

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

UPDATED: MAY 13, 2020

RETURN TO SPORT GUIDELINES

Q: What is the directive from the provincial government?

A: The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture has advised sport that we may begin developing plans for resuming activities. The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) has asked all businesses to think about three things: processes to open safely, measures to keep people safe to avoid further outbreaks, and a place 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 and
- Self-isolation for employees 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 Return to Sport?

A: For our sector, Premier Horgan and the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Lisa Beare, have asked viaSport to work with you in developing a set of guidelines on how to resume sport and operate safely during this pandemic.

Those guidelines will be reviewed by the Office of the Public Health Officer and WorkSafe BC. Once reviewed, you will be able to use these guidelines to help you finalize and implement your sport-specific plans for the safe return of your sport.

We are here to support and serve you in any way we can to help and advise you through this process. If you need more information we will help you find it. If you have specific questions you need answers to we will do our best to find those answers. If you are uncertain about the meaning of any aspect of the Restart Plan or the sport guidelines, we will strive to provide you with clarity.

Q: What information is included in the Sport Sector guidelines?

A: The guidelines should further outline protocols related to PHO orders and recommendations and provide further direction as they relate to facility access, facility operations, sport-specific programming and participant information.

It will also include links and references to BCCDC, Health Canada, WorkSafe BC, etc.

SCOPE OF RETURN TO SPORT

Q: What types of activities are allowed within this first phase of lifting restrictions?

A: Low risk activities that can occur with the following public health recommendations in place:

- Ability to maintain physical distancing
- Minimal sharing of equipment
- Focus is on skill development, not competition
- Community focused

Q: What is the maximum allowable group size?

A: The maximum group size is 50 people. Sports will 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.

Q: What is the definition of competitive activities?

A: Competitive activities are formal, organized games, matches and tournaments between participants where scores are recorded and standings are kept. For the foreseeable future, sport will be more geared towards community participation and training rather than games and provincial competition.

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.

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.

Recreational Activities or Play can be defined as leisure activities that are done at the discretion of the individual (e.g. – use of parks, hiking trails, public facilities) and are not included within the context of this document.

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. That said, user groups such as sport organizations should ensure that their sport specific guidelines are in place before they begin utilizing these or other facilities to offer organized sport activities.

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

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.

RETURN TO SPORT IMPLEMENTATION

Q: Will there be a sport specific return to sport date, depending on each sport return to play protocol?

A: Each sport will have different dates in which they will resume based on the type of sport, access to facilities, the ability to adapt to Public Health Guidelines and the development of their sport-specific plans.

Q: Are approvals required on the Return to Sport plans?

A: The sector Return to Sport Guidelines will be reviewed by public health officials and WorkSafe BC. Sport-specific plans do not require government approval, but must be approved by your own Board of Directors.

Q: Why have golf courses been allowed to reopen before sport sector guidelines are in place?

A: Golf courses in B.C. were never ordered closed. Some golf courses have also received permission of from local health authorities to reopen. Organized sport activities such as tournaments and club play remains on hold.

Q: What is the process for those sports that submitted sport-specific plans prior to process that was clarified on May 12th?

A: Plans that were submitted prior to May 12th were escalated to health officials for review, however, government has indicated that the review of sector guidelines will take priority.

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: What happens if a club resumes activities before a return to sport plan has been approved?

A: Clubs are not authorized to organize sport programming or activities until there is a sport sector plan reviewed by public health officials. Although there are no clear ramifications for clubs who do not follow the return to sport process right now, it should be made clear to them that they may be jeopardizing the

safety of their participants, and their communities, as well as putting their clubs at risk by not aligning with public health protocols.

Q: What happens if a private organization resumes activities through a sport club or that are linked to but not traditionally defined as sport?

A: Every organization has the responsibility to follow provincial health orders during the pandemic. Sector specific guidelines are being developed to help inform organizations on a phased and safe process for re-opening. Organizations should seek out the appropriate guidelines in order to make informed decisions and plan appropriately.

Q: Where will the responsibility for ensuring the cleaning protocols, restricted space, etc. are maintained? 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.

Q: Do you know if municipalities will decide independently about the status of their facilities or whether there will be a coordinated approach to how they start to phase in access?

A: Municipalities will be developing their own set of guidelines in line with provincial health orders and recommendations and will require approval by their mayor or council. Municipal decisions will be made locally; community by community. This will impact sports organizations who use municipal facilities, and/or multiple facilities across jurisdictions. Return to play plans should account for this type of consideration.

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

A: In the event that 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](#)

HEALTH GUIDELINES

Q: How can you reduce the risk of transmission?

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.

Q: What self-assessment tools are available?

A: [B.C. COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool](#)

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 resources are in place related to communicating personal hygiene and protection against COVID-19?

A: [COVID-19 Protection poster](#)

[Physical Distancing poster](#)

[Handwashing poster](#)

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