

Key Safety Rules for all Little League Managers (2026)

We know being a volunteer Little League Baseball Manager or Coach requires a lot of time and commitment just to get a full team on the field every game. This 1-page doc is to help one understand the critical Little League safety rules.

Umpires are constantly policing safety rules because many Managers/Coaches do not know these rules. It is also the case that some umpires (including paid umps or parents umpiring) don't know these rules or don't enforce them. This combination leads to a lot of confusion throughout the year, especially in Interlock, where there are also slight differences among the leagues as to how these safety rules are enforced.

To be clear, it is the responsibility of the Managers and Coaches to know these rules and enforce them. Umpires will enforce these rules when they are not followed, and no one should be surprised when this happens. But the game goes so much more smoothly when the Managers/Coaches have already taught these rules to their teams and enforce them.

NOTE: These rules are strictly enforced at All Star time. Get yourself and your players properly ready for All Stars!

Below are the key safety rules to know, but please refer to the official Little League Safety Rules for everything Managers/Coaches should know and enforce: <https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/appendices/appendix-b/>

On Deck Batters (Rule 1.08)

For Majors and below, there can never be an on-deck batter. Period. This includes the fact that players should never even handle a bat in the dugout.

The one exception is when a new pitcher is warming up (to start an inning or when a pitcher is changed during an inning), the next batter can be standing outside the dugout.

For Intermediate and up, one on-deck batter is allowed.

Managers/Coaches/Players in the Dugout (Rule 3.09)

All team members, including the manager and coaches, must be fully in the dugout at all times when not actively on the field. This means no standing outside the dugout, leaning on the fence, or sitting on a bucket outside the dugout.

No players/coaches may leave the dugout without permission from an umpire. No parents, siblings or friends are allowed in the dugout during the game. Players are not to handle bats when in the dugout.

Additionally, an adult Manager or Coach (not a parent) must be in the dugout at all times. If you only have 1 Manager and 1 Coach, then one of them must remain in the dugout, and a player with a helmet on is the base coach.

Warming Up a Pitcher – Coaches Allowed (Rule 3.09)

Coaches/Managers **are allowed** to warm-up a pitcher anywhere, anytime. No mask required. If a player is warming up the pitcher, that player must be wearing a full catcher's mask and be using a catcher's mitt [**For softball**, can be regular glove]. This includes between innings as well as during an inning.

New for 2026: Neoprene sleeve is now allowable for a pitcher (must still adhere to color rules) (Rule 1.11 (a) (3))

Equipment Check (Manager's responsibility, updates for 2026)

IMPORTANT: The use of an illegal bat violation is an immediate ejection for both the player and the manager (Rule 6.06 (d)). All other illegal equipment is simply to be immediately removed from the game. **'Thumb protectors' on the hands and pine tar can be used; choke nobs and choke-up assists cannot (2026 rule). (Rule 1.10)**

Bats – Must have the USA Baseball emblem (for Majors and below). For Intermediate and Juniors, bats can also have the BBCOR emblem but not more than a -3 drop weight. Seniors can only be BBCOR. Wooden bats are allowed. **(Rule 1.10)** [**For softball**, bats must have a BPF of 1.20].

Helmets – All padding must be fully intact, have the NOCSAE stamp, and sticker/decal application must meet guidelines per the rulebook **(2025 update** – can have 'reasonable' amount of stickers). **(Rule 1.16)**

Catcher's mask - Must have an attached dangling throat guard, and must be 1-piece (e.g., no skull caps). **(Rule 1.17)**