

METRO TACOMA FENCING CLUB

8629 South Tacoma Way
Lakewood, WA 98499
253-584-1986

Western Washington Division
www.tacomafencing.com
info@tacomafencing.com



Metro Tacoma Fencing Club 2020-2021 Fencing Season Protocols and Policies in Response to COVID-19

“Our guide to ensuring a safe fencing experience for all”

Based on state and local guidelines and CDC recommendations, Metro Tacoma Fencing Club (MTFC) programs will operate under one of the following protocols for the 2020-2021 fencing season. As local guidelines on social distancing and gathering size limits change, the protocol may change accordingly.

MTFC Program Protocol Phases 1-5 based on Washington State’s Safe Start Phases

Phase 1- Virtual programming only

No in-person programming will be offered. Instead, MTFC will offer virtual conditioning programming daily to MTFC members and offer virtual private lessons. Fencers must have all appropriate fencing safety gear to participate as dictated by coaching staff. No programming offered to non MTFC members.

Phase 2 – In Person Private Lessons and Small Group Classes and Camps with emphasis on physical distancing and modified curriculum

In person private lessons and small group classes are available to members. Non members may attend intro clinics. Non-members may attend camps and on a case- by -case basis approved by the board and coaches. Maximum occupancy 8 related or unrelated fencers not including instructors in Main Facility and up to 4 related fencers not including instructor in the Annex based on 300 sq ft per fencer. Outdoor facilities will be used when available and weather permitting. Participants and staff will be screened for symptoms of COVID 19 upon arrival and a no touch thermometer will be used to verify lack of fever (less than 100.4). Fencers will warm up and do individual drills within their 300 sq ft bubble. Fencers will participate in modified drills, games and target work prioritizing 6 feet of physical distancing whenever possible. Limited blade work with coach and other fencers within the small group is allowed, maintaining 6 feet distancing as much as possible. Limited bouts (5 touch bout) is allowed in all classes and camps with assigned partners that will rotate no sooner than every week. Siblings in the same class or camp have the option of not rotating partners. Boutings will be at the end of class period or camp and is voluntary. Fencers may opt out of boutings and an alternate activity or drill will be provided.

Equipment and facility contact surfaces will be sanitized after each session or class by program staff per separate written protocol. Doors shall remain open with fans in each doorway to maximize air flow through the building as much as possible, weather permitting. The HVAC system will not be operational during classes or lessons as it recirculates interior air. Masks will be required to be worn by staff and coaches at all times both indoor and outdoors. Masks will be required for fencers (including under fencing mask) while indoors and outdoors. Masks may be removed for hydration and cooling break while seated or stationary and at least 6 feet from others preferably outdoors. Neck gaiters, bandanas and face shields including fencing specific face shields are not a substitute for a mask. Coaches reserve the right to deem a mask unsafe and substitute a disposable mask provided by the club. No “High Risk” individuals allowed in the club as fencers, coaches or observers.

Phase 3 – Larger Isolated Groups with physical distancing and modified curriculum with expanded bouting and drills

In person private lessons and small group classes are available to members and non members per MTFC policy. Class size expanded if possible based on current Washington State Safe Start guidelines for occupancy and physical distancing. Outdoor facilities will be used when available and weather permitting. Participants and staff will be screened for symptoms of COVID 19 upon arrival and a no touch thermometer will be used to verify lack of fever (less than 100.4). Fencers will warm up and do individual drills while maintaining physical distance per Washington State's Safe Start guidelines. Fencers will participate in modified drills, games and target work prioritizing 6 feet of physical distancing whenever possible. Blade work with coach and other fencers within the larger group is allowed with less emphasis on maintaining 6 feet distancing. Bouting is allowed in all classes and camps and can return to traditional length of bouts as appropriate. Bouting partners can include all members of the class. Bouting will be at the end of class period or camp and is voluntary. Fencers may opt out of bouting and an alternate activity or drill will be provided. Equipment and facility contact surfaces will be sanitized after each session or class by program staff per separate written protocol. Doors shall remain open with fans in each doorway to maximize air flow through the building as much as possible, weather permitting. The HVAC system will not be operational during classes or lessons as it recirculates interior air. Masks will be required to be worn by staff and coaches at all times both indoor and outdoors. Masks will be required for fencers (including under fencing mask) while indoors and outdoors. Masks may be removed for hydration and cooling break while seated or stationary and at least 6 feet from others preferably outdoors. Neck gaiters, bandanas and face shields including fencing specific face shields are not a substitute for a mask. Coaches reserve the right to deem a mask unsafe and substitute a disposable mask provided by the club.

