



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

10.2021

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 and vaccination, which evolves as more strains of the virus become prevalent. Vaccines are highly effective against severe illness, but the [delta variant](#) causes more infections and spreads faster than earlier forms of the virus that causes COVID-19.

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 October 1st, 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 Vaccination

Current guidelines from the CDC allow for increased freedoms for fully vaccinated individuals (VI), defined as being 14 days – 8 months past your second dose of a mRNA vaccination, or 14 days past your single dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine. Based on the [recommendations from the](#) CDC we can reduce restrictions for vaccinated people in the following ways:

- VI can resume many activities that you did prior to the pandemic, except for where required by federal, state, local, or business guidance.
- To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area [of substantial or high transmission](#)
- Get tested for COVID-19 if you are experiencing [symptoms](#).
- If you've had [close contact](#) with someone who has COVID-19, you should get tested 3-5 days after your exposure, even if you don't have symptoms. You should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative. You should isolate for 10 days if your test result is positive.



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

- All U.S. Ski & Snowboard staff & contractors are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Any one who requires medical or religious exemption will complete a ADA process through U.S. Ski & Snowboard Human Resources Department.
- Any named National Team athlete that is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine and does not receive it will be subject to following all COVID-19 protocols and guidelines from U.S. Ski & Snowboard. Please refer to the [Named U.S. Team Athlete COVID-19 Vaccine Policy](#) for details.
- **Any athlete invited to participate in a National Team camp, Development project or competition is required to show proof of vaccination.**
- All participants will complete a pre-travel test prior to departure for a camp or competition. All participants will continue to undergo weekly testing for surveillance or to comply with travel / competition requirements.
- No unvaccinated individuals will have any indoor interactions with teams including lodging, meals or transportation.
- 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. Masks must be worn at all times outside of work outs for all athletes and staff.
- 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, preferably KN-95 or medical grade masks.

Breakthrough infections of COVID-19 post vaccination are possible, [and we know that vaccinated individuals are more likely to have asymptomatic infections](#). 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.

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 weekly. Anyone who has tested positive within the last 90 days will not be required to complete COVID-19 surveillance testing.



Unvaccinated Individuals

Any unvaccinated individuals who are traveling separately from the team are advised to continue to follow COVID-19 mitigation strategies to minimize the risk of infection. 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/or 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 **vaccinated** individuals who had [close contact](#) with the infected individual within 48 hours of the individual becoming symptomatic or testing positive, will be subject to an increased testing regime and will be required to mask indoors for



14 days. Close contact continues to be defined as being within six feet for more than 15 minutes, regardless of mask wearing.

Unvaccinated individuals who are traveling independently of the team will be required to follow local health guidelines for quarantine post exposure. Current CDC guideline require 7 days of quarantine with a negative test, and continuing to wear a mask indoors through 14 days.

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 regardless of vaccination status, 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. VI do not need to quarantine post travel, but should test 3-5 days after arriving 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.

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. Here are just a few:

- **eHome:** eHome Counseling Group is a nationwide virtual counseling network that provides empirically-based mental health treatment anytime and anywhere. Get started by visiting ehcmp.com/teamusa. eHome accepts health insurance and USOPC Mental Health Services will pay for any expenses outside of insurance. Contact mentalhealth@usopc.org
- **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.

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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.



Table 1 National Team COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies Matrix

	National Team	Fully Vaccinated	Not Fully Vaccinated
Testing	Prior to Travel	PCR test (pooled or individual) within 3 days of travel	PCR test (pooled or individual) within 3 days of travel
	Surveillance Testing	Weekly PCR/NAAT test unless symptomatic or based on a risk assessment or documented close contact with COVID-19	Recommend twice weekly surveillance testing with PCR/NAAT test
	Competition Season	Required to produce negative PCR test 72 hours prior to arrival	Required to produce negative PCR test 72 hours prior to arrival
Quarantine/ Isolation	Close Contacts	Masking in public indoor settings for 14 days with discontinuation if a COVID-19 test is performed three to five days after exposure and is negative, or if assessment does not reveal high risk.	Quarantine in accordance with local public health authority guidance for close contact with another individual with confirmed positive COVID-19.
	Positive Test	Isolation for 10 days and at least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have improved. No exercise during isolation. Post-isolation exercise consistent with previous recommendations, including cardiac considerations.	
Travel	Training & Competition	No Restrictions	No Team travel, independent travel /competition only
	Team Travel	Masking in indoor public settings	Universal Masking and physical distancing
Non- Athletic Activities	Meetings	Avoid gatherings of more than 10 vaccinated individuals outside of the immediate team. Masking recommended for indoors.	Do not gather or attend gathering of people outside immediate family / roommates.
	Non-Athletic Activities	Large crowd avoidance or masking where community immunity is unknown or vaccination status cannot be determined.	Avoid all large crowds and gatherings.

*Adapted from NCAA