

Lifesaving Society Guide to Lifesaving Sport Training During COVID-19

In-Person Safety for Affiliates/Clubs,
Trainers, Officials and Coaches

March 2021



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Overview

In conjunction with the Lifesaving Society's *Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts* and *Guide to Training During COVID-19*, Swim Ontario's *Safe Return to Operations*, Swimming Canada's *Return to Swimming* and public health guidelines, the following resource document should be utilized to assist in the resumption of Lifesaving Sport activities in the pool.

The Lifesaving Society [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#), provides guidelines for adapting facility operation to mitigate the risk posed by COVID-19.

The Lifesaving Society [Guide to Training During COVID-19: In-Person Safety for Affiliates, Trainers, Instructors, Examiners and Coaches](#) supports and aims to ensure that in-person water and classroom training can be delivered safely.

[Additional Lifesaving Society COVID-19 resources are located here.](#)

Our collective efforts in returning to the pool safely will go a long way in ensuring we are back to “normal” as soon as possible.

This guide does not replace or supersede local, provincial/territorial or federal legislation or regulation or directives from the Ministry of Health and Medical Officer of Health.

It is important to note that this document will evolve and that new information will be added as the Government of Ontario, Municipalities, Public Health Authorities, Swim Ontario, Swim Canada and the Lifesaving Society provide directives for the reopening of facilities, parks, lakes and a return to organized sporting activities.

Our philosophy continues to be to progress slowly with purpose, including periods of re-evaluation, in order to do everything we can to continue to move forward.

Affiliate/Club and event host responsibilities

Affiliate/Clubs and hosts should implement appropriate COVID-19 policies and procedures to protect athletes, coaches and officials.

Pre-screening and self-assessment

Athletes, coaches and officials should take a COVID-19 self-assessment each day prior to attending any training sessions or events.

Educate athletes, coaches and officials about the need to inform the coach or club if they develop any COVID-19 symptoms, or become aware of information that would prevent them from successfully completing the screening again, during the practice or event.

Refer to the Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment and guidance from the Medical Officer of Health in the region the practice or event is being held for current screening recommendations. Website: [COVID-19 self-assessment](#).

Emergency response plan

Define the required steps in the event that an athlete or coach or official exhibits COVID-19 symptoms during training. Include:

- Instruction to the individual and anyone who was had prolonged and close contact with the individual
 - to go directly home, have no contact with their family or the public, and self-isolate.
 - to contact their doctor or local public health authority for guidance on next steps including testing.
- [Contact your local public health unit](#) for guidance on next steps. Public health will provide instructions and do contact tracing if needed.

The emergency response plan should include a contact tracing system to provide information about who had close interactions with an affected athlete, coach or official. This should include attendance records, and participants' full name and contact information (e.g., phone numbers, email)

Safe practice

- Limit athletes in accordance with Ontario Ministry of Health guidance and physical distancing measures.
 - Adjust pool space usage and coach/lifeguard supervision assignments as necessary for adequate safety supervision.
- When scheduling, consider flow through the facility including shared spaces such as lobbies and change rooms.

- Create COVID-19 policies, procedures and protocols and communicate them to athletes and guardians and train staff on them. This may include:
 - Screening & self-assessment
 - Entrance/exits and building flow
 - Mask wearing
 - Sanitization and disinfection of surfaces and equipment
 - Hand and respiratory hygiene
 - Minimizing touch points
 - Maintaining physical distancing
- Implement physical reminders that support COVID-19 policies, procedures and protocols. These may include but not limited to:
 - Signage
 - Floor markings

Coach and trainer responsibilities

Coaches and Trainers must know and follow the policies, protocols and procedures established by the affiliate/club.

In addition, Coaches and Trainers should identify potential risks during practice and develop measures to eliminate, mitigate and control the potential for COVID-19 transmission during training.

Equipment

Where possible, avoid sharing of equipment. Implement strategies like numbering or bringing your own equipment to avoid cross contamination. Where equipment needs to be shared, clean and disinfect between users.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

All athletes are reminded that they are required to wear a mask at all times when inside the facility including the pool deck. Athletes shall remove their mask immediately prior to entering the water to begin their session and put their mask back on immediately at the conclusion of their session.

During dryland activities, athletes should practice physical distancing and wear appropriate PPE (at minimum a mask, and optionally eyewear and/or gloves). A distance of 3 m should be maintained between athletes during dryland activities.

During simulated rescue training, athletes should practice donning and taking off PPE as they might in a real-life rescue. (Note: a wet face mask

is not effective PPE and wearing a face mask in the water is a breathing hazard.)

Safety supervision

Coaches and/or lifeguards remain responsible for the safety supervision of athletes in the water. Adjust as required by physical distancing requirements. For more information read the [COVID-19 and Staff Training Information Bulletin](#).

Training adaptations

Adaptations to training sessions may be required to address physical distancing, personal contact restrictions, recommended hygiene protocols, and restricted ratio requirements.

- Encourage athletes to wear goggles.
- “Bubble buddies” are defined as a partner or group of three that work together exclusively throughout the session to limit physical contact with others.
- Have athletes grouped into training bubbles for each practice during the season.

Activation (on-deck) requirements

Due to inclement weather and the importance of pre-pool activation, on-deck activation (see list of allowable activities for activation) under the following conditions would be allowed:

- Facility approval/endorsement is mandatory.
- On-deck pre-pool activation must be part of the regularly scheduled training permit, where transition times shall remain in place.
- Maximum allowable length of time for an activation session is 15 minutes.
- Pre-pool activation group numbers must not exceed the maximum training group size allowed in pool by the facility.
- Masks must be worn at all times by all participants.
- 2 m physical distancing must be maintained at all times, and when fitness activities are planned this distance should be increased to 3 m.
- A pre-assigned space for each swimmer must be clearly marked (consider yoga mats).
- All activation activities shall be permitted only when there are no multi-group traffic flow issues.

- All athletes have their own equipment – absolutely no sharing of equipment.
- Equipment must be wiped down prior to and after use: athletes wipe their deck space with a sanitizing wipe after the assigned session and discard the wipe in a trash bin.
- Coaches must directly supervise/coach activities at all times.

Pre-pool activation cannot occur when:

- On-deck space is also designated as a walk-through for other users.
- Other groups are entering/exiting the training space.

List of acceptable on-deck “activation” movements/activities:

- Arm or leg swings/rotations, etc.
- Stationary core work in a designated spot.
- Resistance band activities for shoulder stability (injury prehab/rehab only).
- Towel/rope/band shoulder rotations.
- Core stability.
- Activities that do not raise the core temperature or the heart rate, i.e., no skipping rope or jogging on the spot.

Officials responsibilities

All officials are reminded that they are required to wear a mask at all times when inside the facility including on the pool deck.

Officials are to maintain physical distancing while performing their duties or while training. Officials should ensure physical distancing precautions are followed to the best extent possible.

Resources

Lifesaving Society

- [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#)
- [Guide to Training During COVID-19](#)
- [Competitive Swimmer Training](#)

Province of Ontario

- [Reopening Ontario](#)
- [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#)
- [Public Health Ontario COVID-19 Public Resources](#)

Other competitive sport organizations

- [Swim Canada](#)
- [Swim Ontario](#)
- [Athletics Ontario](#)
- [Canoe Kayak Ontario](#)