Phase 4 – Larger class size with interaction between classes, expanded bouting and in house tournaments with size limitations

In person private lessons and group classes are available to members. Class size expanded if possible based on current Washington State Safe Start guidelines for occupancy and physical distancing. Outdoor facilities will be used when available and weather permitting. Participants and staff will be screened for symptoms of COVID 19 upon arrival and a no touch thermometer will be used to verify lack of fever (less than 100.4). Fencers may warm up and do individual drills with loose physical distancing. Fencers will participate in drills, games and target work with loose physical distancing. Blade work with coach and other fencers within the large group is allowed. Bouting is allowed in all classes and camps with members of same class or other class groups. Bouting may occur at anytime in the class or camp but will remain voluntary. Fencers may opt out of bouting and an alternate activity or drill will be provided. Small in-house tournaments of less than 20 fencers may be possible. Equipment and facility contact surfaces will be sanitized after each session or class by program staff per separate written protocol. Doors shall remain open with fans in each doorway to maximize air flow through the building as much as possible, weather permitting. The HVAC system will not be operational during classes or lessons as it recirculates interior air. Masks will be required to be worn by staff and coaches at all times both indoor and outdoors. Masks will be required for fencers (including under fencing mask) while indoors and outdoors. Masks may be removed for hydration and cooling break while seated or stationary and at least 6 feet from others preferably outdoors. Neck gaiters, bandanas and face shields including fencing specific face shields are not a substitute for a mask. Coaches reserve the right to deem a mask unsafe and substitute a disposable mask provided by the club.

Phase 5 – Typical Camp and Class Format with no restrictions and tournaments allowed

Camps and classes will run normally with typical participant to coach ratios. Classes will return to inside the facility regardless of the weather. There are no restrictions for fencer interactions in bouting or drills and classes can mix. Tournaments may resume with local fencers if allowed by Washington's Safe Start Plan. Participants and staff will be screened for symptoms of COVID 19 upon arrival if required by Washington Safe Start Plan. Equipment and facility contact surfaces will be sanitized per Washington State Safe Plan requirements. Protocols regarding face coverings will be guided by Washington's Safe Start Plan.

MTFC Mask Policies based on USA Fencing Guidance

All attendees at USA Fencing sanctioned tournaments will be required to wear a mask at all times, including athletes during competition. Face coverings must be two-layer cloth masks or surgical face coverings. Single-layer gaiters, bandannas, masks with vents and the Leon Paul mask or shield or similar face coverings **are not permitted**. Athletes who do not comply with this policy **will not** be allowed to compete. Other individuals, including spectators and coaches, who do not wear a mask or face covering will be assessed a Group 3 penalty for "any person not on strip disturbing order" which includes a yellow card warning for the first infraction and a black card resulting in expulsion from the venue for a second infraction. There will be no exceptions, for athletes or any other tournament attendee, to the mask mandate.

Q: What is the purpose of wearing a face mask while fencing?

A: Mitigation of infection risk to other participants is the overall goal. Wearing a mask decreases the radius of respiratory droplets surrounding an individual and/or decreases the forward projection of respiratory droplets and or aerosols. The mask barrier also may absorb some respiratory droplets.

Q: Which masks should and should not be used when considering exercise of fencing?

A: The following is a list of masks that are and are not allowed to be used during competition:

Two-layer cloth masks – Acceptable during competition

Surgical masks – Acceptable during competition

Sport facial masks – Acceptable during competition

N95 mask – should NOT be considered being used during exercising or fencing. The N95 mask will protect the athlete; however, is suggested that it may restrict performance and health inadvertently.

Leon Paul Face Mask Shield – Not allowed during competition or at Metro Tacoma Fencing Club (MTFC)

Neck/face sleeves or gaiters – Not allowed during competition or at Metro Tacoma Fencing Club (MTFC)

Masks with one-way valves – Not allowed during competition or at Metro Tacoma Fencing Club (MTFC)

Q: What type of mask do you recommend for use while fencing?

A: Within the guidelines listed above, individual fencers should determine what mask is best based on their personal comfort level and congruent with owner of the facility policy. All masks have their pros and cons and choosing the right one for you will take individual monitoring on how you feel during exercise. It is advised that athletes bring multiple masks to practice and competition to change when wet.

Q: How should you utilize a face mask in order to maximize protection from viruses?

A: Make sure that the mask is put on and tied appropriately to reduce the likelihood that you will need to adjust the mask while wearing. Remove the mask correctly after a workout, bout or competition by untying it from behind. Avoid touching the front or inner layers of the mask during use. After removing the mask, wash or sanitize your hands. Remember to wash your mask regularly, preferably iron it dry, and do not re-use masks designed for single use.

Additional information is available at [usafencing.org/mask-faq](https://www.usafencing.org/mask-faq).

