

Guidance and Template Safety Plan for Sports Associations during COVID-19

November 4, 2021

Preparing for Success

Cooperating for a safe return to sport and recreation

It is important to protect everyone involved in your sports association from the spread of COVID-19. People involved in your sports association may include, but are not limited to, staff, participants, volunteers, officiants, association members, coaches, trainers, spectators, parents or guardians of youth, and contractors such as bus drivers.

In general, it is safest to conduct fitness virtually or outdoors when possible. In addition to the guidance in this document, consult the current [government of Ontario restrictions](#) and your [national](#) and [provincial](#) sport organizations.

Public health measures may include showing proof of vaccination, staying home if you are sick, physical distancing, wearing a mask or face covering, handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and downloading the COVID-19 Alert app.

Proof of vaccination

Proof of vaccination is required in higher-risk indoor public settings where face coverings cannot always be worn, including **indoor fitness facilities**. People entering must show proof of vaccination and ID that lists their birthdate.

Activities related to organized sports have the potential to enhance COVID-19 transmission. Specifically, close contact, forceful exhalation, prolonged exposure, crowded indoor spaces, and masks and face coverings removed during physical activity contribute to enhanced likelihood of COVID-19 transmission.

Fitness facilities are responsible for confirming proof of vaccination for people entering. This includes confirming proof of vaccination for sports associations and other groups entering the facility. Fitness facilities may not delegate the responsibility of checking proof of vaccination to sports associations and groups renting the facility. Fitness facilities and sports associations may not keep vaccination records, including for gym and sports association members.

The people listed below must show proof of vaccination or a medical exemption before entering an area where organized sports are played and/or practiced indoors.

- Sports participants aged 18+
- Coaches, officiants, volunteers, and spectators aged 12+

Proof of vaccination is not currently required in the indoor area of a facility for people aged 12-17 years who are **actively participating** in an organized sport in the Timiskaming Health Unit coverage area.

However, facilities and sports associations may put additional proof of vaccination requirements in place.

Resources:

- [Proof of vaccination support packet for workplaces](#)
- [Timiskaming Health Unit proof of vaccination webpage](#)
- [Poster: Proof of vaccination required](#)
- [Letter of Instruction for Owners/Operators of Facilities located in Timiskaming Health Unit service area where organized sports are played and/or practiced indoors and FAQ for the Letter of Instruction](#)

Safety plan

Sports associations are required to create a COVID-19 safety plan. A [template safety plan](#) is available at the end of this document. Safety plans must be available publicly, for instance, on your website or on a bulletin board at the fitness facility you use.

As part of the safety plan, sports associations must designate a responsible person to oversee activities to ensure public health guidelines are followed.

Fitness facilities are also required to have a COVID-19 safety plan. You should request the safety plan of the facility that you use and follow it. The facility that you use is required to ensure that you have prepared a safety plan. They may request a copy of your plan.

Plan to review your safety plan regularly and to provide the facility that you use with regular updates to your safety plan.

To continue to improve your safety plan, take the following factors into account:

- When you add new safety measures, check that they do not create any new hazards or ensure that measures can be put in place to control new hazards.
- Maintain a record of actionable feedback related to this plan and to the steps taken to address any issues.
- Collaborate with workers and with everyone involved in your sports association on solutions to any health and safety issues.
- Your joint health and safety committee may be consulted about the safety plan and measures.

Capacity limits

Limits on capacity related to COVID-19 are no longer in place for settings where proof of vaccination is required, including indoor fitness facilities. You must still adhere to non-COVID related capacity limits. If you would like to continue to reduce capacity in order to enable physical distancing, consider reducing group sizes or using a booking system to stay within capacity limits. Booking systems also help with contact tracing. Participants should cancel their booking if they can no longer attend.

Attendance list for contact tracing

Keep a record of **everyone** in attendance at each of your sports association's activities. This should include:

- Name, phone numbers, and schedules of workers (staff, volunteers, officiants, coaches, trainers, contractors, vendors, delivery and bus drivers)
- Name, phone numbers, and time of attendance for all participants and spectators.

Facilities can delegate the responsibility to collect contact tracing records to sports associations and other groups using the facility. Information collected can only be used by public health for COVID-19 contact tracing. The attendance list can be deleted after 30 days.

