

## Guidance for Sports & Recreation

This general guidance document is one of several resources intended to support sports and recreation (organizations, activities, and facilities) to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by implementing public health measures. It is to be used in conjunction with other public health directives. Please review [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) and [A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 3](#) for more information on Stage 3. **Please also review the Government of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#).**

This document provides general guidance only, **sport teams should refer to their respective [Provincial](#) or [National](#) Sport Organization for protocols that are specific to their individual sport and to the Government of Ontario's [Return to Play](#) webpage.**

Recreational settings and sport associations/organizations **do not require approval** from Public Health to reopen or resume activities. **Public Health is unable to review individual association/organization or sector-specific reopening plans and/or protocols.** Facility owners are responsible to ensure that any activities that they permit comply with Ontario Regulations and safety protocols.

- For [recreational water facilities](#), please review the [WDGPH COVID-19 Guidance for Recreational Water Facilities](#).
- For indoor and outdoor playgrounds, please review the [playground guidance documents](#).
- For fitness facilities (e.g., gyms, fitness, yoga, and dance studios), please review [COVID-19 Guidance Checklist for Fitness Facilities & Studios](#).

### COVID-19 Transmission

COVID-19 can spread from person-to-person through close contact from respiratory droplets of someone with COVID-19. COVID-19 droplet transmission is much more likely when individuals are in close contact. The likelihood of transmission between individuals participating in sport, physical activity and recreation in an indoor setting is significantly higher. While transmission is less likely in an outdoor setting, where air flow is greater and there is more space for individuals to keep physically distanced, transmission can occur if public health guidance is not followed.

## General

- Stay home when you are ill.
- Whenever possible, activities should take place in an outdoor setting.
- Participant registration should be done in advance online or over the phone.
- Steam rooms and saunas are not yet permitted to open.
- Health and safety protocols should be clearly communicated to all participants (coaches, instructors, participants, guardians).

## Screening & Response Plan

- Recreation and sports facilities and organizations should develop a COVID-19 [workplace safety plan](#) for staff and participants that outlines plans to prevent COVID-19 transmission.
- All coaches/instructors/participants/guardians should complete a health-screening questionnaire prior to coming to the facility or sports field.
  - Questions can be completed on a paper-based questionnaire, asked directly to with answers recorded, or be completed electronically.
  - Consider using the [Ontario Ministry of Health's self-assessment tool](#) or another similar [screening tool](#).
- Any person that does not pass the screening tool, is exhibiting any symptoms or has had close contact with a confirmed case should not be allowed to enter the facility or use sports fields to participate.
  - There is a higher risk for severe illness in people over the age of 60, and those with weakened immunity or underlying health conditions.

## Physical Distancing

- Every person who engages in sports or recreational fitness activity at the facility, other than a team sport, must maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from every other person at all times during the activity.
- Team sports may only be practiced or played if they do not allow for physical contact between players or if they have been modified to avoid physical contact between players.
- Use pylons/cones or other indicators to ensure physical distance is maintained between participants.
- Minimum age of participants should be considered in light of their ability to maintain physical distance.

- Limit the number of spectators permitted in the facility to ensure they are able to maintain 2 metres (6 feet) distance from each other.
- Cheering and yelling is strongly discouraged as it presents a high risk of spreading droplets.

## Use of Partitions for Room Separation

- Large areas, such as weight rooms, gymnasiums and sports courts, can be subdivided into separate rooms by a non-permeable barrier to allow each room to have a capacity of 50 patrons at any one time
- Patrons should be restricted to one sport or fitness room/area for the duration of their scheduled activity
- If you have multiple programs activities occurring at the same time, have staggered entry and exit times to limit cross over between patrons in common areas
- Height and width of partition should reflect the room dimensions and the ability to effectively physically separate groups (i.e., floor to ceiling). The height of the partition should be above the breathing zone of individuals to prevent the spread of droplets expired by patrons.
- Ensure partition does not interfere with ventilation and airflow and meets fire code regulations
- Ensure partitions can be easily and routinely cleaned and disinfected between uses. There should be no physical contact with the partition
- If ceiling fans are present, the location of the fans should take into consideration the air blowing from fans to prevent droplets blowing from one person to another within or between the partitioned sections
- Ensure partitions are secured appropriately, following fire and building code requirements to allow for easy evacuation from the building in case of emergency

## Gathering Limits

- The total number of people permitted in a class or organized program/activity at any one time cannot exceed 50 people indoors or 100 people outdoors
- The total number of people permitted to be at the facility in areas containing weights or exercise machines at any one time cannot exceed 50 people indoors or 100 people outdoors
- The total number of people permitted to be spectators at the facility at any one time cannot exceed 50 people indoors or 100 people outdoors
- The limit of 50 people per room does not apply to amenities that are not subject to gathering limits, such as swimming pools, tennis courts, food establishments,

and shooting ranges

- Organized team sports may only be played if the league either
  - Contains no more than 50 players and does not permit its team to play against teams outside the league **OR**
  - Divides its teams into groups of 50 or fewer players and does not permit teams in different groups to play against one another or against teams outside the league
- Businesses unable to reopen in Stage 3 or are experiencing challenges with restrictions can work with the government on a [reopening plan](#) at [Ontario.ca/reopen](https://Ontario.ca/reopen).

