



USCSA COVID-19 WINTER OPERATIONS GUIDE V3

November 10, 2020





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Change Log

October 26

- Expanded Health Screening guidance
- Crisis Communication policy
- Contact tracing policy

November 7

- Nordic Event Operations Update





Introduction

Generally, skiing and snowboarding are considered sports that have a lower risk of transmission. Participants are outdoors, distanced from each other, generally wear gloves, goggles/sunglasses and face coverings while engaged in the sport.

Outdoor recreation, including skiing and snowboarding, is proven to improve mental and physical health of participants. “Research is showing that being outside in a mountain environment can boost our immune systems as well as our mental health and well-being,” says Florence Williams, author of *The Nature Fix: How Being in Nature Can Make us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative*.

The United States Collegiate Ski & Snowboard Association has developed the following information for our members, athletes and volunteers. We will be updating this information on a regular basis.

We have developed these recommendations in accordance with current information from these sources: CDC, OSHA, NCAA, USASA, National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), US Skiing & Snowboarding (USSS). They are intended to help ensure USCSA events have the lowest risk of transmission possible.

Safety First! It's Everyone's Responsibility

As an organization, we are encouraging all members, athletes, spectators and volunteers to practice physical distancing and follow all local health guidelines. In accordance with NSAA recommendations all USCSA participants will be required to wear face coverings. Competition Organizers will ensure venue specific information is shared with team leaders on a regular basis.





What to Expect this Winter

The experience this winter at Ski Areas will be different!

- Members, athletes, spectators and volunteers can expect the ski areas will follow all current best practices on physical distancing and cleaning. Because of these practices, there may be additional lines during peak times.
- Expect changes to the experience in base lodges and chalets. There will be changes to onsite registration, lift ticket distribution, bib distribution & where you will be able to change & store gear.
- Expect a reduction in table space available in the base lodges and chalets and changes to food courts and restaurants. Expect changes to rules about outside food and please be sure to check with the host area prior to arrival
- Lift Lines will be physically distanced this winter; areas will develop plans specific to their areas. It may take more time to reach the competition venue.
- These changes will also affect Ski Patrol. The National Ski Patrol has developed policies and training for its members to ensure the highest level of care is offered.
- There will be changes to how the Start & Finish areas are managed.
- There will be changes in gate keeping and judging as well the numbers allowed at each station.
- Spectators may be limited & will be required to physically distance.
- We are looking forward to getting back on the slopes and are excited to see you this winter.





The health and well-being of our student athletes, volunteers, coaches, industry partners and families is the number one priority to the USCSA Board of Directors. We made the decision to end the 2020 USCSA National Championships early to allow participants to return home before much of the country went into a stay at home order. Learning from that process, a COVID-19 Task Force was established in July 2020 and this group has been meeting regularly.

The Task Force has been reviewing issues related to the organization's operations and how competitions may look this winter. We are using recommendations from the CDC, OSHA, USASA, National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), US Ski & Snowboard (USSS), NCAA and other industry partners. These recommendations are intended to help ensure everyone participating with the USCSA experiences the lowest possible risk of COVID-19 transmission.

At this point, the one thing we know for sure is the upcoming season will be different. As an organization we are encouraging all members, athletes, coaches, spectators and volunteers to practice physical distancing, wear a face covering in public, and follow all local health guidelines. Competition Organizers will ensure venue specific information is shared with team leaders on a regular basis. We are all in this together and we all have to take responsibility for ourselves, teammates and other members of our conferences & divisions.

The Task Force will continue to meet on a regular basis for the foreseeable future and will continue to stay abreast of the latest health information, ski industry information. We will be publishing standards for our events, the publication date will be established once NSAA, USASA & USSS release their recommendations. We will work with the Board of Directors and Executive Director to ensure everyone is up to date on best practices.

The USCSA COVID-19 Task Force

Chris Shumeyko - President

Bo Bigelow - Executive Vice President

Sarah Geiger - Vice President of Conferences

Doug Grayson - Vice President of Sport

Brittney Jackson - Executive-at-Large

Jay Moyer - Executive-at-Large

Collin Casper - Executive-at-Large

Eric Plausteiner - McBryne Division Coordinator

Luke Dykowski - Student Athlete Representative

Charlie Naples - Student Athlete Representative





USCSA COVID-19 Registration Protection Program

Understanding the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the USCSA is offering a Registration Protection Program for the 20-21 Competition Season. Athletes and teams can request a full refund of National Office registration dues for any reason until January 4th, 2021. Requests made after January 4th will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If requesting refunds for multiple products and/or team members, please make a single request with all listed registrations to refund for faster processing.

