

Tourism, Heritage & Culture – Sport & Recreation Branch

Updated communication on physical distancing in sport by NB Public Health

September 1, 2020

Risk of transmission is informed by factors including **physical contact, context, and disease epidemiology**. **Risk associated with physical contact is influenced by a combination of variables** including proximity, duration, frequency, intensity, and number of contacts (e.g. tackle, checking, blocking, etc.) and is cumulative in nature. Risk is greatest during prolonged and close interactions. Prolonged interactions are those generally greater than 15 minutes (team benches, huddles, locker rooms, closer game play with more stationary positions, etc.) Close interactions are those less than 2 metres of physical separation. Context-related factors include: Indoor settings, confined spaces, poorer ventilation, and crowds. Risk is also influenced by colder temperature, higher humidity, and air flow patterns. Activity may exacerbate transmission (e.g., physical activity/exertion, singing, cheering). Risk is mediated by the extent to which each individual and those that surround them at any given time are following public health measures. Due to COVID-19 transmission pathways, physical distancing is a top risk mitigation method.

Sports, like all other sectors in New Brunswick, must adapt to meet the public health measures to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission and infection. Risk mitigation must consider and apply across all relevant contexts (e.g., during *and* before/after game play) and participants (e.g., players, staff, volunteers, officials, spectators, etc.). A layered approach to risk mitigation is required, combining effective modifications across physical distancing, enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surface areas, wearing a face mask as required and where recommended, screening and staying home when sick or required to self-isolate, and following good hand and respiratory hygiene.

In the context of game play, sports are expected to adapt to better enable physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, while still permitting resumption of game play in the current yellow phase. More effective adaptation and risk mitigation will provide greater protection from COVID-19 infection and transmission. Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) and local clubs should adopt a more precautionary approach where possible.

Brief, incidental contact on the field of play is permitted so long as that contact cannot reasonably be avoided. Intentional contact during sport game play is not encouraged (e.g., checking, tackling, etc.).

At present, PSOs and sport **should not resume 'normal game play' where 'normal game play' would be expected to undermine ability to ensure physical distancing** (while recognizing that brief incidental physical contact is acceptable). In all instances where distancing is possible, measures should be put in place.

As we move into the new school season and incur new risks, NB Public Health will be monitoring COVID-19 disease epidemiology. A second wave or further clusters of COVID-19 are anticipated. Further consideration of lessening physical distancing requirements during sport play and sport activities will be explored after October to enable a more informed assessment. At this time, the expectation continues to remain that sports are required to adapt to the public health measures, including physical distancing, both during and pre/post game play (except for incidental, brief contact). The FAQ's provided by Tourism Heritage and Culture, Sports and Recreation Consultants remain current and valid – please continue to work with your respective Consultants for further guidance.

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The answers provided in this document reflect the Branch's efforts to provide as much clarity and guidance to our partners in the Recreation and Sport sector based on feedback from public health, requirements noted in the Mandatory Order, content that is and/or was available on the GNB webpage, feedback that was developed through the response process associated with the early stakeholder engagement calls, and content that reflects good interpretation of requirements associated with Operational Plans. The situation is fluid and the information changes regularly. The onus is on each organization to understand the restrictions set out by the Province as well as the recommendations and requirements of Public Health and the Guidelines for New Brunswick Workplaces issued by WorkSafe NB.

The health and safety of our citizens is of paramount priority, and the public is strongly encouraged to visit the Province's dedicated COVID-19 website for the most current information: www.gnb.ca/coronavirus.

COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	
*** September 25 th , 2020 ***	
1. Where can I find information on GNB COVID-19 response?	www.gnb.ca/coronavirus and Frequently Asked Questions
2. Where can I find the COVID19 Operational Plan guide?	COVID-19 Operational Plan Guide and Guidance Document of General Public Health Measures During COVID-19 Recovery
3. Where can I find guidelines for workplaces?	Embracing the New Normal As We Safely Return To Work and Frequently Asked Questions
4. Where can I find the COVID-19 Operational Plan Template?	A template is available on page 16 of the WorkSafe NB "Embracing the New Normal" document
5. Where can I find guidance documents and Risk Assessment Examples?	In addition to the links above, the following documents may be helpful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-Based Measures Guidance • Risk Assessment Guideline Health Canada • PHAC Risk Mitigation Tool for Child and Youth Settings • Risk Mitigation Tool for Outdoor Recreation Spaces and Activities Operating during the COVID-19 Pandemic
	Own the Podium has also developed a Risk Assessment Tool specific to sport. We recommend you contact your National Sport Organization for guidance on this tool.
6. Will COVID-19 affect my organization's insurance coverage?	Organizations should contact their insurance provider directly. Virus and biological agents/contagions are typically an exclusion in most policies. Many insurers now have a specific COVID-19 exclusion as well.
7. Should my organization update its waivers / assumptions of risk (for minors) forms to include COVID-19?	Organizations are strongly encouraged to discuss this with their insurance providers and consider getting legal advice.
	In general, including COVID-19 into your waivers and forms would be a good risk management practice. For more information about Waivers and Forms under COVID-19, we encourage you to listen to this webinar .
	Please note that Provincial Organizations have received templates that include COVID-19 which can be shared to local organizations.

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<p>8. What organizations are required to have a COVID-19 Operational Plan?</p>	<p>Each organization or group must have its own unique COVID-19 Operational Plan in place that outlines how they will manage the safe operation of their programs and activities. The plan must address, but is not limited to, physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, hand and respiratory hygiene pre-screening for symptoms.</p> <p>This includes Multisport Organizations, Provincial Sport Organizations, Regional Organizations and Local Organizations.</p> <p>COVID-19 Operational Plans must be made available at all workplaces and activities.</p>
<p>9. Can a local club just adopt its' Provincial Organization's COVID-19 Operational Plan?</p>	<p>Provincial Organizations are encouraged to provide high level guidance. Local organizations must have their own COVID-19 Operational Plan that takes in consideration local operations.</p>
<p>10. Will Government review and approve my COVID-19 Operational Plans?</p>	<p>Government does not approve plans. Sport and Recreation Organizations can contact their respective Sport and Recreation Branch Consultant for additional guidance however final approval remains the responsibility of each organization.</p>
<p>11. Is there be a mechanism for organizations to be able to access the COVID-19 Operational Plans from each of the facilities?</p>	<p>The Sport and Recreation Branch does not keep a database of organizations COVID-19 Operational Plans.</p> <p>It is incumbent on organizations and clubs to work collaboratively with facility owners and operators to ensure that programs are delivered as safely as possible.</p> <p>Recreation and Sport Organizations should refer to or add the COVID-19 Operational Plan of the facility they are using to their organization's COVID-19 Operational Plan.</p>
<p>12. If I rent an office, am I required to have a COVID-19 Operational Plan or is it my landlord's responsibility?</p>	<p>All organizations must have their own COVID-19 Operational Plan for their workplace. When the workplace is rented from another organization, it should align with the landlord's COVID-19 Operational Plan.</p>
<p>13. If there is no opportunity for approval of my Operational Plan what will happen if there is a spot check and my plan doesn't meet the requirements?</p>	<p>The inspections/spot checks are focused on education and monitoring. If spot check finds weaknesses in a plan, the aim will be to provide the guidance for the organization to meet the requirements. Blatant disregard of the requirements could result in a fine, or worse, a COVID-19 outbreak.</p> <p>The action items that are listed in the WorkSafe NB template are comprehensive.</p>
<p>14. Some of our coaches are self-employed. Are they required to have their own operational plan?</p>	<p>Organizations that hire coaches are required to have a COVID-19 Operational Plan. Unless the coaches offer activities independently of an organization, they are not required to have their own COVID-19 Operational Plan.</p>

