

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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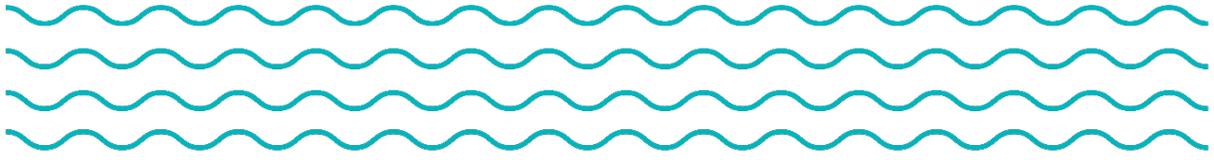
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# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## PROVINCIAL RESTRICTIONS ON GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

March 15, 2021

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### GENERAL

#### **Q: What restrictions are in place for sport?**

A: On March 15, 2021, sport-specific updates were added to [the Provincial Health Officer Order on Gatherings and Events](#), a summary of which is available on [this page](#). The intent of this order is to significantly reduce social interactions and travel. The impacts on sport include:

- All indoor and outdoor adult group sport activities for people 22 years of age and older are limited to the following:
  - Indoor activities – maximum of two people
  - Outdoor activities – maximum of 10 people
  - Physical distance of three metres is always maintained on the field of play, unless the participants reside in the same private residence.
- The government website lists a number of sports as examples, but it is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list. **All sport** must follow these restrictions.
- Indoor and outdoor sport for people under 22 years of age can continue but:
  - Participants must maintain a physical distance of three metres from one another while on the field of play;
  - Activities should be low risk of transmitting the virus (e.g. individual activities, group training that maintains physical distance). Tournaments and events outside the club are not allowed.
- Travel restrictions are in place for sport. See the section on [travel](#) below for details.
- No spectators are allowed at any sport activities unless to provide care for the participant.

#### **Q: What Return to Sport Phase are we in?**

A: There have been some misconceptions that sport is currently in Phase 2 of the Return to Sport Process – this is not the case. Sports must follow the current Provincial Health Officer Order (which is highlighted above) and not their Phase 2 plan.

#### **Q: How long are the restrictions in place?**

A: On February 5, the Office of the Public Health Officer extended the Order for events and gatherings. The Order can be revised at any time or additional orders could be put in place that supersede this Order.

**Q: Has the definition of physical distance changed?**

A: Previous guidelines related to sport have referred to physical distance as two metres. However, the PHO Order for Events and Gatherings specifically states that sport needs to maintain three metres of physical distance while on the field of play.

**Q: Are masks required when participating in indoor sport?**

A: Masks are now required to be worn by all individuals in indoor public settings. This includes common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity. Masks may be removed temporarily in indoor public places while participating in a sport or fitness activity.

Link: [Mask Mandate Order](#)

**Q: If masks are worn, can the requirement to physical distance be reduced?**

A: Masks can be worn as an additional layer of protection, but the requirement to maintain three metres of physical distance is still in place.

**Q: Are there enforcement mechanisms in place?**

A: Orders can be enforced by police or other compliance and enforcement officials. Individuals or organizations who do not follow the order can be fined.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/violation-tickets>

**Q: Are in-person coach/officials training courses allowed to occur?**

A: In-person group education should only occur if absolutely necessary. The current [Gathering and Events Order](#) states, "For certainty, this Order does not apply to students and instructors when engaged in occupational training activities which cannot be provided virtually by their nature." The host organization of a training course must have a safety plan in place for the training event that outlines appropriate safety protocols such as physical distancing, mask use, etc.

**Q: If we are a sport organization but are running low or high intensity classes, do we need to follow Public Health's Guidance to Group Low Intensity Exercise?**

A: Yes, all group fitness activities, including fitness activities run by sport organizations, must comply with current Provincial Health Officer Orders and Public Health guidance.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-public-health-guidelines-low-intensity-exercise.pdf>

**Q: What restrictions are in place for spectators?**

A: No spectators are permitted for sport, unless necessary to provide care to a participant (e.g. first aid attendants).

**Q: What exemptions are in place for high performance athletes?**

A: High performance athletes are individuals who have been identified to a targeted athlete list with the Canadian Sport Institute Pacific by their respective Provincial Sport Organization or National Sport Organization. A person who is a high-performance athlete who is already training in B.C. may train, compete and travel for that purpose if they follow the COVID safety protocols of their respective provincial or national sport organization.

