

Michigan Sailing Club 2021 Covid Safety Update

Adopted by the MSC Board April 5, 2021

Background

The Michigan Sailing Club (MSC) Board and the MSC Covid-19 Preparedness and Response team adopted, supported and implemented the [MSC Safe Start Plan \(June 7, 2020\)](#) and the [MSC Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Plan \(August 1, 2020\)](#) to support the safety and enjoyment of our MSC community. Our collective efforts in following the MSC safety procedures and public health guidelines supported a safe and enjoyable sailing season in 2020. As the 2021 season approaches, the evolving Covid-19 pandemic continues with our state still in Phase 4 of the Governors [Michigan Safe Start Plan](#). [Michigan Covid data](#) compiled by experts across the state show that cases of Covid-19 had decreased to levels similar to last summer following a peak. However, the current trend is towards increasing levels and it is anticipated that the 50-70% more infectious [B.1.1.7 Covid-19 variant first found in the U.K. and already present in Michigan](#) will increase the rate of new cases as it becomes widespread. As of March 19, 2021 Michigan already had over 600 cases, making Michigan second in the U.S. for the number of B.1.1.7 variant cases detected. Additionally, the first case of the B.1.351 variant which originated in South Africa and may impair vaccine efficiency was detected on March 8, 2021.

While the number of fully vaccinated people is increasing, and the recently updated CDC [Interim Public Health Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People, updated March 8, 2021](#) suggests some private individual choices that vaccinated people may now make with relatively low risk, the CDC guidance also stresses the importance of physical distancing, wearing masks and other prevention measures such as cleaning **regardless of vaccination status** when gathering with people from multiple households. While early data suggest that Covid-19 vaccination stops at least some of the transmission, it is possible that that vaccinated people can serve as asymptomatic carriers and infect others. As vaccination proceeds it is expected that additional public health guidance will be provided.

Purpose

One year into the Covid pandemic we all have information and opinions about what is important and how things should be done; we make decisions for ourselves every day. Although we are likely to have differing individual opinions, we need to focus on working together to create an environment which supports the safety and enjoyment of our sailing community. To achieve this we rely on the guidance of public health experts and U.S. Sailing.

U.S. Sailing cites the [Gowrie Risk Report: Covid-19 Risk Management and Best Practices for Sailing Organizations](#) which says “comply with all Federal, State, and Local laws, guidelines, executive orders, mandates, and public health guidelines, as they relate to COVID-19,” “comply with and implement the recommendations set forth by the CDC for safe operations,” and “review recommendations and guidelines provided by US Sailing, as they apply to your organization, your location, and the capabilities of your team, staff, and members.” U.S. Sailing has issued additional clarifications to the Gowrie Risk Report in the form of Frequently Asked Questions i.e. U.S. Sailing [Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions with a “Return to Play” in mind, V1.0 of June 2020](#) which indicates that all participants should be familiar with and expected to follow an organization’s rules and Covid safety procedures.

The purpose of this review of the MSC Covid Safety plans along with current guidance from the Governor of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the Washtenaw County Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and U.S. Sailing is to confirm and/or modify our MSC Covid safety plans to support a safe and enjoyable start to the 2021 sailing season. Together we can keep our members safe and make the Michigan Sailing club a friendly and safe place.

Current Covid-19 Guidance

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) issues Epidemic Orders and the current order is the [Gatherings and Face Masks order effective March 19, 2021](#). This order includes capacity limitations of less than 300 people for outdoor non-residential gatherings and with requirements for physical distancing and mask wearing by all persons participating in a gathering. A gathering is defined as “any occurrence, either indoors or outdoors, where two or more persons from more than one household are present in a shared space” and “all persons participating in gatherings are required to wear a face mask.” Additionally, “as a condition of hosting a gathering under this order, organizers and facilities must design the gathering to encourage and maintain physical distancing and must ensure that persons not part of the same group maintain 6 feet distance from one another to the extent possible.” Per this Gatherings and Face Masks order and the [FAQ document for the Gatherings and Face Masks March 19, 2021 order](#), “the consumption of food or beverages is permitted only while seated in designated areas. While eating/drinking, no more than 6 people may be seated together in a group, and groups must be separated by at least 6 feet; groups may not intermingle.”

The CDC [Your Guide to Masks, updated Feb. 22, 2021](#) also recommends that people wear masks in public settings, at events and gatherings, and anywhere they will be around other people. Additionally, the CDC [Guidance to Improve How your Mask Protects You, updated February 13, 2021](#) recommends using a well fitted mask, with 2

or more layers, covering your nose and mouth regardless of vaccination status and provides detailed instructions on these points.