Refunded registrations will be marked inactive for the duration of the 20-21 season. Reinstatements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if circumstances around original refund request can be shown to have been resolved.





Preface

The following protocols have been adopted by the United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association (USCSA) help keep their members, guests, employees and partners healthy. All recommendations included in this document are intended to align with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), state and local requirements and/or recommendations.

This document will be updated as guidelines are revised and may be subject to frequent changes. Furthermore, in the event of any changes in state requirements such as percentage or maximum occupancy levels, or other specific standards, the requirements of this document will automatically be revised to reflect the specific state requirements in effect at that time. The USCSA have taken precautions to limit transmission of COVID-19 by following federal, state, and local regulations along with industry best practices.

Generally, skiing and snowboarding are considered sports that have a lower risk of transmission. Participants are outdoors, distanced from each other, generally wear gloves, goggles/sunglasses and face coverings while engaged in the sport.

These guidelines were established in accordance with current information from the following sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
National Ski Areas Association (NSAA)
US Ski & Snowboard (USSS)
State and Regional Ski Associations





General Guidelines

The USCSA recommends that everyone participating in its sanctioned events wear face coverings and practice physical distancing. Our goal is hold events where the risk of transmission is as low as possible. We need everyone's help to achieve that goal.

Communication will be critical this season as many of our normal practices will be changing on a regular basis.

USCSA National Office – will regularly update Conference Coordinators about changes to regulations that may impact their events. The National Office needs to update the full membership on a regular basis as to activities within the organization to help reduce the rate of transmission.

COVID-19 Task Force – will remain in contact with industry partners and share best practices within the organization. They will also make recommendations to the USCSA Board of Directors as warranted.

Conference & Division Coordinators – need to remain in close contact with their venues, volunteers and team leaders. It will be critical to share all relevant event information electronically prior to the event to ensure smooth operations.

We know each State is approaching the response to COVID-19 differently and in some cases the responsibility has been granted to a local authority. We suggest each Conference appoint a COVID-19 lead who would stay abreast of local & regional COVID-19 restrictions and or requirements. This person would assist the Conference Coordinator in disseminating the information and potential updates.





Health Screenings

It is our recommendation that teams engage in health screenings prior to departing their campus. If an athlete begins to feel sick while traveling, we ask that the entire team or travel group not attend the events and return to their campus and follow CDC recommendations for a close contact event. If any athlete receives a positive test result during the season they must notify the Conference Coordinator who then will notify the other athletes and the National Office. Health information will remain confidential and details limited to those necessary for contact tracing (if applicable). Conference Coordinators will need to include a Health Screening request into the event competition announcement.

The USCSA is recommending Conferences follow the US Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 Pre Screening Questionnaire.

<https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2020/COVID%20Website%20Resource%20-%20Pre%20Screen.pdf>

Pre-Screen Questions

Prior to beginning any training sessions, athletes and staff should complete a pre-screen questionnaire. Below is an example of information to collect. Note that information about COVID-19 is still evolving and changing rapidly. The symptoms and questions below are subject to change at any time.

Anyone indicating experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should immediately be instructed to call the local COVID-19 hotline for testing instructions, or contact their personal health care provider, and club protocol should be followed to follow up with them.

- Name
- Email
- Phone
- Have you experienced any COVID symptoms in the last 14 days(e.g. cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste of smell, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea)
- Have you had contact with persons displaying COVID symptoms in the last 14 days?
- Have you traveled out of region* in the last 14 days?

*Depending on your location 'region' could mean county, a group of counties, state or other based on your state/county health order.

Athlete Protocol

It is our recommendation that Conference Coordinators require team leadership to send them an email stating that they have asked the questions and no athlete, coach or volunteer with the team has given a positive response to any of the questions.





Volunteer Protocol

It is our recommendation that Conference Coordinators require any volunteers and or event staff to send them an email stating that they have not given a positive response to any of the questions.

Sanctions

Failure to comply will result in sanctions under sections 2.7.14 & 2.7.15 of the USCSA Bylaws. USCSA will follow the Return to Competition Guidelines established by US Ski & Snowboard.