## TRAVEL FOR SPORT

**Q: What are the current travel restrictions in place?**

A: No group travel for sport is permitted. Individuals are permitted to travel to their home club. Home club is defined as the sport organization, club, or facility at which a person is registered for ongoing sport programming. For example:

- a skier who is part of the local ski club can travel to their local mountain, which might cross a regional health authority border;
- an archer may need to travel to a neighbouring community because their community does not have an archery club;
- a high-performance athlete may need to travel to a nearby community to receive specialized training

**Q: Is any interprovincial travel allowed for sport?**

A: With the exception of identified high-performance athletes, there is no travel allowed between provinces for sport. High performance athletes who have been identified to a targeted athlete list with the Canadian Sport Institute Pacific by their respective provincial sport organization or national sport organization must be already training in B.C. to be part of the exemption (i.e. athletes from out of province cannot travel to B.C. to train or compete if they were not already training in B.C. and on the Canadian Sport Institute Pacific list).

## ADULT SPORT

**Q: What is the definition of adult?**

A: Adults are 22 years of age and older. The PHO Order for Events and Gatherings differentiates between adult and youth sport activities.

**Q: If three metres physical distance can be maintained, can team programming for adults continue?**

A: Adult group sport is defined as sporting activities involving more than one person and includes training and practice for an individual team sport. As of March 15, 2021, adult group sport activities such as training and drills are permitted provided the following conditions are met:

- Indoor group sport is only permitted in groups of up to two people (e.g. singles tennis or an athlete and a coach training session).

- Outdoor group sport is only permitted in groups of up to ten people (e.g. ten individuals may run together or ten individuals could run soccer drills).
- All participants must maintain a distance of three metres from one another while participating in the sport activity unless they are members of the same household.

**Q: Are adults able to access a sport facility to train?**

A: Similar to a gym setting, individuals may access a facility to train individually or with a partner or coach (up to two people). If the facility is outdoors, individuals may train in groups of up to ten.

Multiple individuals or groups may be able to access a facility at one time (space permitting) provided there are no gatherings occurring. For example, more than one tennis court can be used at a time but individuals must stay to their assigned space.

**Q: What happens for programs that have a mix of adult and youth participants?**

A: The program may continue; however, this Order means that those who are 22 years of age and older must follow the group sport restrictions (i.e. a maximum of two adults indoors and ten adults outdoors). However, if the facility is able to have designated spaces for different groups, it is possible for a youth group to be participating in the same facility separately from an adult group. These groupings should not interact with each other or share coaches.

**Q: Can youth and adults both participate in sport if they reside in the same household?**

A: The current order allows for the three metre physical distance restriction to be lifted if all participants reside in the same household. However, if you live in the same household, you are not allowed to increase the maximum number of participants (i.e. two for indoor and ten for outdoor). That is, two adults can play with their two children indoors without maintaining physical distance, but three adults who live together could not play together indoors (with or without children participation).

**Q: Can varsity athletes continue to train?**

A: Varsity sport is defined in the order as a sport for which the eligibility requirements for participation are established by a national association for the regulation of intercollegiate athletics, or which is designated as a varsity sport program by a post-secondary institution. Individuals may participate in varsity sport if they are a member of a varsity sport team and they only train or practice with the post-secondary institution with which they are enrolled. At this time, varsity sport need to follow the children and youth restrictions.

## SPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**Q: What activities are allowed for children and youth?**

A: Indoor and outdoor sport for children and youth (under 22 years of age) can continue, but:

- Participants must maintain a physical distance of three metres from one another;
- Activities should be low risk of transmitting the virus (e.g. individual activities, group training that maintains physical distance).

**Q: Are there maximum group sizes in place for youth?**

A: Group sizes are dependent on the size of the facility and the ability to maintain physical distance of at least three metres during the activities. No matter how large the space is, group sizes cannot exceed 50 people.

**Q: Can youth team sports still have games within their home club?**

A: Most sports will not be able to play games at this time, either due to the restrictions on distancing or travel. Those sports that can maintain distance while playing a game may continue to do so as part of their training in-club only (e.g. singles tennis). However, tournaments and events are not permitted.

**Q: Can individual sports such as swimming or speed skating still run informal time trials within the club setting?**

A: If the intent of the activity is for training where officials and extra volunteers are not necessary, and all other components of the Order are followed, these activities can occur.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs updated as of September 17

### RETURN TO SPORT GUIDELINES

**Q: What is the directive from the B.C. provincial government for resuming sport activities?**

A: The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture has advised that the sport sector may begin the process towards return to sports. The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) has asked all sectors to think about three things: processes to open safely, measures to keep people safe to avoid further outbreaks, and a plan in the event that a case or an outbreak should occur.

