

Statement of Position Regarding COVID-19 Protections

Soccer officials play a crucial role in maintaining the safety of participating players. Local officiating boards bear responsibility for ensuring that officials have appropriate training, education and support such that officials may fulfill their obligations to the players. Local boards also have the responsibility to protect their member officials from a variety of hazards including, but certainly not limited to, the spread of COVID-19. Measures to slow and/or prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic that have been suggested and, in some instances, ordered by the state and federal health authorities as well as Sectional Athletic Councils and/or individual schools, however, may limit the ability of officials to effectively protect the safety of the players and the integrity of the game while protecting themselves from the threat of COVID-19. New York State Certified Officials of Soccer, Inc. (“NYSCOS”), therefore, has adopted the following position:

- It is the responsibility of the local boards to ensure that there are adequate safeguards in place to protect their members from contracting or transmitting COVID-19 during a game (including pre-game and post-game activities).
- Each local board must make a determination as to whether the procedures and safeguards put in place by the State, the Sectional Athletic Councils and/or the competing schools to prevent transmission of COVID-19 during the games that are to be officiated adequately protect the safety of the officials assigned to a game. If a local board does not reasonably believe that their member officials are sufficiently protected, the local board must institute such additional procedures as the local board deems appropriate to protect its member officials from the spread of COVID-19, **and** advise the athletic directors of the schools served by the local board of such additional procedures. If a local board cannot reach an agreement with one or more schools regarding the safety of the local board’s member officials, then the local board should not allow its member officials to officiate games in which those schools are participating.
- Local boards must respect that individual officials can, and most likely will, have varying risks associated with the spread of COVID-19. By the way of example, some officials may be immunocompromised or develop or be diagnosed with immunodeficiencies during the season. Other officials may have members of their families that are immunocompromised or have to regularly interact with immunocompromised individuals. Accordingly, each individual official should be afforded the discretion necessary to determine the level of risk that the official will tolerate. Moreover, **no** individual official should be subject to any discipline whatsoever for refusing or turning back an assignment when the official has an honest and reasonable belief that he or she cannot ensure his or her personal safety while protecting the safety of the players.