Communication

- Share the [Return to sport and recreation guidance for participants and spectators during COVID-19](#) with spectators, participants, and the parents or guardians of youth.
- Use signage to inform everyone of public health measures. Note that certain signage is required. For a list of required signage and a link to all available posters, click [here](#). To request outdoor lawn signs, please contact the Timiskaming Health Unit at 705-647-4305 Ext. 7.
- Include information about your safety plan, COVID-19 screening, and other precautions that your sports association is taking in your regular worker and participant communications, for example posters, loudspeaker announcements, email, newsletter, website, or Facebook page.
- Inform everyone involved in your sports association of proof of vaccination requirements.

Screening

- Everyone using the indoor and outdoor spaces of the facility must be actively screened (even if they are fully vaccinated). Active screening means that people entering are asked screening questions. Active screening can be conducted before people arrive (for example, via an online form) or on-site before people enter the business or organization. If the screening is on-site, it can be conducted by a worker or with a sign-in form. A variety of active screening templates are available: [Government of Ontario online customer screening tool](#), Government of Ontario .pdf version [EN FR](#), THU poster [EN FR](#).
- Facilities can delegate the responsibility to screening people entering to sports associations and other groups using the facility.
- Workers (staff, volunteers, officiants, coaches, trainers, contractors, vendors, delivery and bus drivers) must screen every day, even if they are fully vaccinated. Workers should use the [COVID-19 employee and worker screening tool](#).
- A [screening poster](#) is required in a visible location at all entrances.
- Your workplace screening policy may require additional screening for unvaccinated workers, for example, rapid antigen testing or at-home self-testing.
- Consider adjusting your cancellation policy to allow participants to cancel or reschedule bookings without penalty should they develop symptoms.

Group celebrations

- During the sporting activity, physical distancing may be maintained during group celebrations and other customs. Avoid activities like handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps and chest bumps.
- Often, good public health measures are in place during sporting events. However, at an after-party or post-game celebration, frequently people relax and may not follow public health measures. This is when COVID-19 has an opportunity to spread. Continue to follow public health measures during team celebrations.

Travel

Keeping sport and recreation activities local is preferred. Travel to other regions in the province and out-of-province should be limited. Follow provincial and federal travel restrictions.

Public Health Measures at the Facility

Arrival and reception

- Ensure that everyone involved in your sports association avoids crowding at arrival and reception areas.
- Have medical masks available to give to people involved with your sports association, if needed.

Hand hygiene

Provide handwashing stations or alcohol-based hand sanitizer at entry, exit, and high-traffic locations. Everyone should perform hand hygiene when entering the facility. Handwashing stations or sanitizer should also be available at outdoors fitness activities and sporting events.

Follow face mask requirements

- Masks are required by law in all indoor public spaces and in indoor workplaces. Everyone involved with your sports association should wear a mask indoors and outdoors when it's difficult to maintain a distance of 2 meters from people who don't live with them.
- Masks are not required when engaging in an athletic or fitness activity. However, masks must be worn when participants are not actively engaging in athletic or fitness activity, for example when sitting out on the sidelines or when waiting to use a fitness machine.
- Follow these links for more details about mask requirements for [workers](#) (staff, volunteers, officiants, coaches, trainers, contractors, vendors, delivery and bus drivers) and [participants and spectators](#), including a list of mask exemptions.

Consider maintaining a 2-meter physical distance

Maintaining physical distancing at fitness facilities is no longer required. As long as people entering the facility are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms of COVID-19, maintaining a distance less than 2 meters is considered a low-risk activity. However, you may want to consider keeping physical distancing in place if there are a large number of people involved in your sports association who are exempt from proof of vaccination requirements (for example, children).

It is recommended to conduct physical activity in an area that is large enough for participants to maintain physical distancing, if they prefer to do so.

If you decide to maintain physical distancing, here are some points to consider:

- Activities can be modified to allow physical distancing between participants, except members of the same household and caregivers.
- Install floor markings to encourage physical distancing. Floor markings can be used to designate individual workout areas or in any other area where crowding may be an issue.
- Where spotting is necessary for weightlifting, mask use is encouraged.
- If different activities are conducted in a shared space like a gymnasium, fieldhouse, or fitness room, the activities could be kept separate.

Physical distancing for high-intensity indoor activities

The highest risk is posed by high-intensity indoor activities (for example, running, spinning, dance, boot camp). Consider maintaining physical distancing for these activities, especially if there are a large number of people involved in your sports association who are exempt from proof of vaccination requirements (for example, children).

Increase ventilation

Wherever possible, activities should be re-located to outdoor settings.

If fans are needed for temperature control, direct them upwards, away from people. High-powered fans may result in greater dispersion of droplets. Consider further reducing room capacity and group sizes to maintain room temperature at manageable levels without the use of high-powered fans.