**Q: What health guidelines are in place?**

A: PHO orders and recommendations include:

- Prohibition of gatherings of 50 people or more;
- Physical distancing of at least two metres;
- Frequent hand hygiene;
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection;
  
- Self-isolation for individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 for a minimum of 10 days (or self-isolation for 14 days if returning to Canada from another country)
- Symptom screening for staff and participants

**Q: What is viaSport's role in B.C.'s return to sport?**

A: Premier Horgan and the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Lisa Beare, have asked viaSport to work with the amateur sport sector on how to resume sport and operate safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

viaSport has developed the Return to Sport Guidelines, which have been reviewed by cross-ministry officials within government and WorkSafe BC for use by provincial sport organizations (PSOs) as they finalize and implement sport-specific plans. viaSport is supporting sport organizations with advice and guidance as they navigate their return to activities.

**Q: How do I access the Return to Sport Guidelines?**

A: The sport sector guidelines are available on the viaSport website:  
<https://www.viasport.ca/sites/default/files/ReturntoSportGuidelines.pdf>

**Q: What information is included in the sport sector guidelines?**

A: The guidelines outline the most current protocols related to PHO orders and recommendations and provide further direction and best practices related to facility access, facility operations, sport-specific

programming and participant information. It also includes links and references to BC Centre for Disease Control, Health Canada, WorkSafe BC, as well as tools and templates for sport organizations to use.

**Q: What is mandatory versus recommended?**

A: It is mandatory to follow any [PHO Orders](#) and directives from your Regional Health Authority. PHO Orders that are in place as of June 3, 2020 and apply to sport are [Gatherings and Events](#) and [Workplace Safety Plans](#). The Return to Sport Guidelines are a reference tool that outlines best practices and health recommendations in order for a sport organization to make informed decisions related to their sport specific plans.

**Q: Are approvals required on sport-specific safety plans?**

A: The sector Return to Sport Guidelines have been reviewed by public health officials and WorkSafe BC. Sport-specific plans developed by provincial sport organizations (PSOs) or at the club level do not require government approval, but must be approved by the organization's (PSO's or club's) Board of Directors. PSOs may have additional approvals requirements for local sport organizations and the sanctioning of activities. Please check with your PSO.

**Q: Which guidelines take precedence (PSO, viaSport, BC Recreation and Parks Association, facility)?**

A: Organized sport activities must be in alignment with the viaSport guidelines. Provincial sport organizations are responsible for developing sport-specific guidelines in alignment with viaSport guidelines. Sport guidelines developed by a national sport organization may or may not be appropriate within the context of B.C. and current PHO orders.

The viaSport Return to Sport Guidelines are general and apply to all sports in B.C. Local sport organizations should align with guidelines from their PSOs. The PSO may set additional standards for their sport, but they may not lower the threshold of the standards set by viaSport. In the event that PSO guidelines do not meet the minimum standards set by viaSport, then the viaSport guidelines take precedence.

The [BC Recreation and Parks Association \(BCRPA\) Sector Guidelines for Restarting Operations](#) apply to public recreation facilities and parks.

**Q: As a local sport organization, do I need to wait for an approved sport-specific plan to be released from my provincial sport organization?**

A: Local sport organizations should follow the guidance and best practices of their PSO as it relates to returning to their sport.

**Q: Where can sport-specific plans be found?**

A: Links to sport-specific plans on our website at <https://www.viasport.ca/sport-specific-guidelines>. Plans posted on viaSport's site have been developed by each sport's provincial sport organization and approved by its Board of Directors.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs updated as of September 17

### SAFETY PLANNING

**Q: What steps does a local sport organization need to take before resuming activities?**

- Use their provincial sport organization's return to sport guidelines to create a safety plan
- Receive Board approval of their return to sport and safety plans
- Connect with facility operators and municipalities to ensure access is permitted and adopt any further protocols they have in place
- Post safety plans and messaging beside fields of play and communicate them with their members

**Q: What is the role of an organization's Board of Directors in the return to sport?**

A: Depending on the membership affiliation of your sport, the respective boards have fiduciary responsibility and are accountable for the decisions and work of the organization. Each board should understand and be comfortable with the level of risk the organization is taking on and approve the adoption of their organizations sport-specific return to sport plan before implementation begins.

**Q: What support do local sport organizations have in the return to sport process?**

A: viaSport, Provincial sport organizations (PSOs), the viaSport Regional Alliance, and your municipalities are resources to support local sport organizations in the return to sport process. Local sport organizations should reach out to these groups should they have specific questions or are needing support. If there is uncertainty about the meaning of any aspect of the Restart Plan or the sport guidelines, viaSport will strive to provide clarity.

