

2021-2022

FIRST[®] FORWARDSM Season

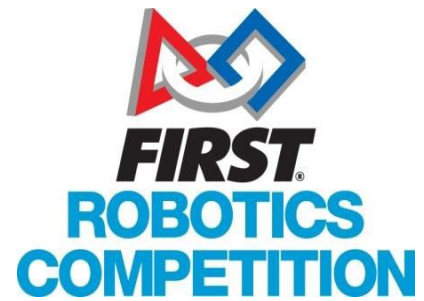
COVID-19 Policies and Plan

Tallahassee Regional

The Alfred Lawson, Jr. Multipurpose Center,

Florida A&M University

Update: 01/15/2022



The Tallahassee Regional Planning Committee (RPC) and FIRST[®] recognize that the health and safety of FIRST teams, volunteers, and staff is our top priority. We are following guidelines from state and county health departments, the CDC, and local school districts regarding COVID-19. Decisions regarding event planning are made based on the guidance and policies as established by community and public health officials, the venues hosting our events, and in the spirit of *Gracious Professionalism*[®].

Gracious Professionalism[®] is part of the ethos of FIRST. It's a way of doing things that encourages high quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. These policies may be more stringent than the precautions that your team or family observe, but the large number of attendees at the competition requires a higher level of mitigation measures. *Showing respect for the health and safety of all participants at the event - team members, mentors, volunteers, event staff and visitors - exemplifies the spirit of Gracious Professionalism*[®].

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **Face masks are required for all individuals in attendance at all times when inside the event venue regardless of vaccination status, except when eating or drinking.** Face masks shall be worn correctly, covering both the nose and mouth. Teams must bring an adequate supply of masks for all participants. All other attendees must bring their own supply of face masks sufficient for the duration of the event.
- Face shields, bandanas, single-layer gaiters and masks with exhalation valves are NOT considered effective PPE for mitigating the spread of COVID-19. These items shall not be worn at the event.
- Program-specific personal protective equipment rules, including those around safety glasses, will be enforced as usual. All participants are expected to bring their own personal safety glasses; there will be limited on-site availability. In addition, every team should bring their own safety glass cleaning supplies. Antifog spray also is recommended to help prevent fogging of glasses. Other safety measures are included in the FIRST Safety Manual.

Venue Entry & Pit Restrictions

- All participants and visitors are advised to follow all event signage regarding entry into event pits, viewing stands, and other designated spaces. **The Tallahassee Regional Planning Committee (RPC) may restrict entry into the event pits to reduce crowding and create the best possible experience for all participants.** The Tallahassee RPC may also restrict overall venue and event access to participating teams and mentors only, should health and safety conditions necessitate this additional step.

We know that teams and volunteers have questions about what 2022 events will look like and we are sharing the information that we do know at this time. Information will be updated as it becomes available, so check back for updates.

Daily Health Screening

- Do not come to the event if you are sick or if you have been in contact with someone who is sick.
- All attendees (participants and volunteers) shall follow the rules established by their local health authorities.
- Please see the event Daily Health Screening (separate document) for the recommended daily health screening.

Teams

- Mentors and volunteers must verify that anyone travelling with their team has passed a health screening each day of the event. The team's travel mentor or primary/lead mentor must not allow anyone who fails this health screening to enter the event venue.
- Teams need a plan to handle illnesses that arise during the event, including failure to pass the daily health screening. For example, the plan should include logistics to seek medical help, and to send an ill person home or isolate the ill person away from the event venue. Any individual supervising an ill student should be an adult over the age of 18 and graduated from high school.

Event Volunteers

- Volunteers must perform a daily health screening before coming to the venue. If a volunteer does not pass the daily health screening or is otherwise ill, they must notify the event's volunteer coordinator(s) and not come to the event venue.

Physical Distancing

- **Whenever possible, everyone should avoid close contact with others, especially people from other teams, and maintain a distance of 6 feet or more.**
- We strongly discourage any shaking of hands, high fives, etc. during the event, including the alliances standing behind the drivers' stations.
- Teams are encouraged to allow extra space between individuals and teams in the pits, stands and eating areas.
- When possible, volunteer mealtimes will be adjusted to allow more distancing in the volunteer lounge.

Cleaning

- Teams should bring their own cleaning supplies and follow their team's and school's procedures for cleaning and use of shared materials and tools.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water, or hand sanitizer, is encouraged.
- Sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer will be available for event volunteer use in the volunteer lounge, pit area, and field area.
- The venue is continually updating its cleaning protocols. As the date of the event nears, specific cleaning protocols may change based on public health guidance.

Vaccinations

- At this time, the Tallahassee Regional Planning Committee does not require event attendees to be vaccinated. FIRST believes that the best path toward ending the COVID-19 pandemic—and having a successful season—is through vaccination. FIRST strongly recommends everyone who is eligible consult with their physician and be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, with booster shots if applicable, prior to attending the event.