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15. Where can I find more information about Employment Standards	www.gnb.ca/labour or contact 1-888-452-2687
16. Where can we purchase hand sanitizing or protective equipment?	https://www2.snb.ca/content/dam/snb/Procurement/AtlanticCanadaPESuppliersForPrivateIndustry.pdf
17. Where can I find a guide on cleaning and disinfection for COVID-19?	https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/Cleaning_DisinfectingE.pdf
18. Is there guidance available to determine how often a shared piece of equipment should be disinfected?	There is currently no specific guidance other than “as often as possible” to a minimum of twice per day. Sports are responsible to determine the best system to implement to limit exposure via the sharing of equipment (eg. Rotation of sanitized balls after each play, etc.)
19. Who is responsible to provide hand cleaning stations / hand sanitizing dispensers? Facilities or user-groups?	Facilities will be required to have hand cleaning stations which will be listed in their COVID-19 Operational Plan. Organizations must also address cleaning and sanitization in their respective COVID-19 Operational Plan and practices. Organizations are encouraged to communicate with their respective facility to confirm these details.
20. Are organizations required to collect information on the participants that take part in their activities?	Yes. The current mandatory order requires that organizations maintain a record of the names and contact information of all persons who attend and must make those records available to Public Health Inspectors upon request. For more guidance: Collection of names and contact information under the Mandatory Order COVID-19
21. What is screening and when is it required?	See WorkSafe NB document (page 9 and 11) Passive Screening is required by all organizations. Active Screening is required in workplaces where 2m physical distancing can't be maintained.
22. What does my organization do if we find out that an employee, volunteer or participant has been exposed to someone infected with COVID-19?	https://www.worksafenb.ca/media/60927/frequently-asked-questions-COVID-19.pdf
23. Can my organizations hold an in-person meeting?	Indoor meetings for business purposes are allowed provided they can maintain physical distancing and meet other requirements. Organizations are still encouraged to use conference call or online conferencing software for their meetings.
24. Is my organization allowed to have day camps?	Sport day camps will have to operate according to the Guidance to Early Learning and Childcare Facilities and Day Camps as well as the expectations for the particular sport (including maintaining physical distancing) involved as established by the relevant provincial sport association. Also see: Frequently Asked Questions for Summer Camps

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<p>25. Is my organization required to maintain 2m physical distancing measures during its activities?</p>	<p>Yes. Organized sports may operate as long as they identify means to limit the number and intensity of close contacts during play.</p> <p>All reasonable attempts shall be made to respect physical distancing measures as much as possible except brief incidental contact on or off the field, arenas, gyms, rinks, etc.</p> <p>A gradual phased in approach to return to play is advantageous (i.e. Structure 3-4 weeks (incubation period of virus) per phase starting with strict physical distancing requirements. Re-assess after each phase before loosening restrictions further).</p> <p>Further consideration of lessening physical distancing requirements during sport play and sport activities are being explored but there is currently no date provided for when this could happen. The Sport and Recreation Branch continues to work with the Department of Health and will inform all stakeholders as soon as we receive more information. At this time, the expectation continues to remain that sports are required to adapt to the public health measures, including physical distancing, both during and pre/post game play (except for incidental, brief contact).</p>
<p>26. Is my organization allowed to group participants in “bubbles” where they wouldn’t need to maintain physical distancing?</p>	<p>The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health has returned a decision on this request. They have decided to NOT permit ‘bubbles’ for sports in New Brunswick based on public health evidence (current and emerging) associated with transmission of COVID-19 and the risk mitigation measures to protect community and sport-participant health.</p> <p>However, sports that occur in pairs only (e.g., martial arts) may proceed without physical distancing within each pair, but only in cases where pairs are consistent (members of each pair are not interchangeable), and where pairs are mutually-agreed members of a common and limited ‘close friends and family bubble’.</p>
<p>27. If my activity can’t be done with physical distancing measures, can the participants just wear masks?</p>	<p>In some activities, wearing a non-medical mask (NMM) may not be practical or tolerable, e.g., when playing active sports there might be a risk of poor oxygenation, easily soiled/moistened due to sweating/heavy breathing, or risk from injury if the mask is caught on equipment. Also, for NMMs to be of benefit, they need to be worn correctly. Failing to do so may present a risk rather than a benefit. For sports where a face shield can be used (e.g. hockey), a face shield may be considered.</p> <p>Anyone who is in a public area, where physical distancing of two metres cannot be maintained, should wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth unless they are a child under the age of two or if they cannot wear one for medical reasons. For sport and recreation facilities, general guidance would be for patrons to wear them while not conducting the activity (e.g. entrance/exits and spectators)</p>