**Q: What requirements are private sport organizations expected to follow?**

A: Every organization has the responsibility to follow provincial health orders and must have in place a COVID-19 safety plan before re-opening. Organizations should seek out the appropriate guidelines in order to make informed decisions and plan appropriately. Private companies are encouraged to follow the sport sector return to sport guidelines, reach out to viaSport for support or connect with their sport's PSO.

**Q: What is required for informal or unaffiliated sport organizations or leagues?**

A: In the absence of affiliation with a provincial sport organization, sport groups should refer to viaSport's guidelines and relevant sport-specific plans to develop their own safety plan.

**Q: Who is responsible for oversight and ensuring that sport organizations are following their plans?**

A: Each organization is responsible for ensuring that they are in compliance with public health and the viaSport guidelines. WorkSafe BC has jurisdiction to inspect organizations that fall within the Workers Compensation Act.

Note: The COVID-19 Related Measures Act Regulation only protects those organizations that are properly implementing applicable emergency and public health guidance.

**Q: Should return to sport plans be specific to sport delivery? What about return to work or office safety for our staff and organizations?**

A: Organizations need to create safety plans that relate to different venues (office versus field of play) and activity types.

**Q: Why has my club not resumed activities?**

A: Although sport and recreation are now allowed in B.C., according to the [PHO Order on Workplace Safety Plans](#), local sport organizations must have a detailed return to sport plan in place that aligns with health guidelines before activities can start. Each club's Board of Directors also has a duty to assess the risks associated with the pandemic and decide whether to resume activities. Further, access to facilities is critical to resuming sport activities, and some operators and municipalities may not have the capacity to open at this time.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs updated as of September 17

### PHASE 2: TRANSITION MEASURES

**Q: What is the definition of community focused?**

A: Community focused sport activities take place within the home sport community or clubs where participants are members. This means avoiding cross-regional, inter-provincial or cross-country travel for sport. During this transition phase, activities should remain within the club and not cross-clubs.

**Q: What is the difference between recreational activities and organized sport activities?**

A: Organized sport is defined as any organized sport activity that involves a number of people doing something together in a structured way and is facilitated by a Provincial Sport Organization or Local sport organization.

“Recreation” as defined by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association is the “experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.” Physical activities would include those undertaken as leisure, fitness training and sport-related activities that are done at the discretion of the individual (e.g. – use of parks, hiking trails, public recreation facilities), and are self-led.

Recreational facilities have been given the go-ahead to begin re-opening in certain municipalities by their public health authority. This allows the facilities to open up access to the public to participate in recreational activities under their own risk. Refer to the [BC Parks and Recreation Association Guidelines](#) for further details.

**Q: What is the maximum allowable group size?**

A: According to [current PHO orders](#), the maximum group size is 50 people. Sports need to consider other factors to determine what number is appropriate for their space and the ability to maintain physical distancing. As we transition back to sport, we should be cautious to not jump to these maximum

numbers too quickly. Maximum capacity within a facility is determined based on the ability of individuals to physical distance. See page 10 of the [Return to Sport Guidelines](#) for further details.

**Q: Will sports that include sharing of a ball or integral piece of equipment be allowed to resume activities in phase two?**

A: Sharing of equipment creates greater risk of spread of the virus. Therefore, in order to resume activities the sports will need to have guidelines in place that look to mitigate that risk. This should include regular cleaning, disinfection between users (where possible), hand washing before and after use/play, etc.

**Q: Are individuals over the age of 50 permitted to participate in organized sports?**

A: Older adults are considered a vulnerable population and are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19. Those at increased risk due to compromised immune systems should not take part in recreational or sport activities. However, it is up to the individual to understand their risks and make a decision about whether or not to participate. As a sport organization if you are planning programming for older adults you will need to ensure that health guidelines are being followed and look for further ways to mitigate risk, such as smaller group sizes and specific timeslots for this population group.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs Updated or added September 17, 2020 are highlighted in blue

### PHASE 3: PROGRESSIVELY LOOSEN

[Competition](#)

[Contact](#)

[Sport Specific](#)

[Cohorts](#)

[Travel](#)

[Events](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Compliance](#)

[School Sports](#)

#### **Q: What types of activities are allowed within the current phase?**

A: We are currently in Phase Three: Progressively Loosen according to the [Sport Activity Chart](#). viaSport has developed the Sport Activity Chart to outline the types of activities that can be considered as we transition through the different phases. Though there is a range of activities that may be allowed within a given phase, it is still the advice of the PHO to move slowly. Therefore, sport-specific activities may progress more gradually than outlined in this chart.

