

Algoma Public Health

# COVID-19: Guidelines for Reopening your Sport or Recreational Facility

July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020

## Background

This guide provides you with the information you need to re-open your sport, recreational, or fitness facility.

- **Part 1** - provides general guidance and resources to support reopening
- **Part 2** - helps you to modify your premises and practices to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19

Please note that this guidance document contains basic information as outlined in [the instructions provided by the Algoma Medical Officer of Health](#), effective July 17<sup>th</sup>. In the event of any conflict between this guidance document and the legislation, the legislation prevails.

If you have a specific question about anything in this document, please call Algoma Public Health at: 705-942-4646 ext. 3273, email [healthyworkplaces@algomapublichealth.com](mailto:healthyworkplaces@algomapublichealth.com) or visit [www.algomapublichealth.com/healthyworkplaces](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/healthyworkplaces)

## Part 1:

### General Considerations

- This guidance should be used in conjunction with any additional applicable facility or sport/activity specific guidance:
  - Ontario Recreation Facilities Association: [Recreation Facility Reopening COVID-19](#)
- Wherever possible, activities should be re-located to outdoor settings.
- Indoor facility ventilation systems should be both operational and appropriate for the activities practiced within.
  - Facility owners may wish to consult with an expert in Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) for assistance.
- Designate a responsible person to oversee activities to ensure public health guidelines are followed.
  - The responsible person should not be someone engaged in other critical duties (e.g. referee, lifeguard).
- Consideration should be given on how to appropriately include or accommodate vulnerable persons such as seniors, those with disabilities and persons with compromised immune systems.
  - Examples include reducing attendance, offering virtual methods of engagement (where feasible) and dedicating certain rooms/times for those at greater risk.
  - Instructors/responsible persons may not know who is an at risk person, so consideration may be given to beginning high-intensity group physical activities with a reminder that there may be increased risk of transmission in these settings, and spacing guidance should be carefully followed.
- Remove unnecessary communal items such as candy, magazines, and complimentary phone chargers. Where disposable water cups are provided, place a garbage receptacle close by for any used cups.
- Communicate to all participants (coaches/staff, instructors, officials, participants, and their guardians, volunteers) about the risk of COVID-19 and practices that should be undertaken to mitigate risk.
  - Communication platforms could include online registration forms, rental contracts, automated telephone switchboards, etc.

Refer to the [Framework for Reopening our Province during Stage 3](#) for additional information.

## Part 2:

### Screening and the Prevention and Management of COVID-19 Outbreaks

- Any person accessing the facility – including staff, volunteers, participants, spectators and family members – should be directed to perform a [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) before arriving at the facility. Use APH’s [employee screening tool](#) to:
  - Implement active screening of employees daily before their shift.
  - Consider assigning an employee to perform active screening of facility attendees (other than staff) prior to entry.
- Anyone that exhibits at least one [COVID-19 symptom](#) must not be permitted to enter, should self-isolate and should be encouraged to visit a [COVID-19 Assessment Centre](#) to be tested. Individuals who have symptoms, but who have not been tested for COVID-19, must not participate and should self-isolate for 14 days after the start of their symptoms and until they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours (whichever is longer).
- Add information on COVID-19 symptoms and screening to your facility’s website.
- Keep a record of attendance for all activities and bookings at your facility. This will facilitate contact tracing by the health unit.
  - Work with groups, associations, clubs and coaches to facilitate this process.

### Mandatory Mask Use in Enclosed Public Spaces

- Require that employees wear a mask (face covering) when working in the public areas of the premises unless the employee or agent is within or behind a physical barrier.
- Ensure that no members of the public are permitted to enter or remain in the public areas of the Enclosed Public Space unless he or she is wearing a mask (face covering) in a manner that covers their nose, mouth, and chin. Exemptions apply. Please review the most [current directives and information](#) on masks.
- Post, at every public entrance to the premises, prominent and clearly visible signage about the mask requirement. A [sample sign](#) is available on APH’s website.

