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CDPH releases school athletic guidelines

The California Department of Health on Dec. 14 released [new guidance](#) indicating when California recreational sports can expect to return during the COVID-19 crisis. This guidance provides direction on how to support a safe environment for outdoor and indoor youth sports as well as for recreational athletics involving adults. The guidance applies to all organized youth sports — including school- and community-sponsored programs, and privately-organized clubs and leagues — as well as all adult recreational sports. It explicitly does not apply to collegiate or professional sports.

While counties must first exit the current Regional Stay-at-Home order, CDPH says that competition could resume as soon as Jan. 25.

Risk profiles

The new guidance places sports into low-, moderate- and high-contact categories, also taking into consideration whether the activity occurs outdoors or indoors:

- *Low contact*: Individual or small group sports where contact within 6 feet can be avoided, particularly those with relatively low exertion rates that allow for consistent wearing of face coverings when within 6 feet of other participants.
- *Moderate contact*: Team sports that can be played with only incidental or intermittent close contact.
- *High contact*: Team sports with frequent or sustained close contact (especially face-to-face contact) and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants. Indoor sports pose a higher risk due to reduced ventilation.

When can sports return?

Intra-team sports competition could resume as soon as Jan. 25, provided a county has exited the current Regional Stay-at-Home order. **CDPH also cautions that, based on COVID-19 transmission levels in the state, this date will be assessed again on Jan. 4 and may be subject to change.**

The guidelines break down which sports are permitted based on each county's current tier in the state's color-coded COVID-19 monitoring system:

- *Widespread Tier (Purple)*: Outdoor low-contact sports may resume, such as tennis, cross country, and outdoor swimming and diving.
- *Substantial Tier (Red)*: Outdoor moderate-contact sports like baseball may resume.
- *Moderate Tier (Orange)*: Outdoor high-contact sports, including football, and indoor low-contact sports, such as volleyball, may resume.
- *Minimal Tier (Yellow)*: Indoor moderate-contact sports like cheerleading and indoor high-contact sports such as basketball may resume.

A more thorough list of sports allowed at each tier, as well as general guidelines for participants, coaches and support staff on how to make the return to competition as safe as possible, is included in [the guidance](#) and available online.



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