



COVID-19 Guidance: Sports and Recreation Teams and Clubs

Date: July 16, 2021

October 27, 2021 ALERT: This guidance document has not been updated to reflect recent regulatory amendments related to physical distancing and capacity limits. Please refer to O. Reg. 364/20 for current requirements.

Owners, operators, and organizers of sports, recreation, and fitness teams, groups and clubs are responsible for complying with the provisions set out in the applicable Regulation(s) under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#). As well, the Ontario government has released the [Roadmap for Reopening](#) that has three steps of public health measures: **Step 1**, **Step 2**, and **Step 3**. This guidance document describes the Provincial requirements that all sports and recreation teams and clubs must comply with, as well as local recommendations to reduce the risks of transmission in the area served by Peterborough Public Health (PPH).

This document does not constitute legal advice and does not replace the need for sports, recreation and fitness businesses and organizations to follow all applicable requirements from the Province of Ontario. There may be situations where provincial rules and local public health rules vary in level of restriction. When this is the case, sports, recreation and fitness businesses/organizations must ensure compliance with the measure that is most restrictive in terms of preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation is evolving very quickly. As such, PPH's guidance is subject to change as new information is received. Please visit the [PPH COVID-19 website](#) for up-to-date information, including the current status of enhanced measures in Peterborough.

Before any sport, recreation and fitness team, group or club begins their season, [a safety plan](#) must be developed to ensure all relevant public health guidelines and requirements are in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. The guidance in this document will help with the creation of your safety plan. The final plan may be requested by any indoor/outdoor facility that you are using and should be shared with all relevant employees, volunteers, and participants (athletes, parents or guardians, coaches, volunteers, spectators).

COVID-19 Transmission and Sports

Respiratory viruses, like COVID-19, spread through respiratory droplets and aerosols from an infected individual when they speak, cough, sneeze, sing, shout, etc. Respiratory droplets are larger than aerosols and fall more quickly. Aerosols are smaller particles that can remain suspended in the air for some time. COVID-19 can spread from person to person by:

- Breathing in droplets or aerosols from the infected person's nose and throat secretions after they cough, sneeze, laugh, sing, or shout.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus droplets on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.
- Personal contact with the infected individual such as shaking hands, hugging, or kissing.

The highest risk of transmission is generally close (2-metres and under), unprotected contact with the infected individual. There is a lower risk of transmission with longer distances greater than 2-metres. Long distance transmission only occurs under certain conditions, including:

- [Poor ventilation](#), or recirculation of unfiltered or untreated air.
- Long exposure time.
- A high viral load.
- Specific activities promoting increased exhalation/expulsion such as singing, exercising, and shouting.
- Lack of masking.

Given the close contact nature of many team and group sport and recreational activities, the limited use of masks during physical activity, as well as the forceful exhalation/deep breathing one experiences when they are active; sports, recreation, and fitness activities are considered high-risk and can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. PPH encourages physical activity but strongly advises participants to consider their own personal circumstances and risk factors including risk for exposure to the COVID-19 virus when making decisions about going out and participating in sports and recreation programs.

General Considerations

- ✓ Know and understand the Regulation(s) under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#). This will dictate applicable rules and regulations for sports, recreation and fitness.
- ✓ Develop a return to play safety plan. Use the Ministry's [safety plan template and checklist](#) to complete the plan, or use a template that is familiar to your organization. Be sure that your safety plan, at a minimum, answers the relevant questions listed in the Ministry's template.
- ✓ Ensure your safety plan has measures in place to modify your activities and procedures depending on the corresponding [Reopening Plan Step](#).
- ✓ Communicate your return to play safety plan broadly (to all coaches, participants, parents, officials, family members, etc.).
- ✓ Designate a responsible person to oversee all activities for your team/club to ensure public health guidelines are followed.
- ✓ Teams or clubs participating in organized activities sanctioned by, or affiliated with, a [provincial](#) or [national](#) sport organization should refer to and ensure compliance with their governing body's guidelines, as long as the governing body's guidelines meet or exceed Provincial and PPH requirements.

