



October 30, 2020

TO: MIFA Member Schools

SUBJECT: Forensic Council - Fall COVID-19 Updates & Guidance

Dear MIFA Members,

At the October 25th meeting of the MIFA Forensic Council, the board issued the following guidance based on the findings of the NFHS Performing Arts Aerosol study combined with the October 2nd ruling by the Michigan Supreme Court and the MDHHS Emergency Orders issued October 30th & October 5th. If the EO's, MDHHS orders, county health department restrictions and school district policies in place at the time are stricter than the MIFA guidelines, member schools are expected to follow those orders when preparing for and participating in speech activities. Be advised that the recommendations below only govern events organized by MIFA. MIFA does not have jurisdiction over independently organized, invitational tournaments (nor liability for how they are held).

1. In-person Tournaments: MIFA will not hold any in-person tournaments for the 2020-2021 school year. MIFA Debate & Individual Events tournaments will occur "live" (synchronously) online via video conferencing platforms for competition and tabroom.com or similar service for ballots/scoring/feedback. The MIFA Theatre festival series will be a pre-recorded (asynchronous), video submission format with written feedback and video oral critiques with critics.

The MIFA also strongly discourages our members from hosting and/or participating at any "in-person" invitational tournaments this season. We will not actively assist, advertise, facilitate or otherwise condone any in-person tournaments for the 2020-2021 season. As a reminder, there are strict limits regarding the number of people attending indoor events, use of face coverings, physical distancing, cleaning protocols, contact tracing and reporting requirements.

2. Face Coverings: The NFHS aerosol study (linked below) makes it abundantly clear — speech, debate and theatre activities are uniquely risky when it comes to spreading an airborne respiratory virus. Face coverings are one of the most effective ways to limit the spread. Face coverings should be worn by speakers/performers at all times when in the presence of another person. Face coverings are strongly recommended for everyone present in the practice/rehearsal or competition performance spaces including students, coaches, administrators and spectators. Wearing a face covering does not mean you can reduce physical distance.

3. Physical Distancing: Participants in all events (debate, IE & theatre) should maintain 6' minimum physical distance from other people at all times. MIFA recommends using virtual, online options for practice/rehearsals and limiting attendance at in-person meetings so that physical distance can be maintained.

4. Time: Coaches/Directors should limit rehearsals and practices to 30 minutes or less and allow at least 1 air exchange cycle (preferably 3 cycles) prior to next use of the room. Please consult



your facility personnel and the resources from CU Boulder (linked below) to determine air exchange rates for practice, rehearsal & performance spaces.

5. Hygiene: Shared surfaces such as props, blox, chairs, stools should be frequently sanitized. In addition, everyone should employ good hygiene practices like hand washing, catching coughs/sneezes etc. on a regular basis.

The MIFA will continue to monitor the situation, listen to members, provide updates and be flexible in these uncertain times. Each of the event committees are developing an FAQ with clarifications regarding how this guidance may affect the various events (linked below). You can also submit a question by emailing the event committee chair or me ([director@themifa.org](mailto:director@themifa.org)).

Committee	FAQ	Chair / Email
Debate	<a href="#">Online Best Practices / FAQ</a>	<a href="#">Debora Marsh, Dexter HS</a>
Individual Events	<a href="#">Online Best Practices / FAQ</a>	<a href="#">Danielle Tier, Bloomfield Hills HS</a>
Middle Level	<a href="#">Online Best Practices / FAQ</a>	<a href="#">Ken Weinstein, Leslie MS</a>
Theatre	<a href="#">Online Best Practices / FAQ</a>	<a href="#">Kirstin Carolin, Utica Henry Ford II</a>

We thank all of you working with us through these uncertain times to make sure students have the rewarding opportunity to experience speech activities. For many of them this is one of the few normal things about the past year.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Becker, Executive Director

References:

1. State of Michigan - MDHHS Orders  
[https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178\\_98455-533660--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98455-533660--,00.html)
2. State of Michigan - coronavirus gatherings & face coverings information  
[https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178\\_98455-541962--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98455-541962--,00.html)
3. International Coalition of Performing Arts - aerosol study (in particular pgs 17, 18, 34-42)  
<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4119369/aerosol-study-prelim-results-round-2-final-updated.pdf>
4. CU Boulder - aerosol transmission estimator  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16K1OQkLD4BjgBdO8ePj6ytf-RpPMIJ6aXFg3PrIQBbQ/edit#gid=519189277>
5. Harvard-CU Boulder - calculator for portable air cleaners  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NEhk1IEdbEi\\_b3wa6gl\\_zNs8uBJjISS-86d4b7bW098/edit#gid=1882881703](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NEhk1IEdbEi_b3wa6gl_zNs8uBJjISS-86d4b7bW098/edit#gid=1882881703)