Cheering, shouting, and singing

Cheering loudly, shouting, and singing are high-risk activities.

- Music should be avoided or kept at a low volume to avoid the need to shout.
- Participants should not sing along to music.
- Workers, including coaches, may be provided with microphones to reduce the need for shouting.
- Spectators should be discouraged from shouting and cheering loudly.

Cleaning and disinfection

Clean and disinfect equipment between participants.

For more information, consult Public Health Ontario's fact sheet [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).

Encourage participants to bring their own clean equipment when possible. If equipment is rented, operators should clean and disinfect between uses.

Working with vulnerable participants and children

- Consideration should be given to how to accommodate vulnerable participants such as seniors, people with disabilities, people with compromised immune systems, and children who are too young to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Examples include physical distancing, reducing capacity limits, offering virtual methods of engagement, and dedicating certain rooms or times of day for vulnerable participants.
- At the beginning of high-intensity group physical activities, workers may issue a reminder that there may be increased risk of transmission in these settings. Group reminders are important because many health conditions are invisible.

Site-specific Considerations

Lockers and change rooms

Encourage participants to minimize time spent in locker rooms.

Indoor tracks

- Walkers and runners should travel in the same direction on the track.
- Encourage outdoor walking and running wherever possible.
- Since the standard indoor track lane is 1.22 meters wide, consider limiting use to every second lane if there are a large number of participants who are exempt from proof of vaccination requirements (for example, children).

Water facilities

These additional public health measures should be used during water activities:

- Masks should **not** be worn in the pool and water facilities.
- Consider keeping physical distancing in place if there are a large number of people involved in your sports association who are exempt from proof of vaccination requirements, for example during swim lessons and aquatic activities for children.

Additional Resource: [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts \(Lifesaving Society\)](#)

Safety Measures for Workers

Most sports associations are volunteer-run. However, they still have workers. Workers include staff, volunteers, officiants, coaches, trainers, and contractors such as bus drivers. This information should be used to develop safe practices for all workers.

Workplace safety training

Train workers in your sports association's COVID-19 policies and procedures so that they are prepared to lead by example and enforce requirements. Train workers in [proper PPE](#), [safely putting on and taking off a mask](#), how to clean or dispose of single-use masks appropriately, [handwashing](#), and [respiratory etiquette](#). Training should be held online if possible or in small groups with physical distancing measures in place.

PPE: Masks and eye protection

- Workers may be required to wear appropriate PPE based on their level of risk, as outlined [here](#).
- In addition to masks and eye protection, workers may be required to wear other PPE depending on the task being performed (for example, cleaning or providing first aid or resuscitation).
- Since workers may come within 2 meters of vulnerable participants, for example to assist unvaccinated children, workers should use extra vigilance with PPE.
- If a participant requires first aid, ask a family member to attend to them when possible. If this is not possible and first aid is provided by a worker, wear gloves and use extra vigilance with PPE.

Violence and harassment

- If anyone has complaints about COVID-19 policies, direct them to talk to your sports association's administration. Resources concerning complaints and questions about proof of vaccination requirements are found in the [Proof of vaccination support package for workplaces](#).
- Establish a violence and harassment policy that outlines how workers can report issues and how the issues will be addressed. In the event of harassment or threats of violence, instruct workers and management to contact law enforcement.
- Management should retain a record of all incidences of violence or harassment and should report to the authorities as necessary.

Additional information for fitness coaches and trainers

Consider maintaining physical distancing except when required for training (for example, spotters during weight training) if there are participants, coaches, and/or trainers who are exempt from proof of vaccination requirements (for example, children).

Additional information regarding contractors such as bus drivers

Communicate public health measures to contractors who work with your sports association. These individuals must follow public health measures, such as wearing a mask and using hand sanitizer before entering a fitness facility.

Reporting a case

If a worker lets you know that they have tested positive for COVID-19, report the case within four days to the Timiskaming Health Unit. Call 705-647-4305 ext. 7.

Additional information for workers

This resource assumes that sports associations are primarily run by part-time volunteers. If your sports association has a physical worksite or a significant number of worker hours, please consult the additional worker precautions found in the [Guidance and template safety plan for fitness facilities during COVID-19](#).

Return to Sport Safety Plan Template for Sports Associations during COVID-19

November 4, 2021

To return to organized sport and recreation, sports associations will need to adapt their way of delivering programming. It is important to protect everyone from the spread of COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to, staff, participants, volunteers, officiants, sports association members, coaches, trainers, spectators, parents or guardians of youth, and contractors such as bus drivers.

