

# SOCCER OFFICIAL'S COVID-19 PROTOCOL

<b>Objective</b>	This document is intended to provide guidance for referees as they return to officiating. Protocols are in accordance with government restrictions.		
<b>Position Statement</b>	<p>Protocols are to be followed until such time as the governing authority revises and updates the status of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. Protocols have been reviewed by authorities in the health/medical and legal fields and will continue to be reviewed as needed.</p> <p>Due to the ever-changing statistics and status of the Covid-19 pandemic, this is a fluid document and will change and be adjusted and/or updated to reflect the very latest advice/guidance received from the below listed authorities.</p> <p>Officials working games acknowledge that they have been expressly advised that local officials associations, soccer clubs, schools (private or public), colleges or universities, the VDH, CDC or the state government is not able to control or prevent their exposure to Covid-19 while participating in any officiating activity (even if these protocols are followed).</p>		
<b>References</b>	Centers for Disease Controls and Preventions (CDC)	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html</a>	
	Virginia Department of Health (VDH)	<a href="https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/">https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/</a>	
	The Commonwealths Governor's Office	<a href="https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/">https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/</a>	
	VCU Outreach Athletic Training Program	<a href="https://www.vcuhealth.org/news-center/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-home?&amp;id=11">https://www.vcuhealth.org/news-center/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-home?&amp;id=11</a>	
<b>Before Accepting an Assignment</b>	Understanding/Accepting Risks	Officials accepting games acknowledge that they understand there is a risk of Covid-19 exposure through participating in officiating activities.	
	Designating your Status in ArbiterSports	Officials not comfortable returning to officiating must mark themselves NOT READY TO BE ASSIGNED in their ArbiterSports accounts or any other assigning tool.	
<b>Preparing for travel to a game</b>	Officials will do a self Covid-19 Symptoms Check, and will not officiate if they display any of the symptoms to the right.	Temperature Check	If your temperature is equal to or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit
		Most Common Symptoms	Fever, Dry cough, tiredness
		Less Common Symptoms	Aches and pains, Sore throat, Diarrhea, Conjunctivitis, Headache, Loss or taste or smell, a rash on the skin, or discoloration of fingers or toes
		Serious Symptoms	Difficulty breathing or shortness pf breath, Chest pain or pressure, loss of speech.
		If the official experiences any of the above, they are to contact their assignor immediately and they are not to referee.	
			Referees that are experiencing any of the above symptoms should consult their family physician before returning to officiating. Although you may experience one of the above symptoms, you may not have Covid-19, only your family physician can make that determination.

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	Family and Work Contacts Check	If the official or a family member that they live with (or a co-worker that you work close with) has had close contact with a sick individual or anyone with a confirmed case of Covid-19 in the last 14 days, they are not to referee until they have been Covid-19 tested and have proof of a negative result. The official is to notify their assignor and the referee crews that they have worked with in the last 2 weeks.		
	Game Day Travel Kit/Mandatory Equipment	Hand Sanitizer	Wash your hands often. Before the game, after the game, at half-time. Minimize touching your eyes, nose and mouth	
		Face Masks	Wearing a face mask during the game is simply not reasonable. Officials will wear one prior to the game, while conducting pregame duties and immediately after the game.	
		Electronic Whistle	These whistles are far more sanitary than traditional whistles and are highly recommended.	
		Disinfectant Wipes	The disinfectant wipes should state on the label that they are safe for use on hand, non-porous surfaces, food preparation areas, baby equipment, furniture, fridges, taps, sinks, door knobs, kitchen and bathroom surfaces, floor cleaning and <u>electronics</u> .	
		Disposable Latex Gloves	You will need these to perform your pregame duties and to wear, if sharing a set of AR flags.	
	Individual Travel Plans	Officials should avoid carpooling to games		
	Referee Team Arrival Plans	Upon arriving at the game site, officials should stay in their car to minimize social distancing until the rest of the crew has arrived. Use your cell phones to check on the other's arrival and where they are parked. Attempt to park near each other.		
<b>Pregame</b>	To and From Car/Masks	Officials will wear a face mask to and from their cars to the fields.		
	Greeting Parameters	Practice social distancing; no high fives, handshakes, knuckle (fist) bumps, or hugs.		
	Food and Water	Do not share water or food.		
	Game Day Equipment: flags, communication sets	Flags	Crews should avoid sharing a set of AR flags. Most flag sets have foam handles, which are very difficult to clean and sanitize. Crews that do share a set of AR flags shall have the Ars wear a pair of protective gloves.	
		Communication Sets	All crews that use a comm set shall prior to and after each game wipe down the ear piece and microphone with a disinfectant wipe.  The foam windshield that covers the microphone shall be removed after each game and disposed of. Foam windshields are not able to be cleaned and sanitized and will hold bacteria from the previous user.	

