



U.S. Ski & Snowboard Athlete & Teams COVID-19 Policy & Procedure

5.27.2021

U.S. Ski & Snowboard is committed to maintaining the health and safety of all national team athletes and staff, while protecting their ability to train and compete, during the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy details the current U.S. Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 athlete and team policies, and has been developed by the U.S. Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 Panel. These policies are based on our organization's best practices and include specific content from the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Please note that these policies and procedures are fluid as we learn more information surrounding COVID-19 as well as vaccination, which evolves as more strains of the virus become prevalent.

The travel and competition requirements of our sports create an inherent potential for disease transmission. The U.S. Ski & Snowboard policies are designed to help reduce exposure and mitigate the risk of viral transmission; however, they are not all encompassing and do not account for every variable. Our mitigation strategies are best practices with the goal of maintaining the health and safety of athletes, staff, and volunteers, and limit exposure and transmission of the virus. These policies are current as of May 27, 2021, but are subject to change based on local health ordinances and the regulations of local organizing committees and the venues at which we train and compete.

COVID-19

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is the strain of coronavirus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the respiratory illness responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 range from mild to severe illness and may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus. These symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets released through the nose or mouth. Precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the respiratory droplets include wearing masks that cover the nose and mouth, maintaining personal hygiene, and physically distancing a minimum of six feet from others.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Current guidelines from the CDC allow for increased freedoms for fully vaccinated individuals (VI), defined as being 14 days past your second dose of a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or past your single dose of Johnson & Johnson. Based on the [recommendations from the CDC](#) we can reduce restrictions for vaccinated people in the following ways:

- VI can resume activities that you did prior to the pandemic, without wearing a mask or physical distancing, except for where required by federal, state, local, or business guidance.

- Get tested for COVID-19 if you are experiencing [symptoms](#).
- VI do not need to quarantine after close contact with COVID+ persons or upon return to the U.S. from international travel.

U.S. Ski & Snowboard protocols will mandate that:

- If 100% of all participants in a **domestic** camp or competition are vaccinated, pre-travel testing can be discontinued.
- International travel restrictions will dictate requirements prior to camps held outside of the U.S. Some local health ordinances might require a pre-arrival test in order to form our “team household” or “bubble” as well protect those unvaccinated individuals around us. This will be considered on a location-by-location basis.
- If there are any unvaccinated individuals participating in a project, all participants **regardless of vaccine status** must test prior to participation in the 72-hour pre-integration phase.
- VI can workout at the COE without a mask. The athlete must provide a copy of their vaccination card on Smartabase via the “COVID-19 Vaccination” form and sign the attestation. This will be approved by the Medical Director prior to clearance to remove mask within the COE.
- At this time, health care workers are required by the CDC and OSHA to wear a mask while working in close contact with patients. All treatments and evaluations will be conducted with all parties in masks.

Breakthrough infections of COVID-19 post vaccination are possible, [and we know that vaccinated individuals are more likely to have asymptomatic infections](#). While there are some initial indications that viral load is lower in a vaccinated person, which makes them less infectious, the data is not well established at this time. Due to the likely continuation of extensive COVID-19 testing for international travel and competition through the 2021-22 season, we ask that teams consider the following to protect the athlete’s ability to perform and compete:

- People who are fully vaccinated should continue to wear a mask in public, maintain physical distancing from others and avoid crowds as well as poorly ventilated public spaces.
- **DO NOT** attend gatherings in public that do not allow for physical distancing with people of unknown vaccination status.
- Wear masks and maintain physical distancing when visiting with unvaccinated individuals from multiple households.

Travel Considerations

Restrictions and privileges for Americans traveling abroad are constantly changing. Currently there been no travel restriction exemptions for vaccinated people outside of the U.S. The USOPC maintains an [International Travel and COVID-19 Policy Overview](#) sheet that updates changes to travel requirements regularly.

Risk Mitigation Strategies

COVID-19 surveillance testing will continue twice weekly until 100% of a team is vaccinated. For domestic camps in the pre-period of 2021-22 we will utilize the Abbot Binax rapid antigen test for surveillance at no cost to the teams.

- Anyone who has tested positive within the last 90 days will not be required to complete COVID-19 surveillance testing. Testing may still be required for travel, competition or to receive medical care at certain facilities.

Unvaccinated Individuals

There is a need to continue to follow COVID-19 mitigation strategies to minimize the risk of infection in unvaccinated individuals. This includes but is not limited to:

- Restricting community interactions
 - Limiting eating in restaurants, utilizing public fitness facilities, attending gatherings, etc.
- Frequently disinfecting commonly touched surfaces.
- Maintaining personal hygiene and washing hands or using hand sanitizer.
- Avoiding frequent touching of the hands and face.
- Limiting the number of close contacts (unvaccinated).
- Limiting interaction with unvaccinated individuals outside of the immediate “bubble.”
- Wearing a mask in public at all times.
- Maintaining consistent dining partners to limit the number of close contacts.
- Limiting the number of athletes in dryland sessions and recommending athletes workout only with their roommates to limit close contacts of unvaccinated individuals.
- Disinfecting all commonly touched surfaces and equipment before and after usage, and between sessions.
- Separating athletes by a minimum of 30 feet during all cardiovascular and higher intensity workouts, and a minimum of six feet during lower intensity workouts.
- Wearing masks for all indoor activities.
- Working out in open-air environments whenever possible and appropriate.

