



SSLL Return-to-Play Safety Plan

Upon review and recommendation by the South Sunrise Little League (SSLL) Safety Committee, the SSLL Board of Directors has approved the following return-to-play safety plan for the 2021 baseball and softball season.

On February 26, 2021, the State of California allowed youth sports to resume in counties where the adjusted case rate is equal to or less than 14 per 100,000.

These best practices have been compiled from resources and guidance from Little League International, the City of Orange, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the World Health Organization (WHO), The Aspen Institute, among others.

This safety plan was last updated on March 15, 2021. SSLL will continue to update these guidelines to provide additional best practices guidance as information is further developed around COVID-19 mitigation.

Summary of Guidelines

- Face coverings shall be worn by managers, coaches, league officials, volunteers, and observers at all times.
- Observers shall maintain at least 6 feet from non-household members. Spectators should bring folding chairs to avoid overcrowding the bleachers.
- Observers should be limited to immediate household members (for practices and games)
- Observers shall vacate the field/facility as soon as reasonably possible after the conclusion of their event.
- Player shall wear a face covering while inside the dugout. Players may remove their face covering while on the field of play, although they are not required to.
- No sharing of drink bottles and other personal items or equipment. If equipment sharing is necessary, it shall be sanitized between use.
- No one with symptoms of COVID-19 or who is in isolation or quarantine for COVID-19 is permitted to attend practices or competitions.
- Players and coaches will have their temperatures taken prior to each practice or game.

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 percent 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. The league will do its best to place hand sanitizer in all common areas off-field for easy use.

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.
- 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 percent 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 15-20 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 or coolers.
- Teams should not share any snacks or food. Players should bring individual, pre-packaged food, if needed.
- Post-game snacks provided by team parents should be eliminated.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- All managers/coaches, volunteers, umpires, etc., shall wear PPE whenever applicable and possible, such as cloth face coverings and protective medical gloves. Face coverings are required for all volunteers.
- 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.

- 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.
- If possible, teams should utilize bins be placed underneath the dugout bench at the players' assigned spots. Bins should be taken home and sanitized by each player's parent/guardian after each game.
- Players and managers/coaches should wear a cloth face covering while in the dugout.

Player Equipment:

- Players should have their own individual batter's helmet, glove, bat, and catcher's equipment, if possible.
- 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 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 reach of children.

Baseballs and Softballs:

- Baseballs and softballs should be rotated through on a regular basis, at least every few 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

Pre-Game Plate Meetings:

- 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 percent alcohol after the inspection of each individual piece of equipment.

Limit League/Game Volunteers:

- For each game, there should only be the required volunteers in the dugout or the field of play, such as team managers/coaches, umpires, and dugout parents for lower divisions (T-ball, Rookie, A).
- Practices should be limited to the managers/coaches and players. If possible, parents are encouraged to drop off players for practice and not remain at the fields to avoid overcrowding.

- Only the official scorekeeper (home team) shall be behind the back stop in the scorekeeping tent. The other scorekeeper shall sit at least six feet away. The scorekeeper tent shall be taped off to avoid crowding.
- The scoreboard operator shall be at least six feet away from the scorekeeper, but may remain under the scorekeeper tent.

Field Preparation and Maintenance:

- Only one field parent and/or managers/coaches per team may prep and tear down the fields.
- 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 if that is their personal preference or the preference of their parents (junior umpires). Umpires are encouraged to keep a safe distance from players as much as possible and wear protective gloves.
- If physically able, umpires are required to wear cloth face coverings while umpiring.

Facility, Fan, and Administrative Guidance

Spread Out Scheduling of Practices and Games:

- The league will schedule sufficient time between practices and games to facilitate the 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 1 hour before game 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 1 hour.
- The league will ensure that practices and games follow all local and state directives regarding the number of people allowed to gather in one place.

Limiting Spectator Attendance:

- Spectators should be limited to immediate household members.
- All spectators should follow best social distancing practices — stay six feet away from individuals outside their household; wear a cloth face covering; avoid direct hand or other contact with players/managers/coaches during play.
- Spectators should bring their own seating or portable chairs when possible to avoid overcrowding the bleachers.
- 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

Public Restrooms:

- Shall be open.

Snack Bar:

- Shall operate under the CDPH Covid-19 Industry Guidance for restaurants.