



Face Coverings and Contest Officials

3/15/21

THIS GUIDANCE CONTAINS SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS ORDERS

This is a brief summary of the expectations for MHSAA officials regarding face mask mandates found in orders issued by the Director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Definition

- “Face mask” means a tightly woven cloth or other multi-layer absorbent material that closely covers an individual’s mouth and nose. Plastic face shields may no longer serve as an alternative to face masks for game officials.

Allowable Exception to Face Mask Mandate

- The most recent MDHHS order permits officials to claim a **medical exception** to the face mask mandate if one applies to the individual. **Under the current MDHHS order, officials must have documentation from a medical provider (MD, DO, PA, NP) and provide that to the host school administrator upon arrival.**

Requirements During Down Times:

- All officials shall wear face masks upon arrival at a facility, before the contest, during intermission away from the field/court/area of play and following the contest until departure from the facility.

Prerogative of Local School Districts

- **Local school districts may choose to only hire game officials that wear face masks at all times. If this is the case, schools must inform officials in advance of the contest in compliance with MHSAA cancellation policies.**

Requirements During Contests

- MHSAA officials are subject to orders of the MDHHS.
- Officials *outdoors* may officiate without face masks.
- Officials *indoors* must officiate with face masks on at all times unless the medical exception indicated above applies.

Officials’ Responsibilities for Enforcement During Contests

- **MHSAA officials shall treat the requirement for participants to wear face masks (when required) using the following *Remind, Warn and Remove* process:**
 - **An athlete required to wear a face mask will not be permitted to enter the playing surface until his/her face mask is worn properly (*i.e., entirely covering the mouth and nose*).**
 - **Officials use good judgment and preventative officiating to remind athletes (even multiple times) that are wearing face masks to wear them properly if/when they fall below the mouth and nose**
 - **If an athlete refuses to wear his/her face mask (or wear it properly), the face mask is broken during play or an official’s instructions become repetitive for the athlete to make adjustment to wear it properly, play will be stopped at the nearest pause in action and the athlete will be removed from the contest until it is corrected. Athletes that are deemed as intentionally removing an opponent’s face mask should be penalized accordingly.**
- **Officials should expect to encounter MHSAA games where the players may or may not wear face masks and should consider this when deciding whether to accept assignments. MHSAA wrestlers are not required to wear face masks. Athletes in other MHSAA sports may not be required to wear face masks if a medical exception applies to the individual. If this is the case, the school administrator or head coach will notify the game officials of the athlete(s) to which this exception applies.** If an MHSAA official does not feel safe because a team refuses to wear facial coverings *when required*, or to wear them properly, after brought to the attention of the coach or site administrator, the official may leave the contest without penalty.
- If a team refuses to play against another team that is refusing to wear facial coverings, the official will provide a short time for the issue to be resolved between teams. If not resolved in a reasonable amount of time, the official may leave the contest without penalty. The official should complete an incident report online, and the determination of the results of the contest will be made by the MHSAA office.