**NOTE: The temporary removal of a mask where necessary is permitted while engaging in an athletic or fitness activity including water-based activities.**

## Staff & Volunteers

- Assign equipment and supplies to individual staff members and avoid any unnecessary sharing.
- Provide training and information to staff on COVID-19 transmission and prevention.
  - Instruct staff and volunteers on proper [hand hygiene techniques](#) and respiratory etiquette.
  - Ensure that all persons working at the establishment are familiar with the requirements of the Mandatory Mask Use policy.
- Ensure staff and volunteers have access to hand washing stations (sink with water, soap and paper towel) or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

## Entrance and Exits

- Physical barriers should be implemented to separate front-desk attendants and patrons where 2m distancing is not possible.
- Provide portable handwashing stations (sink with water, soap and paper towel) or alcohol-based hand sanitizer at entry and exit points and encourage patrons to also bring their own.
- Limit physical contact by using online payment and registration or hands-free check in. If wristbands are required, the operator should use self-applied bracelets and advise patrons to remove them once they arrive home.
- Post signage at the facility entrance:
  - [Visitors Notice](#) (8.5x11 poster):
- Provide signage at the entrance and throughout access areas with messages to promote safe practices such as mandatory masking and physical distancing. Sample posters can be found [here](#).

## Scheduling and Capacity

Group size must not exceed the current government limits on gatherings. Adhere to all [ministry guidelines related to what can reopen in each stage](#), including limits on gatherings and capacity (these should be consulted regularly to understand the requirements for your setting based on the stage of reopening). As of July 17, 12:01 a.m.:

- The total number permitted to be at the facility in classes or organized activity at any one time must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres, and cannot exceed:
  - the indoor gathering limit of 50 people; or
  - the outdoor limit of 100.



- Gathering limits do not apply in all other areas (e.g. pools, tennis courts and rinks). However, persons engaging in sports or a recreational fitness activity at the facility, other than team sports, must maintain physical distancing of at least two metres at all times during the activity.
- The total number of spectators permitted to be at the facility at any one time must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the facility, and in any event cannot exceed the indoor gathering limit of 50 people or the outdoor limit of 100 people. People at their place of work, including performers and crews, do not count towards gathering limits.
- To ensure physical distancing, consider reducing capacity in each room, venue, court, pool or ice surface in the facility.
- Consider using a booking system that sets out specified activity durations (e.g. 1-hour workout periods, 90-minute ice times).
- Request that participants arrive no more than 5-10 minutes before their scheduled activity, game, or booking.
- Coordinate booking times to avoid crowding and reduce wait times.
- Encourage patrons to limit their time spent in the facility and to maintain physical distancing when returning to vehicles or homes.
- To support cleaning and disinfection efforts, schedule should allow adequate time to thoroughly clean and disinfect equipment and spaces (including washrooms, locker and change rooms, gyms, etc.) between each groups/booking.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

- Reduce the number of common surfaces that need to be touched (e.g., prop doors open, no-touch waste containers, no-touch towel dispenser, etc.).
- Restrict access to non-essential shared equipment (e.g., vending machine, coffee maker, water fountains and bottle filling stations).
- Designate employees (custodial staff) to [clean and disinfect](#) surfaces at least twice per day, or when visibly dirty.
  - Focus on high traffic areas, frequently touched surfaces and objects, and shared equipment (e.g. door handles, elevator buttons, light switches, washrooms, countertops, handrails, shared photocopier, computer screens and keyboards).
  - Use appropriate cleaner and disinfectant as per manufacturer's instructions (consult the [list of acceptable disinfectants](#)).
- Custodial staff should also monitor washrooms, and handwashing sinks to re-stock supplies and [clean and disinfect](#) surfaces at a minimum twice per day or as they become visibly dirty (following same instructions as above).



- A written cleaning and disinfecting schedule is recommended. Encourage staff to document the time a specific area is cleaned.
- Any equipment that is rented to, provided to or provided for the use of users of the facility must be cleaned and disinfected between each use or, where used in a game or practice, at the end of play, such as at the completion of a game or practice.
- Activities must not be practised or played within the facility if they require the use of fixed structures that cannot be cleaned and disinfected between each use, or if used during game play cannot be cleaned at the end of the game.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning of gymnasium floors to reduce the risk of transmission from shared objects (e.g., balls) and those who use wheelchairs.

## Locker and Change Rooms

- Facilities should discourage the use of locker rooms and change rooms whenever possible.
  - Encourage participants to come dressed for their activity.
- Any washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers or similar amenities made available to the public must be [cleaned and disinfected](#) as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
- Set capacity limits on how many people can use locker rooms, change rooms, showers or similar amenities made available to the public at the same time to ensure physical distancing.
- Adjust lockers to enable physical distancing.
- Ensure that surfaces, sinks and toilets in locker rooms and change rooms are cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Remove self-serve and common-use items such as hair dryers, cotton swabs and disposable razors.

## Physical Distancing

- Ensure [physical distancing](#) of at least 2 metres between participants in all facility areas including lobby, change rooms, multi-purpose rooms, hallways, and while off the field of play (players' bench, bleachers, etc.).
  - Physical distancing does not apply to those who are from the same household or [social circle](#).
- Traffic flow and physical distancing markers should be visible throughout the facility to promote physical distancing.
- Use a reservation system and alter booking times of facility amenities (e.g., courts, pools, auxiliary rooms, fieldhouse, ice pads) to create a buffer between sessions.