MTFC 2020-2021 Program Guidelines and Policies

- MTFC will closely follow and monitor all Washington State and CDC guidelines related to youth-specific activities, sports/camp-related policies, and gym facilities.
- Prior to re-opening and the Fall 2020 season all coaches and staff at MTFC will undergo training regarding COVID 19 symptoms and transmission, safe cleaning practices, physical distancing practices, and new MTFC protocols and procedure regarding COVID 19.
- A written copy of MTFC's policies and protocols will be available on site and updated as needed. Electronic copies will be available to all coaches and staff.
- MTFC program staff, participants and any family members must not be or have been sick within past 14-days. Any staff member or participant who does not comply will not be allowed at programs until the 14-day day minimum has been reached. A list of substitute coaches will be actively maintained.
- Programs will be run outdoors where possible with indoor locations being approved based on strict gathering size limits according on facility size. Weather permitting, windows and doors will be left open with fans in place to maximize air exchange
- No contact check in/check out: Fencers will check in from 6-feet away verbally acknowledging name for attendance purposes and for campers stating any special notes regarding allergies, approved pick-up contacts, health concerns, etc. All fencers will verbally certify that neither they nor any family members have been sick within past 14-days. During Phase 2, fencers must also certify that they are not "High Risk" and have watched the mandatory safety video or received a safety briefing and signed the waiver.
- Arrival: Fencers will queue outside the facility at 6 feet distances until invited into the club by coach or staff, proceed to MPR for hand washing then walk straight to their assigned strip. If an outdoor location is being used, fencers will queue at the edge of the field maintaining 6 feet of social distancing until invited to check in and assigned to a station by a coach.
- Strict hand washing practices: All fencers must wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol upon arrival to the club or camp facility. Fencers are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer and MTFC will provide hand sanitizer as available. If an outdoor location is being used, hand sanitizer may be used instead of handwashing if bathrooms are not easily accessible.
- Food and Drink: There will be no food or drink (other than water) allowed in the facility or at camp facility unless for medical purposes. Fencers must bring their own filled water bottles to lessons/camp. The water fountain will not be available for use.
- Bathroom Facilities: Fencers are strongly encouraged to use the restroom at home before attending lessons or camps. Bathroom facilities are available but must be used one at a time and handwashing is required after use.
- Face touching: MTFC staff will remind participants throughout each session not to touch their face, mouth, eyes or mask. Participants will also be reminded to cover all coughs and sneezes. Fencers are strongly encouraged to bring a hand towel to wipe their face to limit face touching.
- Lockers: MTFC lockers will not be available for daily use. MTFC members currently renting lockers may maintain their locker at no charge but lockers can only be used to store unused gear.
- Equipment: All personal or loaner fencing gear must be taken home for cleaning after each lesson. All MTFC members are strongly encouraged to purchase their own gear for health reasons, starting with a mask and glove. MTFC gear will be checked out to members as available with a deposit. Loaner blades must be wiped down with disinfectant before being returned to the storage rack. All MTFC equipment used for camps or intro clinics will be sanitized each camp session and during sessions as needed to prevent the spread of germs. Appropriate cleaning supplies will be available at each location.

- Peer and coach interaction: Coaches will remain 6 feet away from all fencers at all times. High fives, fist bumps, hugs or any form of peer to peer or coach to peer contact will not be allowed.
- Face Coverings: Staff and coaches MUST wear face coverings at all times when inside the facility and while teaching lessons at an outside facility. Fencers are required to wear face coverings while inside the club and when participating in a class or camp or lesson outdoors.
- Neck gaiters, bandanas and face shields including fencing specific face shields are not a substitute for a mask. Coaches reserve the right to deem a mask unsafe and substitute a disposable mask provided by the club
- Facility requirements: Access to running water and soap or hand sanitizer will be available at all times. Facilities must be recently and regularly maintained by on-site maintenance staff to ensure a safe, clean environment for programs.
- Visitors: Visitors are discouraged inside of MTFC. Visitors may watch from outside the facility if 6 feet of socially distancing can be maintained. Visitors are also welcome at outdoor locations if 6 feet of social distancing is maintained. In compliance with Safe Sport, two unrelated adults must be present in the facility if youth are present. One parent of a fencer in a private lesson is allowed inside to observe if occupancy space allows.
- At-Risk Groups: Persons who are older, pregnant, or who have underlying health conditions, including those with compromised immune systems or respiratory conditions like severe asthma, are at higher risk to develop complications from COVID-19. These individuals should not drop-off/pick-up participants, participate in programs or instruct programs during Phase 2
- Illness during Class or Camp: Any staff or fencer who develops symptoms of fever, cough, trouble breathing or feels ill while in camp or class, will be immediately physically isolated from other fencers and staff, be provided with a face mask and arrangements will be made for an emergency substitute (in case of staff) or immediate transportation home (in case of fencer).

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