Timed Events General Guidelines

- Face Coverings must be worn by anyone in the competition area
- Ensure physical distance at start areas
- Limit spectators and gathering at the finish area
- Close course to only necessary event staff and officials
- Eliminate scoreboards & announcing - use Live Timing to share results
- Timing Room is closed to all but timers and pre-determined officials.
- Communicate via radios, texting, social media
- Assign roles to event staff that are spread out, minimize face-to-face conversation where possible

Judged Events General Guidelines

- Face Coverings must be worn by anyone in the competition area
- Ensure physical distance at start areas
- Limit spectators and gathering at the finish area
- Close course to only necessary event staff and officials
- Eliminate scoreboards & announcing - use Live Timing to share results
- Distance judges and use technology where possible for scoring in freestyle events.
- Ensure venue is closed to general public
- Communicate via radios, texting, social media
- Assign roles to event staff that are spread out, minimize face-to-face conversation where possible

Field Size

USCSA rules & bylaws state we follow all relevant USSS and/or USASA rules and policies. Each Conference Coordinator must ensure they also work with local venues to ensure all local, county and state based regulations are incorporated into their field size decisions.

The National Organization will continue to share all updates with Conference Coordinators.





Event Operation Guidelines

Registration

- Wear face coverings and limit interaction & time
- Limit registration desk staff to 1 person
- Only allow 1 person per team to register
- Pre-package bibs & lift tickets
- Allow pre-payments
- Encourage roster changes to be submitted via email or text
- Expect lodge space to be limited
- Work with venue to open registration early and have it broken down before lodge volume increases
- Work with venues ahead of the weekend on where teams can change, store gear
- Don't be surprised if changing & gear storage will be in vehicles

Meetings

- Wear face coverings and limit interaction & time
- Use video conferencing for draws or predefined system
- Use physical media or video platform for team / captains meetings
- If in person meetings – make all attempts to limit the time and hold them outdoors
- Limit meetings to 1 person per team
- Consider purchasing a bulletin board (white erase, push pin, chalkboard, etc.) to allow for non-verbal communication.

Awards

- Wear face coverings and limit interaction & time
- Make all attempts to only have those receiving the award at the award site
- Can broadcast on physical media
- Do not shake hands or have physical contact during the presentation
- Make all attempts to present the awards outdoors

Officials and Event Staff

- Face coverings and hand sanitizer should be purchased and provided by each conference and distributed prior to each event
- Empower officials with disqualification, possible team disqualification for inability to follow new protocols. USCSA will follow guidance from USSS for officials. USCSA will rely on bylaw sections 2.7.14 & 2.7.15 for sanctions.
- Assign roles to event staff that are spread out, minimize face-to-face conversation where possible





First Aid & Safety Personnel

- Ski Patrol will be the sole first aid provider at USCSA events.
- Face coverings must be worn when approaching patient
- Be active in limiting access to injured athletes until a time when they are cleared by patrol. Communicate prior to the event that access to injured athlete and patrol rooms will be extremely restricted.

Mountain Staff

- Be aware of each venue's policies prior to each event and include in the competition announcements.

Bibs

- Consider the use of disposable bibs where possible
- Consider using one bib per athlete for the entire season or issuing a team a set of bibs for the season. If issuing teams bibs for the season, they would need to be educated on proper care.

Inspection

- Consider that longer inspection times will most likely need to take place.
- Consider a team-based dispatch system with times for inspection distributed prior to the event
- There shall be no passing teams immediately downhill of each team.





Alpine / Snowboard SL & GS & Slopestyle

The Start

- Attempt to separate athletes by gender or teams where possible in the start corrals
- Communication is key, utilize wireless communication and technology where possible to alert the next group of athletes to the start
- Create 6 foot markers utilizing gates in snow, cones, markers, brush gates, dye
- Everyone in the start area must be wearing a mask
- Starters must maintain 6 feet where possible

The Finish

- Dissuade people from gathering in finish area
- Use brush gates or dye to mark 6 feet area in the snow for spectators/teammates to gather
- Eliminate announcing if possible & utilize online resources
- Essential personnel only will be allowed in timing shack
- Create a protest text message account or designate a protest meeting area
- Expect larger than normal finish areas

Athletes on Course

- Athlete must have mask on prior to leaving the competition arena

Gatekeepers

- Face coverings will be required
- Gatekeeper meeting and training online, possibility of making online training mandatory for each team. Team will have to designate gatekeepers prior to event
- Gatekeepers should stay in place so they have only 1-on-1 contact with head gatekeeper at the conclusion of each competition run
- Gatekeepers should minimize contact with athletes where possible
- We should utilize our event staff where possible





Snowboard/Free Ski Specific Operations

- Face coverings must be worn by all competitors prior to leaving the competition venue.
- Distance judges and use technology where possible for scoring in freestyle events.
- Make sure that the general public does not have access to venues and ensure that it will be enforced by the venue.

