

DSPS: Resumes unarmed combat sports program

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MADISON, Wis. – The Department of Safety and Professional Services has resumed operations of unarmed combat sports programming, including boxing, kickboxing, mixed martial arts, and Muay Thai. The department is now accepting applications for events to be held on June 1, 2021, or later. All participants will be required to adhere to the department’s COVID-19 protocols and any local public health orders in place, in addition to normal requirements.

Unarmed combat sports programming, which occurs mostly in indoor venues with tight crowds and puts participants in close contact with each other and DSPS employees, had been suspended for the past year due to the pandemic.

“We have been working hard to get to this point, and we are excited that circumstances have improved enough for us to safely resume unarmed combat sports programming,” said Deputy Commissioner Mary Murphy Edwards. “We know competitors are eager to get back to the cage and the ring, promoters are ready to put together events, and venues are prepared to open their doors.”

The new COVID-19 protocols are tied to pandemic data from the Department of Health Services. As conditions improve, restrictions will be lifted. Murphy Edwards says participants must agree to adhere to requirements currently in place when they file applications, but they may be able to operate with fewer restrictions if conditions improve by event night. Also, increasing disease activity could result in more stringent requirements. The goal, she says, is to allow competitions to operate as closely to normal as current pandemic activity allows.

“We developed our protocols to allow us to adjust as disease activity changes,” Murphy Edwards said.

The state's successful vaccination program has created a path back to competition, says DSPS Secretary-designee Dawn Crim. "We are optimistic. Our success with vaccines has been remarkable and has gotten us to this point where we can get this industry up and running again," Crim said. "However, we know this disease has been unpredictable. We all have to remain vigilant, and anyone who can get the vaccine should get the vaccine."

Forms, protocols, and other materials are available on the [DSPS Unarmed Combat Sports webpage](#).

The Department of Safety and Professional Services issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers dozens of boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, runs the state fire prevention program, and maintains the award-winning Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which is a key tool in the multi-faceted public health campaign to stem excessive opioid prescribing. A fee-based agency, the Department of Safety and Professional Services is self-sustaining and receives no general fund tax dollars for its day-to-day operations. With five offices and 250 employees throughout Wisconsin, DSPS collaborates with constituents and stakeholders across a wide range of industries to promote safety and advance the economy.