Phase Three: Progressively Loosen includes:

- introduction of sport cohorts
- introduction of competitive sport activities within the cohort environment
- gradual introduction of travel for sport purposes

### COMPETITION

#### **Q: What is the definition of competition? What competitive activities are allowed?**

A: Competitive activities are formal, organized games, matches and tournaments between participants where scores are recorded and standings are kept. The introduction of competition will vary from sport to sport. Organizations should re-introduce these activities slowly and be cautious of group sizes. Leagues and regional competition can be considered in the Progressively Loosen (see Sport Activity Chart) Phase.

### CONTACT

#### **Q: What is the definition of contact? What contact activities are allowed?**

A: In order to align with health guidance, contact activities are those in which participants come into close proximity (within two metres) or physical contact with each other (e.g. – body checking, tackling, etc.). Non-contact activities are those in which participants do not come into physical contact and the rules allow them to maintain physical distancing of 2m. Any introduction of activities involving either

close proximity or physical contact should be done within a sport cohort during the current Progressively Loosen Phase for sport.

## SPORT SPECIFIC

### **Q: Does my sport organization need to update our Return to Sport Guidelines and/or safety plan?**

A: Yes, if your organization is introducing new activities that were either not outlined in your original plan, or that no longer align to the current recommendations, guidelines and related safety plans will need to be updated.

### **Q: What if my sport is not listed in the chart on Appendix H?**

A: Appendix H is not an exhaustive list of all sport activities. If your sport is not listed in the chart, the same principles within the guidelines still apply. If you are unsure which category best fits your sport please contact [info@viasport.ca](mailto:info@viasport.ca).

### **Q: Are different safety measures required for different disciplines within a sport?**

A: Each discipline will have different considerations related to ability to physical distance, points of contact, facility use, etc. Sport organizations that provide programming in more than one discipline should assess the risks separately, which may result in differences in their safety plans.

## COHORTS

### **Q: What is the difference between a cohort size and group size?**

A: Group sizes (maximum 50 as per public health order) refers to the gathering of individuals in one place at any one time. Whereas, cohort sizes refer to the number of individuals that you may interact with, but not at any one time. For example, a cohort may be made up of 4 teams, however, only two teams within the cohort would be in the same location with each other at a given time.

### **Q: How are cohorts formed?**

A: Cohorts should be made up of individuals or teams of similar age or skill level, ideally from the same community or regional area. Refer to [sport specific guidelines](#) for further recommendations.

### **Q: Why are cohort sizes different between sports?**

A: In Phase 3, sports have been divided into four categories based on the number and intensity of contact within the sport. Larger cohort sizes are allowed for those sports that have a higher ability to maintain physical distancing. Sports where close proximity cannot be avoided and/or physical contact is required will have smaller cohort sizes due to the higher level of risk involved. See Appendix H in the guidelines for further details.

### **Q: Can individuals participate in more than one cohort?**

A: Public health is still advising individuals to remain cautious about the number of people they are interacting with. Therefore, it is recommended that individuals limit the number of sport cohorts they are involved with. It is possible for individuals to participate in more than one cohort (e.g. – both a club and a high performance cohort within the same sport or a cohort for two different sports). Individuals

are responsible for assessing their risk of participation and are urged to be cautious about the number of activities they are participating in.

**Q: Can individuals be part of two cohorts of the same sport?**

A: Sport organizations can only limit cohorts within their respective governance structures/organizations. Although Public Health has advised families to limit the number of sport cohorts they enter, it is an individual choice. Accordingly, individuals can choose to be in two cohorts of the same sport if the cohorts are in differing organizations (e.g., a local basketball club and a basketball skill-development company).

**Q: Can we go back to the normal rules of our sport if we are in a cohort?**

A: The cohort model helps to limit the number of people that an individual might come into contact with but it does not mitigate the risk of exposure within the cohort. It allows for the easing of rules related to physical distancing so that game play or expanded skill training is possible. However, it is highly recommended that rules still be modified to limit physical contact. Outside of the field of play, physical distancing should be maintained.

**Q: Are coaches, officials, spectators, etc., included in the cohort numbers?**

A: Coaches and officials that are able to maintain physical distancing do not need to be counted in the cohort numbers. However, if they are interacting across cohorts mask use should be required. Spectators would also be considered outside the cohort and must maintain physical distancing from the cohort members as well as each other. Spectators are not encouraged at this time and should be limited to parents/guardians where space permits.

**Q: Should masks be worn if you cannot maintain physical distancing?**

A: Individuals should wear masks even within the cohort environment when outside the field of play if they are not able to maintain physical distancing. This includes but is not limited to shared spaces such as dressing rooms, hallways, staging areas, etc.