Jam Events

Jams should consider the following adjustments:

- Create markers for six-feet of separation within the start area
- Designate areas for coaches along the arena boundary and make athletes approach coaches instead of vice versa
- Have a starter at the top of the venue
- Drop in start order the first time through the heat and then in order of arrival thereafter
- Create uphill lanes with space for distance between athletes in case of passing
- Consider extending heat times from normal due to best practices for physical distancing
- Only approved coaches, volunteers and officials are the only people within the competition arena during each heat (no spectators)

Cross Events

Cross formats should consider the following adjustments:

- Create markers for six-feet of separation within the start area
- Designate areas for coaches along the arena boundary and make athletes approach coaches instead of vice versa
- Until further improvement of the COVID-19 pandemic, score utilizing a time trial only for Cross events
- Only approved coaches, volunteers and officials are the only people within the competition arena during each heat (no spectators)





Nordic

General Guidelines

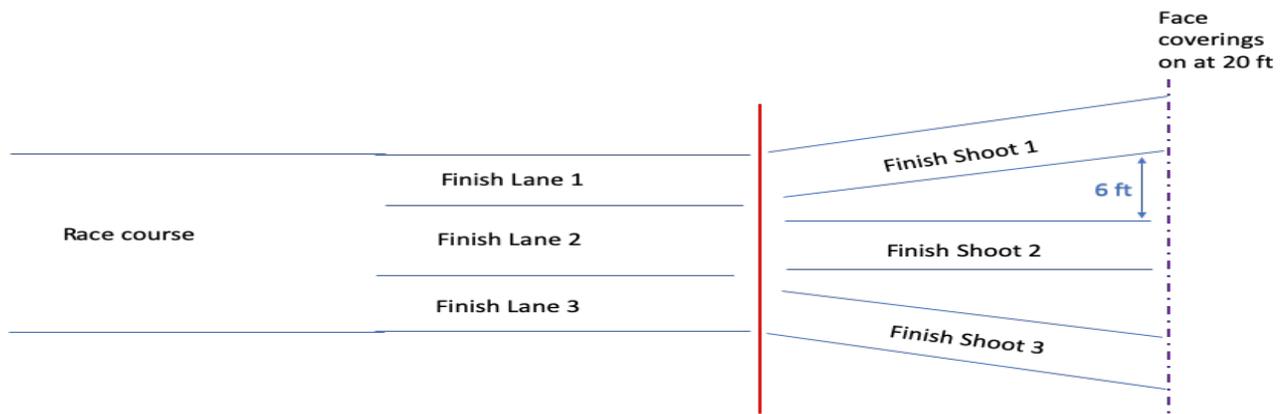
Nordic ski racing has many elements that adhere well to social distancing: it is conducted outside in environments with high UV (Schuit et al. 2020), equipment generally keeps athletes distant from each other, physical contact is not a planned part of the event, cold weather often necessitates the use of face coverings, and the format of at least one of our races, the interval start, is ideal. The only potential parts of racing that contain risk of COVID transmission are the starts and finish.

Start

- All race officials and volunteers will wear face coverings at all times. If voice amplification is needed it will be provided.
- All races will be conducted in 1 minute intervals with one athlete starting at a time.
- Athletes will be called to the start no more than 2 minutes before their start.
- Athletes will wear their face covering until they have 1 minute to start.
- Athletes waiting to start will maintain a physical distance of six feet from each other and the volunteers.
- Markings will be provided in the start area to denote 6 ft between starters.

Finish

- The finish will have a minimum of 2 separate finish lanes, 3 is preferable.
- The finishing athlete will choose, or be directed to, a clear lane and once that athlete is in a lane it will be blocked by a volunteer.
- Once the athlete crosses the finish line, she/he will be diverted to a finishing shoot for that lane. These finishing shoots will be divergent from one another beyond the finish line.
- The athlete will then remain in her/his lane for the demarcated distance (at least 20 ft.). Ideally, this lane is at least 6 ft from neighboring lanes (see image).