Preventing COVID-19

Screen for COVID-19 symptoms

- ✓ Any facility that your team or club attends must have [passive screening signage](#) displayed, prompting everyone that enters the facility to self-screen.
- ✓ Implement an [active screening program](#) for all coaches, volunteers, participants, and anyone accompanying a participant.
 - Use the [COVID-19 Worker and Employee screening tool](#) for staff and volunteers.
 - Use the [COVID-19 Patron screening tool](#) for participants and anyone who may accompany them.
 - Maintain a record of all coaches, volunteers, participants, and spectators (including names, contact information, dates and times) who attend practices, games, and events. These records must be kept for a minimum of 30 days, comply with privacy requirements, and could support case and contact tracing by PPH in the event of an outbreak.

Limit contacts

- ✓ Modify the sport and recreation programming to limit contact as much as possible. This will decrease risk for transmission.
- ✓ Keeping sport, physical activity, and recreation activities local is preferred.
 - Avoid travel to other health unit regions across Ontario, particularly if the other health unit region has active COVID-19 cases.
 - Current provincial and federal [travel restrictions](#) should be followed.
- ✓ Consider encouraging participants to participate in one league or club per season only.
 - While there is nothing in the provincial regulations that prohibits a participant from registering in multiple leagues, this would be considered a higher risk activity that we do not recommend.
 - Participants need to consider their respective sport's governing body requirements, as they may exceed the provincial regulations by not allowing a participant to register in more than one league.
- ✓ Ridesharing and carpooling are discouraged. Participants should only travel with members of their immediate household to the facility, activity, or event, even if the two participants are on the same team.

Adhere to the gathering limits

- ✓ Sporting and recreational events must adhere to required gathering limit as per the provincial [Reopening Plan](#), even for outdoor settings.
- ✓ All sport and recreation events and activities must adhere to the indoor and outdoor spectator gathering limits.
- ✓ Every person (coach, volunteer, participant, spectator) who attends an organized activity/sport, while not engaged in the sport, must keep 2 metres from any other person who is not from the same household.
 - Indoor facilities will have protocols that must be adhered to (i.e., designated entrances/exits, one-way aisles, posted capacity limits, etc.).
 - Teams and clubs may need to create physical distancing plans for outdoor facilities, depending on the protocols in place by the facility operator.
 - Teams and clubs will need to clearly communicate **all** physical distancing requirements to participants, coaches, and their families.

Maximize physical distancing

- ✓ Ensure your return to play plan includes a system that allows participants, coaches, spectators, and volunteers to complete their activity and exit the facility without unnecessary delay. There should be no congregating before or after the event or activity.
- ✓ Indoor facilities will have physical distancing protocols in place, with the possibility of one-way flow of patrons from entrance to exit by using ground markings and barriers.
- ✓ Outdoor facilities will need similar physical distancing control measures, in particular staggering of start and end times to ensure one team or club can fully vacate the area before the next team or club arrives. There should be **no** gathering in the parking lot before or after games and activities.
- ✓ Encourage participants to arrive prepared and appropriately attired to begin their activity and limit exposure to others in common areas, such as change rooms before or after their activity.

Clean and disinfect regularly

- ✓ Ensure any facility that your team, group or club attends has adequate cleaning and disinfection in place.
 - Indoor facilities are required to have rigorous cleaning protocols in place. Review these protocols at any facility you attend to ensure it meets the needs for your sport, recreation or fitness activity.

- Outdoor facilities may not have regular cleaning depending on the type of space (i.e., goal posts at a soccer pitch, etc.) and may require disinfection prior to use.
- ✓ Any equipment that is rented or provided to participants and/or coaches must be cleaned and disinfected between each use or, where used in a game or practice, at the end of the game or scrimmage.
- ✓ Use products that are [approved by Health Canada](#), with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe use.
- ✓ Post [signage](#) to encourage patrons to wash hands frequently for at least 15 seconds with liquid soap and warm water or alcohol-based (60-90% alcohol) hand rub. Washing with liquid soap and warm water and drying with a paper towel is preferred, if hands are visibly dirty.
- ✓ Provide adequate hand hygiene supplies including alcohol-based (minimum of 60% alcohol) hand rub stations.
- ✓ Remove all equipment that may be difficult to clean and disinfect (for example, soft equipment such as foam rollers, yoga blocks, yoga mats, straps).
- ✓ Do not allow for shared water bottles and food. Ensure this message is clearly communicate to participants or anyone accompanying a participant.

