



## *Our Future: Built Better Together*

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March 11, 2020

Dear Lead FRC Mentor,

This letter is concerning the recent COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak in Indiana and its impact on the FIRST in Indiana (FIN) Robotics events and community. The safety of the students, mentors, families, and volunteers is our top concern as an organization. A press release went out on Tuesday, March 10 to all members of the FIN community, including teams, volunteers, event coordinators, and families. However, the FIN Board of Directors wanted to provide additional guidance for FRC teams at upcoming competitions this spring.

We are asking all FRC and FTC teams to create a contingency plan with the cooperation of their school administrators. We understand that the decision to attend any event is a local decision, and should be made in cooperation with school administration, the local health department, and parents.

This is a dynamically changing situation, and I am continuing to stay in contact with local health officials, event coordinators, and school districts regarding next steps for each event. At this time, all events will proceed as planned with the following changes:

- The St. Joseph Health Department and CDC advise that the elderly and those suffering from chronic illness should not attend large scale events considering the current public health concern.
- Please discourage anyone who has recently traveled to an area where COVID-19 is rapidly spreading (like China, Thailand, and Italy) from attending any FIN Competition.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- Sanitation will be increased across the event, and hand sanitizer will be available at all entrances to the public.

**FIRST Indiana Robotics is still waiting on official guidance from FIRST Headquarters as to how a missed event will impact teams and their advancement to District and Championship Competitions.**

As a lead mentor, please allow students to “opt-out” of attending and create flexible team attendance policies for students who are sick. Encourage hand washing and hygiene practices by building it into your team schedule (for example, everyone washes their hands before the team eats lunch).

I also encourage you to use only Center for Disease Control and Indiana State Department of Health materials when sharing information with students and parents. Misinformation and fear can spread just as quickly as a virus, and it is our duty as role models to be smart consumers of information.

If you have additional questions, please reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Rinehart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "R".

Mary Rinehart

Vice Chairman, FIRST Indiana Robotics Board of Directors

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