Officials and coaches that are unable to maintain physical distancing on the field of play should also wear masks.

**Q: How do cohorts affect drop-in activities?**

A: Drop-in activities should not occur at this time. Pre-registration for all activities should be enforced. If individuals are signing up for a one-time activity (rather than an ongoing program) physical distancing must be maintained. For activities where physical distancing can be maintained cohorts are not required.

**Q: Can different cohorts participate at the same facility at the same time?**

A: Individuals from different cohorts should not come into contact with each other. However, if there are separate or defined spaces within a facility that allows them to participate safely and not interact between cohorts than activities of different cohorts may occur simultaneously.

**Q: What are recommendations related to shared equipment use?**

A: Sharing of equipment should still be minimized where ever possible. If sharing occurs it should be limited to within the training group or cohort. In sports where balls are shared, they should be disinfected at a minimum of once per day. Other types of shared equipment such as goal keeper gloves should not be shared on the same day and should be disinfected and air dried after use.

## TRAVEL

### **Q: Is travel for sporting activities allowed?**

A: In Phase 3 it is recommended that travel for the purpose of sport remain primarily within regional boundaries in order to limit the number of groups that individuals are coming into contact with. Exceptions may include travel to attend a high performance training camp or provincial competition, if available in their sport. Inter-provincial and international travel are not recommended at this time.

### **Q: Is it required to stay within your Regional Health Authority?**

A: It is recommended that travel for sport remain primarily within regional boundaries and that cohorts be formed of teams/individuals within the same region. However, Provincial Sport Organizations can provide guidance based on existing sport boundaries and are not bound by Regional Health Authority borders.

## EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

### **Q: How do the updates to the PHO Order for gatherings and events affect sport activities?**

A: The [PHO Order](#) was updated on August 7, 2020 to add new conditions for events including:

- if the organizer is not the owner or operator of the facility the organizer must provide the owner/operator with the first and last names and telephone number or email address of the patrons who attend the event;
- access to the event is controlled;
- the number of patrons is closely monitored;
- there is sufficient space available to permit patrons to maintain a distance of two metres from one another;
- the patrons maintain a distance of two metres from one another when standing or sitting, unless they belong to the same party;
- hand sanitations supplies are readily available to patrons;
- there are washroom facilities available with running water, soap and a sanitary means for drying hands for hand washing purposes or hand sanitation supplies.

An event refers to anything which gathers people together whether on a one-time, regular or irregular basis, including sporting and physical activity.

### **Q: What is considered an event?**

A: The In the public health order defines events as “anything which gathers people together whether on a one-time, regular or irregular basis, including a party, worship service, ceremony or celebration of any type, reception, wedding, funeral, celebration of life, musical, theatrical or dance entertainment or

performance, live band performance, disc jockey performance, strip dancing, comedic act, art show, magic show, puppet show, fashion show, book signing, reading, recitation, display, movie, film; meeting, conference, lecture, talk, educational presentation (except in a school or postsecondary educational institution); auction, fund raising benefit, contest, quiz, game, rally, festival, presentation, demonstration, or sporting or other physical activity, exhibition and fair.” Therefore, each practice, game or sport activity is considered an event.

**Q: Can multiple events occur at the same time?**

A: If the facility has capacity to host multiple events where each event is occurring in a clearly defined space and the participants only interact with those at their event then this may be possible. An example where this may be appropriate is a facility with 4 ball diamonds, each ball diamond is a defined space and participants will only interact with those at their assigned ball diamond.

**Q: How long do sport organizations need to retain records of event attendance?**

A: Event organizers must retain names and contact information of every participant for thirty days, in case there is a need for contact tracing by a medical health officer.

## PRIVACY

**Q: What privacy protection is in place for sharing of personal information?**

A: The collection, use and disclosure of personal information, mandated by the Gatherings and Events Order from the Provincial Health Officer is authorized by the *Public Health Act*, as well as the *Personal Information Protection Act* and *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

For any specific privacy-related questions, please contact the BC Government’s Privacy and Access Helpline at 250 356-1851 and [privacy.helpline@gov.bc.ca](mailto:privacy.helpline@gov.bc.ca).

## COMPLIANCE

**Q: What enforcement mechanisms are in place?**

A: The new order introduced under the Emergency Program Act on Aug. 21, 2020 will allow for violation tickets to be issued by police and other enforcement officers to people disobeying the Provincial Health Officer’s Order on gatherings and events. This means people holding or organizing large events with more than 50 people could receive a \$2,000 fine. Fines of \$200 may be issued to people who refuse to leave an event at the direction of police or an enforcement officer, to people violating physical distancing procedures in any establishment or being belligerent toward others, including employees, because of the rules in place.