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<p>28. Can face shields be worn instead of a face mask?</p>	<p>A face shield may be used in addition to a face mask and may offer value in their added ability to protect the eyes from potential exposure to COVID-19 contaminated respiratory particles, but when worn alone, face shields are insufficient and do not replace, or substitute, face masks.</p>
<p>29. How many participants are allowed in a facility or on an outdoor field for organized recreation and sport activities?</p>	<p>Organized sport is considered a controlled activity and as such does not require the 50 person limit as do 'gatherings'. "Gathering" which is referred to in the GNB mandatory order implies common intent or purpose associated with socializing, celebration, ceremony or entertainment.</p> <p>Occupancy of any facility must be based on the ability to maintain physical distancing between people that are not close friends and family. Venues with indoor events with controlled entry and/or controlled seating, are required to capture contact information on persons using the facility.</p> <p>Owners and occupiers of land and/or buildings must take all reasonable steps to prevent gatherings of more than 50 persons unless effective procedures ensure adequate screening and distancing as required by WorkSafe NB and the Chief Medical Officer of Health.</p>
<p>30. The government recently announced a change to the 2 metre physical distancing requirements to 1 metre. When is this applicable?</p>	<p>As of August 17, physical distancing may be reduced to 1 metre at venues where seating is provided for employees, patrons and/or visitors when community face masks are used at all times. <u>The 1 metre rule only applies in the areas of the venue where seating is provided.</u></p> <p>There are no exceptions to this rule including persons exempt from the requirement to wear a face covering by the Chief Medical Officer of Health such as children and/or for medical reasons. The consumption of food and drinks is not permitted in these seating areas.</p> <p>If a venue permits face coverings to be removed for any reason, including the consumption of food or drink, a 2 metre distance must be maintained unless appropriate engineering controls have been implemented per guidelines from WorkSafeNB.</p> <p><u>The 1 metre rule does not apply</u> in any part of the venue where seating is not provided such as line-ups, stairwells, hallways, change rooms or in areas where food is consumed.</p> <p><u>Capacity and the use of the facilities will be based on what the business can safely accommodate.</u> This will be determined through the establishment of a COVID-19 Operational Plan that addresses, but is not limited to, physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, hand and respiratory hygiene, and pre-screening for symptoms.</p>

