

Guidance for Sports & Recreation

This general guidance document has been developed for sports and recreation (organizations, activities and facilities) that are permitted to be open or take place under [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

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 the Emergency Order.

Facilities for indoor sports and recreational activities, including gymnasiums, yoga and dance studios, and other fitness facilities, have reopened. Any exceptions to these closures are described in the [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

For [recreational water facilities](#), please review the [WDGPH COVID-19 Guidance for Recreational Water Facilities](#).

For playgrounds, both indoor and outdoor, please review [playground guidance documents](#).

For indoor fitness facilities (e.g., gyms, fitness, yoga, and dance studios), please review [COVID-19 Checklist for Fitness Facilities & Studios](#).

For questions about whether your business is permitted to be open, please contact Stop the Spread Business Line (1-888-444-3659).

General

- Stay home when you are ill.
- Whenever possible, activities should take place in an outdoor setting.
- For team sports, amateur and recreational leagues may resume as long as they do not allow prolonged or deliberate physical contact between players or if they have modifications to avoid physical contact between players
- Activities and sports that involve prolonged or deliberate contact while playing are not permitted (e.g. wrestling, judo).

- Participant registration should be done in advance online or over the phone.
- A gathering maximum limit of 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors applies to facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities (e.g., recreation centres, gyms, fitness studios).
- Any washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers or similar amenities made available to the public must be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- 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).

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.

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 assessment, 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.

Face Coverings

- As part of the section 22 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 fitness facility/gym/indoor 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
 - Recreation centres

General Facility Considerations

- Post signage around entrances, exits and around building that clearly communicate the COVID-19 precautions and policies for facility.
- [Signage](#) should highlight face covering requirement, screening criteria, physical distancing suggestions, hand hygiene, etc. Examples can be found WDG Public Health [website](#).

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.

Physical Distancing

- Any person who enters or uses the facility must maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from any other person who is using the facility (unless they are from the same household).
- Activities that are likely to result in individuals coming within 2 metres (6 feet) of each other must not be practiced or played within the facility.
- 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.
- Spectators, other than parental guardians, should not be permitted in the facility.
- Cheering and yelling is strongly discouraged as it presents a high risk of spreading droplets.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- 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 each use with approved disinfectant from [Health Canada's list of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19](#).
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected in 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.
- Locker rooms, change rooms, showers and clubhouses must remain closed, except to the extent they provide access to equipment storage, a washroom or a portion of the facility that is used to provide first aid.
- Shared drinking fountains should be closed.

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.

- Ensure alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol concentration) is available for use.
- 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

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

[WDGPH Guidance for Reopening Businesses](#)

[WDGPH Checklist for Reopening Businesses](#)

[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)

Frequently Asked Questions

Do participants, coaches, instructors and staff need to wear face coverings?

In **outdoor** settings, participants, coaches, instructors or staff do not need to wear face coverings.

In **indoor** settings, including indoor arenas/sporting venues, indoor sports, fitness and recreational facilities or studios a face covering is required. Individuals do not need to wear face covering when engaging in physical activity that would make it difficult for them to breathe. Coaches/instructors must wear [face coverings](#) if not engaged in physical activity that would make it difficult for them to breathe. As per the [Section 22 Order](#), face coverings would be required in common areas (lobby/entrance ways and washrooms) and alcohol-based hand sanitizer is required at all entrances/exits to the facility. Face covering [exemptions](#) would apply.

Are outdoor fitness classes permitted (e.g., yoga)?

Outdoor fitness classes are permitted provided they do not exceed the number permitted for outdoor social gatherings (100 people) and participants are able to remain 2 metres (6 feet) apart throughout the session. All safety protocols described above would apply.

Will public health approve our “return to play” protocol?

Please call us if you have questions about your “return to play” protocols (x4020). Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health will **not** officially approve “return to play” protocols.