Contact tracing remains an ongoing requirement per the MDHHS [Gatherings and Face Mask March 19, 2021 order](#) and is guided by the [Washtenaw County Health Department Covid-19 FAQs for Workplaces – Feb. 8, 2021 update](#) and [Contact Tracing can Help Slow the Spread of Covid-19 Jan 1, 2021 update](#).

U.S. Sailing references the [Gowrie Risk Report: Covid-19 Risk Management and Best Practices for Sailing Organizations of May 2020](#) as currently effective guidance. This comprehensive report was used in formulating the existing [MSC Covid safety policies and procedures](#). U.S. Sailing has also issued [Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions with a “Return to Play” in mind, V1.0 of June 2020](#) which provides clarification and guidance on the use of face masks and boat occupancy. As sailing with more than one person on a boat increases the risk, single-handed sailing and sailing with household members should remain a focus. MDHHS [Safe Social Pods Nov. 2020](#) defines a household as a group of people living together in a shared dwelling with common kitchen or bathroom facilities. Due to the increased risks, it must be an individual’s choice whether to sail with another person outside of their household for club organized activities such as sailing lessons or racing or for open sailing. [Safe Social Pods Nov. 2020](#) per MDHHS are defined as “a core group of friends or family who agree to limit their in-person social activities to only each other, and practice physical distancing with anyone outside the group.” **Both U.S. Sailing and the MDHHS recommend that any self-selected long term pods should carefully consider and discuss the risks, and make a long term commitment e.g. through the length of a course or season.**

Conclusions for 2021 MSC Covid Safety Update

Overall the current Michigan Sailing Club Covid Safety procedures as described in the [MSC Safe Start Plan \(June 7, 2020\)](#) and the [MSC Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Plan \(August 1, 2020\)](#) should remain effective as the 2021 season begins with updates for two critical topics: Mask Wearing and Boat Occupancy.

Rationale for 2021 MSC Covid Safety Updates

As more data has become available regarding Covid-19 transmission through respiratory droplets from the nose or mouth of an infected person when people gather in close proximity, and the effectiveness of well-fitting, multi-layered masks in dramatically reducing the load of virus particles moving through a mask, the mask wearing expectations for outdoor spaces where people gather, (as two or more people from more than one household in an indoor or outdoor space) e.g. the MSC grounds/dock, have been enhanced to follow the current [MDHHS Gatherings and Face Mask March 19, 2021 order](#), the [FAQ document for the Gatherings and Face Masks March 19, 2021](#)

[order](#), the [CDC Your Guide to Masks, updated Feb. 22, 2021](#) and the CDC [Interim Public Health Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People, updated Feb 8, 2021](#).

The individual choices for self-selecting long term pods for sailing have been expanded consistent with the U.S. Sailing [Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions with a “Return to Play” in mind, V1.0 of June 2020](#), [Safe Social Pods Nov. 2020](#), per MDHHS and the CDC [Interim Public Health Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People, updated Feb. 8, 2021](#).

The specific requirements and guidance related to the updated Michigan Sailing Club procedures for Mask Wearing and Boat Occupancy are presented here:

Mask Wearing (on land and the dock) per the MDHHS Gatherings and Face Mask Order March 19, 2021:

- All participants in a gathering **regardless of vaccination status** are required to wear a face mask at all times, unless eating or drinking while seated in designated areas.
- Consumption of food or beverages is permitted only while seated groups are separated by at least 6ft, no more than 6 patrons are seated at a table, and groups of patrons do not intermingle.
- Bringing an extra mask to have on hand in case one becomes wet is suggested.

The [CDC mask wearing guidance updated Feb. 22, 2021](#) recommends using a well fitted mask, with 2 or more layers, covering your nose and mouth regardless of vaccination status. The types of masks that are recommended include the following:

- Disposable masks made of multiple layers of non-woven material
- Breathable fabric/cloth washable masks
- Masks with pockets that contain filters
- Gaiters with 2 layers or folded over to make 2 layers

Note that scarfs or ski masks, single layer or thin fabric masks or masks with exhalation valves are NOT recommended.

Face shields alone are NOT recommended by the CDC as the effectiveness is unknown at this time.

Boat Occupancy (per the U.S. Sailing [Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions with a “Return to Play” in mind, V1.0 of June 2020](#) and MDHHS [Safe Social Pods Nov. 2020](#))

- Any socialization increases the risk of virus spread. Sailing with others outside your household or long term self-selected pod increases Covid risks. Sailors and families should be made aware of the risk and express willingness to accept the increased risk that comes from more than one sailor being on a boat together. It is recommended that sailors who choose to be paired remain together for the entire length of a course or season. Every individual person must make their own choice regarding boat occupancy.
- Mask wearing when sailing outside of your household or long term self-selected pod helps to reduce the risk and is recommended.
- Club organized sailing activities should continue to focus on single-handed sailing and sailing with other members of a household along with the added option of sailing within a long-term self-selected pod.