Your sports association must prepare a safety plan to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This template has been developed to support you in creating your plan.

The final plan is required to be publicly available, for instance, posted on your website or on a bulletin board at the fitness facility you use. The safety plan should be shared with workers, volunteers, coaches, trainers, spectators, participants, and the parents or guardians of youth. Share the safety plan on easily accessible platforms such as your website, social media page, newsletter, or registration materials.

The following documents should be consulted as you develop your safety plan:

- Current [government of Ontario restrictions](#)
- Safety plan: [Safety plan builder](#), [guide](#), and [checklist](#)
- [Public Health Ontario COVID-19 Guidance for Youth Sports](#)
- [Guidance and template safety plan for fitness facilities during COVID-19](#)
- [Guidance and template safety plan for sports associations during COVID-19](#) (this document)
- [Return to sport and recreation guidance for participants and spectators during COVID-19](#)
- Relevant [national](#) and [provincial](#) sport organizations

NOTE: THU does not approve safety plans. However, you can contact THU at 1-866-747-4305 for support with developing your plan.

Preparing for Success

Cooperating for a safe return to sport and recreation

- Relevant sport or physical activity guidance documents have been consulted, including those from public health, the Government of Ontario, and provincial or national sport organization (see list above).

Proof of vaccination

- How are proof of vaccination requirements communicated to people involved in our sports association (for example, email correspondence, included in sports association's safety plan)?

Safety plan

- The safety plan is publicly available, for instance on the sports association's website.
- We have reviewed and are in compliance with the safety plan of the fitness facility that we use.
- Consideration:** How often is the sports association's safety plan reviewed (for example, monthly)? _____
- Consideration:** How do we ensure that we have the most current version of the fitness facility's safety plan?

- Consideration:** How is the safety plan evaluated (for example, checking that new safety measures don't create new hazards, maintaining record of actionable feedback and steps taken to address issues, collaborating with members of our sports association on solutions)?

Capacity limits

- If our sports association would like to continue to reduce capacity in order to enable physical distancing, we have put the following measures in place (for example, smaller groups, establishing limits on the number of spectators)?

Attendance list for contact tracing

- We keep track of contact names and phone number of everyone in attendance at each of our sports association's activities. This includes names, phone numbers, and schedules of workers (staff, volunteers, officiants, coaches, trainers, contractors, vendors, delivery and bus drivers) and name, phone numbers, and time of attendance for all participants and spectators. This information will be used to provide to the public health unit in the event that someone who attended our sports association's activities contracts COVID-19. We use the following process to track names and phone numbers of people in attendance at each of our sports association's activities:

- All contact records are kept for a minimum of one month.

Communication

- The [Return to sport and recreation guidance for participants and spectators during COVID-19](#) has been shared with spectators, participants, and the parents or guardians of youth.
- The safety plan and other relevant documents (including updates to existing documents) have been shared with everyone involved in our sports association through the following communication channels:

- Reminders about the following public health measures are in place (for example, physical distancing, capacity limits, screening, wearing masks, hand hygiene, safety protocols during breaks for workers):

- Reminders about public health measures are issued in the following ways (for example, verbal reminders, signage):

Screening for COVID-19

- Consideration:** How will we ensure that participants have been actively screened and that people with symptoms stay home? (Resource: [COVID-19 customer screening tool](#))

- Consideration:** How will we ensure that workers (staff, volunteers, officiants, coaches, trainers, contractors, vendors, delivery and bus drivers) have been screened and that people with symptoms stay home? (Resource: [COVID-19 worker and employee screening tool](#))

- Our cancellation policy has been adjusted to allow for participants to cancel or reschedule without penalty if they develop symptoms.

Public Health Measures at the Facility

Arrival and reception

- We ensure that everyone involved in our sports association avoids crowding at arrival and reception areas in the following ways:

- We have medical masks available to give to people involved in our sports association if needed.

Hand hygiene

- Considerations:** How will we ensure that everyone involved in our sports association good hand hygiene?