To report concerns around order violations from event organizers, venues or individuals, contact your local government’s bylaw office. Local bylaw officers can help follow-up on concerns and engage police departments and WorkSafe BC as necessary. If unable to reach a local bylaw office, contact your local police department’s non-emergency line. 911 should be reserved for serious situations.

## SCHOOL SPORTS

**Q: What are the guidelines for school sports?**

A: School sports fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and therefore you may see some differences among sports within the community club environment and what is available within the school environment. As of September 10, 2020, school sports will enter stage 2 of the [Return to School Sport Plan](#). This stage allows for intra-school activities within educational cohorts.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs updated as of September 17

### FACILITY GUIDELINES

**Q: What is the municipality's role in decision making related to the return to sport and access to their facilities?**

A: Municipal decisions will be made locally; community by community. This will impact sports organizations who use municipal facilities, and/or multiple facilities across jurisdictions. Municipalities will want to ensure that all user groups have a return to sport plan in place that is aligned with the sport sector guidelines before utilizing their facilities. If possible, consult resources available from Regional Health Authorities.

**Q: Are gym facilities able to open their doors?**

A: Local orders were in place for Island Health, Interior Health and Fraser Health to close gym facilities; however, those bans have been lifted as of May 19, 2020. [Gyms in B.C. can open if they follow local and provincial health guidance.](#) Inquire with your Regional Health Authority for their guidelines.

**Q: Is there a centralized place where clubs can get up to date info on the status of the facility they use?**

A: Clubs are advised to connect directly with the municipality/facility that they use before resuming activities.

**Q: Who is responsible for ensuring compliance with cleaning and restricted space protocols within a facility? Is that a responsibility of the municipality or the local association?**

A: The facility owner or operator has overall responsibility for cleaning protocols within the facility. However, anyone renting/utilizing their space is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient protocols in place as well as ensuring all equipment used is properly cleaned. Refer to the [BC Centre for Disease Control for guidance.](#)

**Q: If I need support with cleaning protocols and/or administrative/engineering controls (i.e. physical distancing measures in facilities), what resources are available?**

A: In the sector Return to Sport Guidelines, we provide guidance on facility access and use and facility operations as it relates to provincial health standards. You can also contact [Recreation Facilities Association of BC](#) (RFABC) for additional resources and support at [dan@rfabc.com](mailto:dan@rfabc.com).

**Q: If a sport organization utilizes multiple facilities, should they have a safety plan for each venue?**

A: Yes. Most aspects of your safety plan will be transferrable from venue to venue. However, there may be some additional guidelines or restrictions in place there are set and controlled by the facility. It is recommended to consult with the facility operators in the development of your plan.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated as of **January 26, 2021**

### HEALTH GUIDELINES

**Q: What is the difference in the level of authority of the Public Health Officer (PHO) versus the Regional Health Authority?**

A: In a provincial state of emergency, the PHO has the authority to set orders as needed that apply across the province. The Regional Health Authorities may set additional standards within their region, but may not lower the threshold of the standards set by the PHO.

**Q: How can you reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19?**

A: B.C. public health officials have referenced a [Hierarchy of Controls for COVID-19](#), outlining that the most effective method of reducing transmission is physical distancing, followed by engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment. As the pandemic continues to evolve it is important to stay up to date on the latest guidance available.

**Q: What tools are available for symptom screening?**

A: Assessment tools are available for participants to use to assess their health before participating in an activity. [B.C. COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool](#) or wellness questionnaires can be used. WorkSafe BC also has posters available that can be used as reminders to [workers](#) and [participants](#).

**Q: What symptoms would mean sending a sport participant home?**

A: For the most up-to-date information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, consult this link at the [BC Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\) website](#). If a participant is showing symptoms of COVID-19, they should not participate in sport activities.

See Appendix C in the [viaSport Guidelines](#) for a sample illness policy.

**Q: Can frontline healthcare workers participate in sport?**

A: Healthcare workers are required to take the same or greater precautions as everyone else and they may choose to participate in sport activities, provided they are not showing any signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Refer to the [Risk Assessment Tool for Healthcare Workers](#) as a guide.

**Q: What are the recommendations related to cleaning and disinfection?**

A: According to the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), general cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces should occur at least once a day. Surfaces that are highly touched (including bathrooms) should be cleaned twice a day. Follow [Health Canada Guidelines](#) on what products to use for cleaning and disinfecting.

**Q: What is the guidance on wearing masks in sport environments?**

A: The use of masks while participating in sport, may vary based on the level of intensity of the activity.