## Face Coverings

- As part of the [Section 22 Order](#) face coverings are required in **indoor** sports facilities. The following establishments fall within the scope of the order requiring face coverings to be worn:
  - Indoor arenas/sporting venues as a spectator
  - Fitness facilities/gyms
  - Indoor sports facilities/studios
- Parts of the indoor fitness facility/gym/sport facility or studio (including pools) that are covered by the order to wear a face covering:
  - Reception area/lobby
  - Equipment room
  - Exercise classroom
  - Common areas not used for activities (e.g., concession stand)
  - Other indoor areas accessible to the public (e.g., publicly accessible washrooms)
- Parts of the fitness facility/gym/indoor sport facility or studio (including pools) that are **exempt** from the order to wear a face covering:
  - Pool/spa area
  - Shower/change room
- Community centres are exempt from the Order but may have their own policies regarding face coverings.
- Patrons may also remove face coverings while exercising or participating in an activity that requires physical exertion
- Staff or patrons may be exempt from wearing a face covering if:
  - They are under the age of 2 years; or a child under the age of 5 years either chronologically or developmentally and he or she refuses to wear a

- face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
- Wearing a face covering would inhibit their ability to breathe in any way
- For any other medical reason, they cannot safely wear a face covering such as, but not limited to, respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information
- The obligation to provide reasonable accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code requires exemption from this requirement
- Train staff on the proper way to [wear and care for face coverings](#)

## General Facility Considerations

- Post signage around entrances, exits and around building that clearly communicate the COVID-19 precautions and policies for the facility.
- [Signage](#) should highlight face covering requirement, screening criteria, physical distancing suggestions, hand hygiene, etc.
- Ensure ventilation systems are operational and appropriate for the activities practiced indoors.
  - Avoid stagnant air conditions. Bring in fresh air by maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the heating, venting and air conditioning (HVAC) system settings or by opening windows.
  - Avoid recirculation of air as much as possible.
  - Limit the blowing of air across people and surfaces. The use of fans should be limited as they blow people's exhaled droplets to others.
    - High ceiling fans (e.g., 25 feet up in a gym) are less of a concern than fans on low ceilings.
    - Pedestal fans or high-powered fans on/near the floor should not be used.

## Cohorting & Attendance Records

- For group sessions, the same group of participants should be kept throughout the season/set of sessions to minimize exposure risk.
- Only one parent/guardian should accompany their child to the practice/session, if needed.
- Coaches/instructors should maintain a list of names and contact information for all attendees at each session/practice in case contact tracing is required.
- Ensure there is enough time between sessions to avoid overlap between people arriving and leaving.
- Establish drop-off and pick-up protocols for parents/guardians/participants.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

- Perform frequent [cleaning and disinfection](#) of all areas of the facility and equipment especially on commonly touched areas/surfaces using [disinfectants](#) approved by Health Canada
- Participants should bring their own equipment whenever possible.
- Avoid sharing equipment or other items.
- Any equipment that is rented or provided to users of the facility must be [cleaned and disinfected](#) between uses
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected between sessions
- Activities that require the use of equipment or fixed structures that cannot be cleaned or disinfected between each use must not be practised or played within the facility.
- Limit the use of water fountains to be used only to re-fill water bottles, not for individuals to drink directly from them.
- Any washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers or similar amenities made available to the public must be cleaned and disinfected frequently.

## Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette

- Participants/coaches/instructors should wash their hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer prior to, and following each practice/session.
- Coaches/instructors should ensure that participants understand the proper way to [clean their hands](#) and [cover their cough or sneeze](#). Post these signs to remind people.
- Have alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol) available at all entrances and exits as per the [Section 22 Class Order](#)
- Have hand sanitizing stations available throughout your facility
- Consider regular hand sanitizing breaks throughout the session.
- Spitting should be prohibited.
- Remind participants to refrain from touching their eyes, nose, mouth and face.
- Food/snacks should be discouraged.

## Other Resources

[A Framework for Reopening our Province – Stage 3](#)

[Reopening Ontario: Frequently asked questions about Stage 3](#)

[Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) (ON)

[Risk Mitigation Tool for Workplaces/Businesses](#) (Government of Canada)

[COVID-19 Guidance for Reopening Businesses](#) (WDGPH)

[COVID-19 Checklist for Reopening Businesses & Workplaces](#) (WDGPH)

[COVID-19 Guidance for Public Washrooms](#) (WDGPH)

[Health and Safety Guidance for Parks and Recreation Employers](#) (PHSA)

[Guidance on Health and Safety for Outdoor Recreation & Drive-in/Drive-Thru](#)

[Entertainment Settings](#) (WSPS)