- Handwashing facilities are available at the following locations:

Follow face mask requirements

- We have developed a face mask policy about when to use masks. Our policy complies with [provincial requirements](#).
- We have the following additional masking reminders in place (for example, verbal reminders, signage in workout rooms that participants must put on their mask when they finish using a machine):

Consider maintaining a 2-meter physical distance

- Considerations:** We have considered the number of people involved in our sports association who are exempt from proof of vaccination requirements (for example, children) in determining whether, when, and where physical distancing will remain in place.
- Physical activity is conducted in an area that is large enough for participants to maintain physical distancing, if they prefer to do so, in the following areas (for example, workout or stretching areas):

- How have activities been modified or adapted to allow for physical distancing?

How have we changed the physical space to enable physical distancing? For example, adjusted traffic flow, floor markings.

How have we communicated with spectators, participants, and the parents or guardians of youth about physical distancing measures they can take (consider reception area, locker rooms, coaching activities, room layout, one-way traffic flow)?

Physical distancing is in place for these high-intensity activities (for example, running, spinning, dance, boot camp):

Ventilation

- Activities are conducted outdoors when possible.
- If activities are indoors, what steps have been taken to improve ventilation (for example, opening windows, appropriately using fans)?

Cheering, shouting, and singing

- How have we reduced the likelihood that cheering loudly, shouting, and singing will occur? (For example, prohibiting spectators from cheering loudly, reducing music volumes to decrease likelihood for yelling over music and/or singing along, providing coaches with microphones):

Cleaning and disinfection

- Rental equipment is cleaned and disinfected between uses.

Working with vulnerable participants and children

What steps are in place to protect vulnerable participants such as seniors, people with disabilities, people with compromised immune systems, and children who are too young to be vaccinated against COVID-19?

Group celebrations

- Group celebrations avoid activities like handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps and chest bumps. Participants are reminded to avoid these activities in the following ways:

During after-parting or post-game celebrations, the following public health measures are followed:

Travel

- We limit travel and follow provincial and federal travel restrictions.

Site-specific Considerations

Lockers and change rooms

- Participants are encouraged to minimize time spent in locker rooms.

Indoor tracks

The following measures are in place on the indoor track (for example, runners and walkers travel in the same direction, outdoor walking and running is encouraged when possible, use is limited to every second lane):

Water facilities

- Masks are **not** worn in the pool and water facilities.
- Physical distancing is in place if there are a large number of people involved in your sports association who are exempt from proof of vaccination requirements, for example during swim lessons and aquatic activities for children.
The following measures are in place to encourage physical distancing:

Safety Measures for Workers

Workplace safety training

- Workers are trained in the sports association's COVID-19 policies and procedures so that they are prepared to lead by example and enforce requirements.
- Workers have been trained in the following topics (check all that apply):
 - PPE
 - Safely putting on and taking off a mask
 - How to clean or dispose of single-use masks appropriately
 - Physical distancing
 - Handwashing
 - Respiratory etiquette

Consideration: How have workers been trained in COVID-19 policies and procedures, including PPE?

The following safety measures are used at training sessions (for example, online training, physical distancing, proof of vaccination):

PPE: Masks and eye protection

- We have developed a policy for PPE that requires workers to wear appropriate PPE based on their level of risk, as outlined [here](#).
- Additional PPE requirements are in place depending on the task being performed (for example, cleaning or providing first aid or resuscitation).
What checks and reminders are in place to ensure that workers wear PPE correctly? What steps are in place to ensure that workers wear proper PPE when they are near unmasked or improperly masked people?

Violence and harassment

- A violence and harassment policy has been established, which outlines how workers can report issues and how the issues will be addressed.
- If anyone has complaints about COVID-19 policies, they will be directed to talk to management.
- Management will retain a record of all incidences of violence or harassment and will report to the authorities as necessary.

Additional information for fitness coaches and trainers

- Considerations:** We have considered whether there are participants, coaches, and/or trainers who are exempt from proof of vaccination requirements (for example, children) in determining whether physical distancing will remain in place.
The following measures are in place to encourage physical distancing:
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Additional information regarding contractors such as bus drivers

- Public health measures are communicated to contractors such as bus drivers in the following ways:
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Contractors required to do the following (for example, wear a mask, use hand sanitizer before entering, maintain a physical distance of at least two meters):

Reporting a case

- If a worker lets us know that they have tested positive for COVID-19, report the case within four days to [the Timiskaming Health Unit](#). Call 705-647-4305, Ext. 7.

Additional information for workers

- This resource assumes that sports associations are primarily run by part-time volunteers. If your sports association has a physical worksite or a significant number of worker hours, please consult the additional worker precautions found in the [Guidance and template safety plan for fitness facilities during COVID-19](#).

Other

Are any extra measures in place? Use this space to include any additional adaptations or measures not already outlined above.