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<p>31. Is there guidance available for facility owners on the use of locker/change rooms?</p>	<p>For the use of locker/change rooms, a 2 metre distance must be maintained and occupancy should be addressed by taking into consideration that in any enclosed, indoor space with unknown or poor ventilation quality, risk of transmission may be heightened. Additional considerations could include staggered scheduling, opening additional rooms for change room usage, changing at home as much as possible, wearing face masks for an added layer of transmission protection.</p>
<p>32. Is there guidance available for facility owners on the use of showers?</p>	<p>Although there is no specific guidance related to shower usage, it is believed that higher-humidity conditions increase droplet formation and dispersion. Greater cleaning and disinfection may be advised within these settings. Additional considerations could include limiting the use of communal showers to only one patron at a time and limiting the use of showers to user groups that require them (morning practices prior to school).</p>
<p>33. Is there any guidance available for facility owners for fitness activities?</p>	<p>In addition to the usual risk mitigation measures (2m physical distancing, cleaning & disinfection, etc), additional considerations could include adjusting classes sizes based on the intensity of the activity and the ventilation quality and assigning designated areas so that participants can move freely without impeding on other participants. Although not all of the information in the Ontario Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19 document is applicable in New Brunswick it may be a useful resource for facility owners.</p>
<p>34. Are organizations required to limit the number of participants in a group to 15 similar to the day camp requirement?</p>	<p>For normal sport activities (not day camps), unless a facility owner says otherwise, organizations are not required to limit the number of participants in a group to 15 as long as organizations are able to demonstrate that all risk mitigation measures are followed, and programs are delivered as safely as possible.</p>
<p>35. For outdoor Recreation facilities, are nearby washrooms satisfactory for hand washing or do they need to bring in hand washing equipment right at the entrance of the field/court?</p>	<p>There is no defined requirement on where handwashing stations must be in proximity to the activity. Organizations must be able to demonstrate that hand hygiene requirements can be met.</p>
<p>36. My program requires having volunteers with First-Aid and CPR certificates, but first aid courses aren't offered due to COVID-19 physical distancing measures. What do I do?</p>	<p>See WorkSafe NB FAQs for guidance: https://www.worksafenb.ca/media/60927/frequently-asked-questions-COVID-19.pdf</p>
<p>37. What are the expectations of a Provincial Organization on local organizations, NBIAA and/or unsanctioned groups of the same sport?</p>	<p>For consistency purposes, NB Public Health has requested that Provincial Recreation and Sport Organizations act as leads for their respective sport however it is recognized that PSOs does not have any jurisdiction on many of these groups. We hope you will share your return to play documents and provide guidance, but you are not responsible for their decisions.</p>

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<p>38. What are the current border restrictions?</p>	<p>Interprovincial travel without the requirement to self-isolate is permitted in Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, for residents of Atlantic Canada. Visitors from other Canadian provinces and territories must adhere to the local entry requirements in place in each of the four jurisdictions. Other Canadian visitors to the Maritime provinces that have self-isolated for 14 days may then travel within the Maritime region. For more information: Travel Information</p>
<p>39. Our organization would like to hire a coach/facilitator from another Province for a clinic. Can he/she still come?</p>	<p>Travel Information</p>
<p>40. Can my organization host games or competitions?</p>	<p>Event planners are required to develop a COVID-19 Operational Plan that addresses risk mitigation measures across all aspects of the event.</p> <p>Tournaments in general should not be conducted in the usual way (large gatherings) but along a game-based playoff model instead to limit exposure as much as possible.</p>
<p>41. Can my organization travel to or host teams from other Atlantic Provinces for competitions?</p>	<p>The current Mandatory Order does not restrict sport teams from travelling within the ‘Atlantic Bubble’ to compete. However, the ‘Atlantic Bubble’ was not opened with the intent of facilitating interprovincial sport opportunities.</p> <p>Any activity that falls outside of the usual organization’s activities (eg. Competition requiring travel) is required to be identified in a separate plan or must be integrated in the organization’s COVID-19 Operational Plan and must address risk mitigation measures associated to that travel in their Plan (eg. Transportation, hotel, restaurants, etc).</p> <p>Concerns remain related to additional travel; the risk of larger gatherings and the fact that other jurisdictions may have more relaxed return-to-play protocols. All organizations are advised to carefully consider and assess the additional risk that travel to and participation in interprovincial events present.</p>
<p>42. Is there communication with the Education Dept to encourage them to open their recreation and sport facilities?</p>	<p>As per the Return to School: Direction for School Districts and Schools document:</p> <p>“Community use of schools is on hold until further notice.”</p> <p>“Outdoor fields may be used by community organizations subject to district direction, but users may not enter the school building.”</p> <p>The Department of Education is currently exploring the possibility of allowing user groups in school facilities but no date on a decision has been provided.</p>

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43. Do municipalities, schools and facility owners have the right to not open recreation and sport facilities even if the restrictions are lifted?

Yes. The opening of recreation and sport facilities is at the discretion of the facility owners.