- Once across the finish line the athlete will proceed through her/his finish shoot as quickly as he/she/they are able.
- Wipes will be provided in the finish shoot for athletes to clean up. We aim to prevent spitting and “Farmer’s blowing” by providing wipes.
- Face coverings must be used as soon as the athlete exits the finish shoot.
- Athletes will keep their bibs.
- Athletes then continue to wear their face coverings and physically distance by at least 6 ft for all post-race activities.





Academic Affairs Information

- The Academic Affairs Committee in conjunction with the COVID-19 Task Force has reviewed and updated necessary guidelines for eligibility based on current NCAA DII guidance.
- If you have a specific question please contact Collin Casper - ccasper@uscsa.org
- If you are impacted by COVID, you should be able to recapture a year of eligibility without undue hardship. (Treated much like a standard medical hardship and will require proof of hardship by a medical provider.)
- Due to limited on-campus interactions this fall due to COVID-19, the USCSA has created a Release Form for each individual athlete to complete and sign during registration.

Should a university not offer enrollment during this academic year, are you and your team members eligible to still compete within the USCSA?

Unfortunately, No. - You must be enrolled in university, meeting proper NCAA DII Academic Status, as defined by the NCAA Academic Eligibility Rules. There is no sponsoring institution in this scenario. In a scenario where this would impact eligibility in future years, granting hardship for the missed period of time would be granted. (Since the student-athlete is not enrolled in school, it does not impact their years of eligibility, unless they are freshman and this impacts the number of years between high school and starting university.)

My university is not in session for the Fall, but it will be in session for Winter/Spring term (during competition). I would like to compete, but the eligibility rules reference that I needed to be enrolled in the Fall. Will I be able to compete?

Yes, if you are a full-time student during the spring term. NCAA DII does offer an exception to this rule when you are not enrolled in full-time session during the Fall Term of the academic year. The USCSA Academic Affairs Committee acts as the "Management Council" to make this determination. This exception should be granted unilaterally for any student-athlete where this impacts eligibility - no waiver request would be required for the 2020-2021 season of competition.

My university is not in session for the winter/spring term (during competition), but I still want to compete. Am I eligible/is my team eligible?

Unfortunately, No. You must be enrolled in university, meeting proper NCAA DII Academic Status, as defined by the NCAA Academic Eligibility Rules. There is no sponsoring institution in this scenario.





My university is in session for the Winter/Spring but has decided to not permit any intercollegiate competition. Can I ski as an individual within the USCSA?

Unfortunately, No. While the USCSA really would like for every athlete to be able to compete, the USCSA does need to abide by the policies of each member institution. If the institution specifically is not allowing intercollegiate competition, the athletes are therefore no longer representing their university. Choosing to permit student-athletes to participate, even if the institution does not permit competition could open the USCSA to undue risk/liability and therefore the USCSA must abide by the policies of each member institution.

My university is in session for virtual learning only and I am now living geographically in another conference. Am I permitted to compete in another conference?

Unfortunately, No. This goes against the USCSA "team" mission, potentially creates a "First Team" and "Second Team" structure, and the institution would need to allow for students to compete in multiple geographic areas. If there are multiple athletes from the same institution competing in multiple conferences, it is no longer a team sport. There are also issues with which sub-set of that team's athletes would be eligible for Regional and National Championships? Would it be the conference where the university normally participates? Would it be the conference where the team performs the best in the ranking of teams?





USCSA COVID-19 Crisis Communication Plan

Overview

COVID-19 presents unique challenges for this winter's season. Our plan is to be prepared in advance with procedures and messages to help communicate effectively during an emergency COVID-19 situation. COVID-19 cases at any USCSA training or competition site trigger crisis communication responses from the USCSA. The communications plan will serve as a road map for various scenarios that may occur.

Objectives

- Communicate to our membership and partners that the USCSA is prepared for the challenges of the 2020/21 season.
- Be prepared to quickly respond or assist in the response of any COVID-19 related situation that may occur during the 2020/21 season.

Plan Details

Key Messaging

- The health and well-being of our student athletes, volunteers, coaches, industry partners and families is the number one priority to the USCSA Board of Directors.
- We believe that safety comes first and it is up to every member of the organization to do their part to protect the health of our community.
- As an organization, we are encouraging all members, athletes, spectators and volunteers to practice physical distancing and follow all local health guidelines. In accordance with NSAA recommendations all USCSA participants will be required to wear face coverings.
- Competition Organizers will ensure venue specific information is shared with team leaders on a regular basis.
- Our competition venues are in compliance with all applicable local, county, state and federal COVID-19 regulation and guidance.
- We will share any information we are allowed to with our membership and community related to a COVID-19 situation.