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	Player Inspections/Player Passes/Rosters	Officials will wear masks while performing these pregame duties. Maintain social distancing.
	Field Inspection/Goals/Ball Checks	Officials will wear masks and gloves while performing these duties. Once the balls have been checked for the proper pressure (while gloved) the balls will be returned to the home team and/or ball runners and will not again be touched by the referee. If the game balls must be re-checked for pressure, the referee is to re-glove.
	Checking Benches for Social Distancing	<p>Team benches behind AR1 must at least 10 feet behind the touch-line to allow AR1 to perform their duties and maintain 6 feet while running up and down the line.</p> <p>This may be very difficult for those playing fields that are inside a track, where benches are not allowed to be on the track. Schools must provide pads to be placed on the track to allow the benches to be moved, or the benches must be placed farther back behind the track.</p> <p>Spectators behind AR2 should also be a minimum of 10 feet behind the touch-line. Or, preferably in a roped off (fenced off) stadium seating.</p> <p><i>Note: Soccer Rule (Law) Books all show a Soccer Field Diagram with the 10 feet buffer zone. This has been overlooked (ignored) over the years as more and more schools put in synthetic tracks around the soccer fields, and do not allow the benches to be placed on the track. This cannot be overlooked or ignored any longer.</i></p>
	Coaches/Captains Pregame Meeting/National Anthem	<p>Officials will wear masks when meeting with the coaches prior to the match to obtain the rosters, and during the Captains meeting for the coin toss. No handshakes will be exchanged.</p> <p>During the National Anthem (if played), the referee crew is to socially distance themselves from the teams and the benches. No post-anthem fist bumps are to be performed by the officiating crew nor the teams.</p>
<b>During Live Play</b>	Do Not Let Players Approach within 6 feet	<p>Officials must keep their distance protected. This protocol will be challenging. There are going to be times when proper distance gets violated.</p> <p>Do not allow players to violate your space to dissent. A simple stop sign with your hand and arm outstretched, or a quick yellow card if that is ignored.</p> <p>Remind the Captains during the coin toss that officials must protect their own social distancing.</p>

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	Do Not touch players/coaches in anyway	Officials have no reason in the normal course of their officiating duties to touch a player or coach in any manner. A reminder to the coaches to maintain social distancing from the AR working the touch line in front of their bench.
	Do Not Attempt to break up a physical confrontation	Officials are reminded that no physical contact with the players is ever acceptable (not even to break up a fight). If a fight does occur, beckon the coaches onto the field to intervene. Record players numbers that are involved. Administer the proper cards and re-start the match.
<b>Postgame</b>	Follow normal "exit the field" parameters/masks	No handshakes or close personal discussions. Officials should immediately head to their referee bags, and put on their face masks before verifying the game statistics and scorebook.
	Maintain social distancing to your own car	Exit the field promptly. If further discussion is needed among the referee crew on details of the game reports or other matters, do so in the parking lot while maintain social distancing.