Masks are now required to be worn by all individuals in indoor public settings. This includes common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity. Masks may be removed temporarily in indoor public places while participating in a sport or fitness activity.

Link: [Mask Mandate Order](#)

**Q: What resources can be used to communicate personal hygiene and protection against COVID-19?**

A: The BCCDC offers communication tools on a range of subjects on their [Guidance Documents](#) page. Some examples include:

[Physical Distancing poster](#)

[Handwashing poster](#)

[Do not enter if you are sick poster](#)

**Q: Are there any guidelines for first aid during the pandemic?**

A: If first aid is required to be administered during an activity, all persons attending to the injured individual must first put on a mask and gloves.

[A guide for employers and Occupational First Aid Attendants](#)

[First aid protocols for an unresponsive person during COVID-19](#)

[Lifesaving Society BC: Resuscitation and First Aid Recommendations \(see page 29\)](#)

**Q: If you live with someone who travels for work, are you able to participate in sport?**

A: Unless you are exempt, all international travelers returning to British Columbia must create a self-isolation plan. [The federal Quarantine Act outlines a list of professions that are exempt from self-isolation after travel](#). If an exempt individual is asymptomatic, others that live within the same household are not required to self-isolate, but should continue to monitor their health. Sport organizations should consider their own risk tolerance around quarantine for returning travelers and include it in their safety plans.

**Q: What is the difference between having a potential exposure and having been a close contact of someone with COVID-19?**

A: An exposure means that it is possible that you came into contact with someone who tested positive. For example, if you have been to the grocery store where an employee tested positive or if you attend the same school as a student that tested positive. If you have been in those settings with those individuals, then it is increasingly important to monitor your symptoms.

However, only those that have been identified by public health as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 are required to self-isolate.

**Q: If you live with someone that has signs or symptoms of COVID-19, are you able to participate in sport?**

A: For those living with someone that is showing signs of COVID-19, the individual is not required to self-isolate and therefore could continue to participate in sport as long as they are not showing symptoms themselves.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs updated as of September 17

### INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

**Q: Is COVID-19 covered under insurance?**

A: It is important to note that most insurance policies exclude coverage related to communicable diseases or pandemics, including Directors and Officers Insurance. Therefore, return to sport discussions should include acknowledgement of the inherent risk to the resumption of sport during a pandemic and clear strategies to mitigation of these risks.

**Q: Are sport organization protected by government legislation from liability related to COVID-19?**

A: On June 10, 2020, a [Ministerial Order](#) that protected sport organizations liability for sport organizations was announced. As of August 6, 2020, the Ministerial Order has now been replaced with [Order in Council 459](#), a regulation passed under the new COVID Emergency Related Measures Act (CRMA). The regulation protects individuals (regardless of whether they are in paid or unpaid roles) from liability due to involvement in “an activity that has the purpose of benefiting the community or any aspect of the community, including in relation to the provision of community recreation or leisure activities”. The regulation is retroactive to January 1, 2020 and will remain in force unless and until the CRMA is repealed.

**Q: What do sport organizations have to do to qualify?**

A: The initial Ministerial Order only applied to non-profit sport organizations, the Order in Council 459 applies to both non-profit and for profit organizations. In order to qualify, sport organizations must ensure that they are upholding orders and guidance of the PHO and viaSport's Return to Sport Guidelines.

**Q: What exactly does liability protection mean?**

A: The Order protects individuals (regardless of whether they are volunteer or paid) from being held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19, provided that the person has followed all

emergency and public health guidance and are taking appropriate precautions and act in a safe and responsible way to reasonably prevent the spread of COVID.

**Q: Does the Order mean that insurance is no longer needed for the amateur sport organizations delivering sport programming in the province?**

A: No, sport organizations should continue to have general liability insurance to cover the day-to-day operations. This protection is only for damages related to COVID-19.

**Q: With this additional coverage, does an organization still need to have a return to sport plan approved by their board?**

A: Yes, all provincial and local sport organizations should have return to sport plans for their specific sport based on the Return to Sport Guidelines created by viaSport and in conjunction with plans from local health authorities and facilities.

**Q: Is my organization covered if we conduct activities outside the province of B.C.?**

A: The regulation only applies to damages that arise within B.C. (e.g. when the exposure/transmission of COVID-19 occurs within BC). If a B.C. organization is operating outside of the province, they are subject to the laws of whichever jurisdiction they are operating in.

**Q: How long will the regulation be in place?**

A: The Regulation applies retroactively to January 1, 2020 and will remain in force unless and until the CRMA is repealed. The CRMA will be automatically repealed one year after its July 10, 2020 in-force date.