MSC 2021 Covid Safety Overview

The complete, approved MSC 2020 Safe Start Plans as well as this 2021 update are available on the [MSC website](#). In June 2020 the MSC Commodore provided an overview of the Covid safety procedures to all members via email. This overview has been updated here for the start of the 2021 season as shown below; updated procedures are shown in *italics*.

The 2021 Covid Safety Implementation Team Leaders are assigned for each portion of the Covid Safety plans. You may reach out to the Commodore or the Team Leaders if you have additional questions or concerns. Their email contacts are listed at <https://michigansailingclub.org/contacts/>.

The 2021 Covid Safety Implementation Team Leaders are:

Club Communications: Patrick Murphy (Secretary) and Meg Gower (Commodore)

Buildings & Grounds: Laura Hagan (Dockmaster)

Fleet Management: Uli Scheven (Fleet Captain)

Instruction: Jeff Kaloustian (Vice Commodore)

Racing: Ovidiu Adam (Racing Chair)

Insurance & Liability: Carey Jones (Treasurer)

COVID Response Management: Sandy Hubar

Here are our priorities for the safety of club members (*updated points in italics*):

- 1) DO NOT COME TO THE CLUB if you are feeling unwell, you suspect you are sick, or if you or have had recent contact with a person confirmed or suspected of having COVID19.
- 2) Stay 6' apart from those not in your household.
- 3) ***Wear a well-fitted mask regardless of vaccination status at all times when using the club grounds (including the dock) unless eating or drinking while seated staying at least 6 feet from people from other households i.e., seated using the picnic tables or areas for chairs/blankets away from sailing activities.***
- 4) ***Bring an extra mask to have on hand in case one becomes wet.***
- 5) Wash your hands often.
- 6) Don't touch your face.

In general, be self-reliant and remember the adage "Pack-it-in/Pack-it-out."

- There is a club Sign-in/Sign-out procedure to support COVID contact tracing. If needed, this information will be shared with the county health department. This is in addition to the boat sign-in/sign-out procedure.
- Bathroom and changing rooms will be available. Use at your own risk. We are an all-volunteer club and do not have staff to regularly clean bathrooms.
- The kitchen is closed.
- The boathouse and boatshed should only be entered for short periods to use the bathrooms/changing rooms or get supplies. No congregating inside.
- Use the dock at your own risk while applying 6 ft. physical distancing and mask wearing rules. Be aware and considerate of others as the dock has limited area and multiple uses. No congregating i.e., lingering with others for a length of time without a clear purpose which requires the use of the dock e.g. holding a conversation which could be moved to a less congested space.
- ***Boats and dolly handles should be cleaned by each new user.***
- PFDs will not be commonly available as we don't have a reliable way to disinfect them between users. Sailors are encouraged to buy their own PFD. A discount is available to members on the MTI brand compliments of distributor Ron Sell (details to come.) A limited number of club-owned PFDs will be available to rent for the season (\$20 each.)
- ***Sailing with others outside your household or long term self-selected pod increases Covid risks. Therefore, every individual person must make their own choice regarding boat occupancy – no member even when acting as an instructor or race organizer shall designate other people to share a boat.***

- ***A number of sail boats will be rigged, including single-handed boats and boats for multiple people from the same household or self-selected long term pods, as well as family boats, and paddle craft. Every individual person must make their own choice regarding boat occupancy. More boats will be rigged as conditions and demand allows as determined by the Fleet Captain.***
- ***Instruction this year will start by concentrating on getting current members rated. Every individual person must make their own choice regarding boat occupancy. In-person lessons scheduled by appointment will follow MSC Covid Safety procedures including mask wearing and physical distancing on club grounds/dock. Beginner and intermediate instruction and racing clinics may be scheduled for small groups; more detailed instruction plans will be determined by the Vice Commodore.***
- ***Racing will concentrate on single-handed sailing, and household members or long term self-selected pods in a boat, and follow MSC Covid Safety procedures including mask wearing and physical distancing on club grounds/dock. Every individual person must make their own choice regarding boat occupancy.***
- Normal club safety and rescue rules apply, but be prepared to self-rescue to avoid close contact with rescuers. **People on the safety boat should wear face masks when interacting with non-household members.**
- Club-wide social events are currently on hold. ***However, as vaccination proceeds it is expected that additional public health guidance will be provided. The Covid Safety Team will monitor Michigan Department of Health and Humans Services and CDC public health guidance and provide updates.***

We can work together to implement these Covid operations to keep our members safe and make the Michigan Sailing Club a friendly and safe place to be!