Activation

Should a COVID-19 situation (including COVID-19 like symptoms or knowledge of a positive test result) arise to the attention of any USCSA member, they should immediately email the USCSA COVID-19 Task Force at covid@uscsa.org, including the basic known information and contact information. During the season a member of the Task Force will be monitoring the account and will respond immediately.

Activation Steps

1. USCSA COVID-19 Task Force monitoring member activates the plan.
2. USCSA President will be the official spokesperson for the organization.
3. USCSA Executive Director will field and manage all media requests, social media posts, press release distribution and email communications. The Marketing Committee Chair will assist the ED.
4. USCSA Executive Vice President will manage Contract Tracing efforts.
5. USCSA VP Conference Coordinator will work with the local Conference & Division to gather information.

Positive Test on a Team or Volunteer outside an event

- 1) Notify all USCSA members and partners of the test result
 - a) Detailed notice to members (**athletes, coaches, volunteers, institution contacts, parents if under 18**) of the home Conference and or Division
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Date individual(s) last attended Conference and or Division event
 - iii) CDC testing guidelines
 - b) Notify all Conference Coordinators
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Date individual(s) last attended Conference and or Division event
 - iii) Conference
 - c) Notify USCSA Board of Directors
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Date individual(s) last attended Conference and or Division event
 - iii) Conference & Team
- 2) Teams, athletes, and volunteers with a positive test will not be allowed to participate in USCSA events until CDC guidance on isolation following a positive test has been met.

Positive Test on a Team or Volunteer at an event

- 1) Notify all USCSA members and partners of the test result
 - a) Press Release





- i) The Press Release will be posted to the USCSA website
 - b) General Membership notice to include Conference and or Division information.
 - i) Basic details - that a member of the USCSA community has tested positive for COVID-19
 - c) Detailed notice to members (**athletes, coaches, volunteers, institution contacts, parents if under 18**) of the home Conference and or Division
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Date individual(s) last attended Conference and or Division event
 - iii) CDC testing guidelines
 - d) Notify all Conference Coordinators
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Date individual(s) last attended Conference and or Division event
 - iii) Conference
 - e) Notify USCSA Board of Directors
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Date individual(s) last attended Conference and or Division event
 - iii) Conference & Team
 - iv) Local Contact will notify venue
- 2) Teams, athletes, and volunteers with a positive test will not be allowed to participate in USCSA events until CDC guidance on isolation following a positive test has been met.

Positive Test from venue staff

- 1) Notify all USCSA members and partners of the test result
 - a) Press Release
 - i) The Press Release will be posted to the USCSA website
 - b) General Membership notice to include Conference and or Division information
 - c) Detailed notice to members of the home conference and or division
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Date individual(s) last attended Conference and or Division event
 - iii) CDC testing guidelines
 - d) Notify all Conference Coordinators
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Conference & Venue
 - e) Notify USCSA Board of Directors
 - i) Date of positive result
 - ii) Conference & Venue
 - iii) Known Status of Members
 - f) Establish communication channel with venue PR contact

All media requests should be directed to the USCSA National Office.





Contract Tracing Protocol

On a monthly basis Conference Coordinators in conjunction with the National Office will share and request updates to member contact information. This will ensure the National Office has the most up to date lists available in the event of COVID-19 situation.

Contact Tracing on the phone will be managed by COVID-19 Task Force Members and members of the USCSA Board of Directors.

Steps in Process

1. Conference Coordinator notifies USCSA COVID-19 Task Force & Executive Vice President.
2. Conference Coordinator will send notification to team contacts (leadership):
XXXXX - I was recently informed that (athlete/team/volunteer/venue staff) has tested positive for COVID-19. At this time I am gathering additional details and you will be receiving an update for the USCSA shortly. (add timeline when follow will happen) The health and safety of our members are the top priority for the USCSA. XXXX / CC of XXXX
3. Executive Vice President will begin creating Contact Tracing Lists
 - a. Date member last event contact
 - b. Names phone & emails of all others in attendance
 - c. List of lodging venues, restaurants visited
 - d. Notification sent via text & email
 - e. Contact lists shared to TF members for phone calls
 - f. 24 hour follow-up
 - g. Keeps Board of Directors & TF informed of results