- Facilities should develop procedures that allow for uncongested drop off and pick up of participants. (e.g., drive-thru lanes for pick up and drop-off of participants, dedicated entrances and exits for incoming and outgoing sport teams).
- Common area chairs and tables should be stacked, roped off or removed from the area to promote physical distancing.

## Spectators

- Spectators will be subject to gathering limits and physical distancing measures, with assigned seating where possible
- Spectators (excluding parents and guardians where necessary for player support) should be kept out of participant spaces (e.g. fields of play, courts, ice surfaces).
- Cheering and yelling is strongly discouraged at this time as it presents an increased risk of spreading droplets.

## Participants

- Encourage participants to bring their own equipment to the facility. Wherever possible, limit the use of shared equipment unless participants engaged in the same activity are from the same household.
  - Participant-owned equipment, including sport gloves, should be visibly clean.
  - Equipment handled by hand or head (e.g. tennis balls, basketballs, soccer balls) during play should be frequently cleaned.
- Participants should not share any personal items (e.g., water bottles, towels, etc.).
- Enable and encourage participants to perform frequent hand hygiene before, during and after the activity.
  - Participants can be encouraged to carry and use their own hand sanitizer.
- Participants should refrain from touching their eyes, nose, mouth and face while participating or while wearing sporting gloves.
- Encourage participants to exhibit good respiratory etiquette (i.e., sneezing or coughing into the crook of the elbow, no spitting, no clearing of nasal passages, coughing or sneezing into a tissue).
- If a participant requires basic first aid, consider having a family member attend to them. If this is not possible, if first aid is provided by a facility employee, they should use appropriate personal protective equipment, including a mask and gloves.

## Sport and Recreation Organizations

- Amateur and recreational sports leagues may resume so long as they do not allow prolonged or deliberate physical contact between players, or if they have modifications to avoid physical contact between players.
- Team sports in which body contact between players is either an integral component of the sport or commonly occurs while engaged in the sport (e.g. wrestling, judo, etc.) are not yet permitted, unless the approach can be modified to prevent prolonged or deliberate physical contact.
- Leagues must contain no more than 50 participant's total. If participants in a league exceed 50, the league may divide into smaller groups of no more than 50 participants. Players are not yet permitted to play against players outside of their league or group.
- Sport and recreation organizations (e.g. clubs, associations, leagues, and teams) wishing to book facilities should follow facility protocols and guidelines, as well as establish their own sport or activity-specific guidelines for the safe return to sport/activity.
  - Those participating in organized activities sanctioned by, or affiliated with, a [provincial](#) or [national](#) sport organization should refer to and ensure they are also complying with their governing body's guidelines, assuming they meet or exceed provincial requirements.
- It is recommended that every sport and recreation organization develop a publicly available written plan.
  - A [template](#) to develop the organization's written plan can be downloaded on our website. APH will not be approving written plans from sport and recreation associations, clubs, or groups but can provide support upon request.

## Equipment

- Where feasible, participants should be encouraged to bring their own equipment (e.g. mats, blocks, gloves, balls, etc.).
- If equipment is shared, it should be cleaned and sanitized between users. Develop a process to ensure cleaning and disinfection of shared equipment between each use by having readily available cleaning supplies and instructions located in accessible places. Facility staff should ensure that cleaning occurs between uses.
- Reconfigure stationary equipment (e.g. weight machines) to promote physical distancing. Consider installing physical barriers between equipment wherever increased distancing is not possible.
  - It is strongly recommended that both physical barriers and at least 3 metres of distance be placed between equipment used for high intensity activities (e.g.,



treadmills, stationary bikes, etc.) to lessen the likelihood of transmission from higher exertion.

## Food Premises in Sport & Recreation Facilities

- Restaurants, bars, food trucks and other food or drink establishments may open if they comply with the requirements outlined in the emergency order. Facility operators should consult the [APH](#) website to review guidelines and requirements for requirements.
- Vending machines should be cleaned frequently, in particular touch keypads.

## Additional Resources

- Ontario Recreation Facilities Association: [Recreation Facility Reopening COVID-19](#)
- [Canadian Parks and Recreation Association](#)
- [Provincial](#) and [National](#) Sport Organizations
- Ontario Government – [Reopening Ontario](#)

Adapted with permission from the Eastern Ontario Health (originally adapted from Alberta)