned with a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.



Spread Out Scheduling of Practices and Games:

- League administrators should schedule sufficient time between practices and games to facilitate the complete evacuation of individuals from a previous practice or game from the premises before the next group enters.
- Players/families/spectators are instructed not to show up to fields more than 40 minutes before game time.
- Where possible, individuals should enter your complex through one point of entry and exit through another.
- Arrivals to the complex can be scheduled to help ensure a large number of individuals are not arriving at the same time.
- If there is a game or practice prior to your event, families and spectators are encouraged to stay in their vehicles or at recommended social distances until the start of their game play to prevent overcrowding of spectator spaces and walkways.
- On-field warm-up should be limited as much as is reasonably possible and no more than 30 minutes.
- Ensure sure that practices and games follow all local and state directives regarding

the number of people allowed to gather in one place.

- Wait in cars before practice or game; limit the use of van pool or carpools.
- Allow time between practices and games for cleaning and disinfecting.

Limiting Spectator Attendance:

- All spectators should follow best social distancing practices — stay six feet away from individuals outside their household; wear a cloth face covering at all times; avoid direct hand or other contact with players/managers/coaches during play.
- Local Leagues may choose to minimize the exposure risk to spectators by limiting attendance to only essential volunteers and limited family members.
- Spectators should bring their own seating or portable chairs when possible.
- Leagues are encouraged to utilize streaming opportunities to provide virtual spectating.
- **A spectator with any of the following conditions should not attend a practice or game until evaluated by a medical provider and given clearance to do so:**

- Active COVID-19 infection
- Known direct contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19
- Fever
- Cough
- Those at higher risk for severe disease should consider consultation with their medical provider before attending a game and should ensure the strictest adherence to guidelines regarding face coverings, distancing, and handwashing.

Such groups include:

- Those with a serious underlying medical condition, including heart disease, morbid obesity, diabetes, lung disease, immunocompromise, chronic kidney disease, and chronic lung disease.
- Those currently residing in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- Those over 65

Key Audiences

League Administrators

Parents/Guardians/Caretakers

Fans/Spectators

CDC Resources

[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces](#)

[Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting \(PDF Download\)](#)

[Guidance for Administrators in Parks and Recreation Facilities](#)

[Visiting Parks and Recreation Facilities](#)



Facility, Fan, and Administrative Guidance **Part 2**



Public Restrooms:

- Communicate information on available facilities and policies to all parents prior to resuming or beginning season.
- Access to public restrooms should be limited if possible.
- A “one-in-one-out” policy, where only one individual is permitted within the restroom at one time, should be implemented to ensure adequate distancing in the confined restroom space.
- Prior to and after any league activity, restrooms should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Restrooms should be disinfected on a regular basis.
- Public water fountains or refillable water stations should not be used, and should be turned off to discourage use, if possible.



Concession Stands:

- No food or concession sales should be allowed at facilities.
- Families are encouraged to bring their own food/beverages.

Post Information to Promote Everyday Preventive Actions:

- Leagues should display posters and signs throughout the park to frequently remind visitors to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These messages may include information about:
 - **Staying home if you are sick or do not feel well, and what to do if you're sick or feel ill.**
 - **Using social distancing and maintaining at least six feet between individuals in all areas of the park.**
 - **[The CDC has downloadable resources available to post at public places; and leagues are encouraged to utilize additional resources from their state or local authorities.](#)**



Key Audiences

League Administrators
Parents/Guardians/Caretakers
Fans/Spectators

CDC Resources

[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces](#)

[Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting \(PDF Download\)](#)

[Guidance for Administrators in Parks and Recreation Facilities](#)

[Visiting Parks and Recreation Facilities](#)



Member Communication:

- Local leagues should disseminate information to all families, volunteers, and spectators about the Coronavirus risk and the efforts your league will be undertaking to mitigate those risks, as outlined above. Information should be disseminated by way of email, league website, social media, coach talks, and public announcements.
- Designate a league board representative to be responsible for COVID19 concerns (e.g. Safety Officer)

Additional, Division-Specific Guidance

Key Audiences

Players

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

Managers/Coaches

Umpires

League and District Officials



Tee Ball and Coach Pitch:

- Team numbers should be reduced, to help limit the number of individuals at practices and games.
- Volunteers are encouraged to be from the same household as players, as much as possible. Coaches should wear cloth face coverings whenever possible.
- The focus on these divisions should be on fun and player development.



Little League Challenger Division® and Senior Challenger Division:

- Buddies should be from the same household as the player whenever possible.
- Buddies should wear cloth face coverings whenever possible, and frequently use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Parents/Guardians of players with high risk health concerns should consult a medical professional prior to having their player participate.



Little League® Sandlot Fun Days

LittleLeague.org/SandlotFunDays

- While activities should be player-led; the adult volunteers overseeing Little League Sandlot Fun Day events should provide a thorough overview of appropriate mitigation efforts and are responsible for ensuring these guidelines are followed.

Pre-/Post-Practice and Game Free Play

- Unofficial pre- and post-practice or game activities should be discouraged. If they do occur, the activities should have constant adult supervision to assure appropriate social distancing and PPE guidelines are being followed.