Symptomatic Cases

In the event that a participant becomes symptomatic, the High Performance Director and Sports Medicine Director must be notified immediately. If the individual is demonstrating a high-risk symptom (loss of taste/smell, fever, achiness, new cough, shortness of breath, vomiting, diarrhea, or chest pain) or two or more of the lower risk symptoms (congestion, headache or sore throat), the individual will enter a period of isolation. The Sports Medicine Director and Team Physician/Internist will contact the individual and complete a thorough medical history and remote evaluation. COVID-19 testing will take place as needed and the individual will isolate from all team members until test results are known.

Considerations for Positive Cases

In the event of a positive COVID-19 test, the infected individual will begin an immediate quarantine and will have no contact with teammates or others. The Sports Medicine Director will be in touch with the individual and local health officials will be notified of the positive case through their required reporting. The individual will remain in a private lodging situation and a representative from the team will be responsible for disinfecting all potentially contaminated spaces and items and returning them to the appropriate team members.

Contact tracing will occur immediately and all primary contacts, defined as **unvaccinated** individuals who had [close contact](#) with the infected individual within 48 hours of the individual becoming symptomatic or testing positive, will be subject to a quarantine for seven days and a negative COVID-19 PCR test between days five and seven. Close contact continues to be defined as being within six feet for more than 15 minutes, regardless of mask wearing. In case of a conflict with the local health ordinance, it is U.S. Ski & Snowboard policy to follow local health ordinance. Medical Department staff and Athletic Staff will discuss plans for providing food and necessities to the infected and close contact individuals. Individuals in both quarantine and isolation will have frequent contact with the Sports Medicine Director. Quarantine and isolation plans will be specific to each location and situation.

Return to competition and training

U.S. Ski & Snowboard recommends medical examination followed by a symptom-based strategy for determining when athletes can return to rehab, training or competition after testing positive for or recovering from COVID-19, as outlined below. This is a two-step process that includes a medical clearance, and then a graded return to activity. Specific information on the graded return to training and competition can be found on the [U.S. Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 resource page](#).

Training/Competition Exit Plan

Upon the completion of a camp all individuals should adhere to post-travel requirements per their local health ordinance once they return home. The CDC recommends that all unvaccinated individuals self-quarantine for seven days post travel and get a viral test three to five days after travel. VI do not need to quarantine post travel, or test upon return to their home.

COVID-19 & Mental Health

COVID-19 has been extremely stressful for all of us. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. You may feel anxiousness, anger, sadness, or overwhelmed. We have been working diligently with the USOPC to improve awareness and access to all of the mental health resources available.

If you feel you need support or would like to talk, don't hesitate to reach out to USOPC Sr. Sport Psychologist Dr. Alex Cohen or USOPC Director of Mental Health Services Dr. Jessica Bartley as resources. All conversations with Dr. Cohen and Dr. Bartley are confidential and information will not be shared with any U.S. Ski & Snowboard staff member unless you request otherwise. Dr. Cohen works mainly with winter sport athletes providing both mental health services and performance consultation. As a licensed clinical psychologist Dr. Cohen is available for non-performance related issues. Dr. Jessica Bartley, Director of Mental Health Services at the USOPC, is available to you and can connect you to further support as needed. **Contact information for both Dr. Cohen and Dr. Bartley is listed below, as well as many other resources available to you.** Do not hesitate to reach out to either one of them for assistance.

I encourage you to check out the many resources available to you via the USOPC, found here: <https://www.teamusa.org/Team-USA-Athlete-Services/Mental-Health>.

- **ComPysch:** The USOPC offers athletes and their immediate families access to unlimited phone counseling with licensed mental health providers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through ComPysch.
- **Free Headspace Plus** account that includes access to hundreds of resources for focus, sleep, movement and more, including content designed for recovery, competition, training and motivation. Contact athleteservices@usopc.org for more information.
- Access to the **USOPC Mental Health Registry** which can be found on the [Team USA Mental Health Hub](#). The registry allows athletes to search for mental health providers who have experience working with elite athletes. Billing is arranged between the athlete and provider.

Your schedules are incredibly busy and your time is challenged more than ever, but taking a few minutes a day to switch off, unplug, relax, or meditate can be effective in improving your mental health.

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Mental Health Resources

- United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee: www.teamusa.org/mentalhealth
- The Speedy Foundation: <https://www.thespeedyfoundation.org>
- Michael Phelps Foundation: <https://michaelphelpsfoundation.org>
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <https://afsp.org>
- Crisis Text Line: <https://www.crisistextline.org>
- Mental Health First Aid: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>
- No cost confidential counseling 24/7 via ComPsych: <https://www.compsych.com/>
- Free Headspace Plus Account for meditation: contact athleteservices@usopc.org to access your account
- USOPC Mental Health Registry: <https://www.teamusa.org/mentalhealth>
- Team USA Mental Health Support Line: call 719-866-CALL (2255) to immediately speak with a licensed mental health provider (available 24 hours a day 7 days a week)
- [WellTrack](#) can be downloaded from the App Store for online tools to help identify, understand, and address mental health(password: TEAMUSA)

If you or someone you know is experiencing an urgent mental health issue, we encourage you to text HOME to 741741, or call (800) 273-8255 to speak to a mental health professional. In the process of helping yourself, you may be inspiring courage in others to seek help as well.