Adhere to mask and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements

- ✓ Ensure all return to play protocols adhere to [all mask and PPE requirements and Regulations](#).
 - Ontario Regulations require any person in an indoor area to wear a non-medical mask that covers their mouth, nose and chin without gaps. There are limited exemptions for this requirement. Wearing a non-medical mask does not replace physical distancing requirements.
 - A non-medical mask is strongly recommended for all persons who attend an outdoor sport and recreation game, event or activity. If physical distancing of 2 metres cannot be predictably maintained between people who are not from the same household, then a non-medical mask must be worn.
- ✓ [Personal Protective Equipment](#) (medical grade mask and eye protection) is required for any staff, coach, trainer, or sports volunteer that is required to come within 2 metres of any other person who is not wearing a mask. There are no exemptions for this requirement.
 - Ensure your staff, coaches, trainers and volunteers have access to [Health Canada](#) approved medical grade masks **AND** eye protection and receive [training](#) on how to properly put on and take off this equipment.

Managing COVID-19

Symptomatic Individual, Probable or Confirmed Case

- ✓ Ensure everyone conducts their active screening before attending any sport, recreation or fitness activity or game to ensure they are not attending when they should be staying home, seeking testing and/or isolating.
- ✓ Anyone (participant, staff, coach, volunteer) who becomes unwell while at the facility/during the activity should:
 - Advise the facility owner, operator, or activity organizer immediately.
 - Separate themselves (or be instructed to) from others. They should put on their mask if they are able to. They must not be permitted to continue to participate and must be directed to go home immediately (if possible, with private transportation, avoiding taxis, ride shares, and public transit).
 - Complete a self-screening again and act on the recommendations provided (e.g. self-isolate, visit a COVID-19 Assessment Centre to be tested, self-monitor for symptoms, contact primary care provider, etc.). Use the provincial Screening Tools to complete the screening:
 - Use the [COVID-19 Worker and Employee screening tool](#) for staff and volunteers.

- Use the [COVID-19 Patron screening tool for participants](#) and anyone who may accompany them.
- ✓ Seek medical attention as required.
- ✓ Facility owners, operators, and activity organizers must follow any guidance from public health.
- ✓ Owners, operators, and activity organizers can establish their own policies for dealing with a confirmed or probable case.
- ✓ Activity organizers using or renting space in a facility should contact the facility operator or owner.
- ✓ If there is an individual who is positive with COVID-19 and associated with your team, group or club you may not receive notification from PPH. It will depend on the amount of information we receive from the individual who is confirmed COVID-19 positive.
- ✓ If you do learn of an individual associated with your team, group or club who is COVID-19 positive you should maintain confidentiality of this individual's personal health information. Ensure this person does not return to the sport or activities until they have received clearance from PPH.
- ✓ Do not attempt to initiate contact tracing or notification of other participants until you consult with public health. We can provide guidance to you and communication to circulate with your participants, if that is deemed necessary.
 - If you learn of 2 or more participants/players diagnosed with COVID-19 within a 14-day interval, please contact PPH Public Health ASAP 705- 743-1000 or covid19@peterboroughpublichealth.ca.

Additional resources

- ✓ [Sports & Recreation resources](#) - Peterborough Public Health
- ✓ [Ontario Reopening Plan](#) – Government of Ontario

More information

For more information, contact Peterborough Public Health COVID-19 Information line at 705-743-1000 or at covid19@peterboroughpublichealth.ca

- ✓ NOTE: Peterborough Public Health will not approve plans from sport, recreation and fitness teams and clubs but can provide support as needed.