

# Return to Sport Resource Document

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Table of Contents

Legal Disclaimer ..... 2

[WPC COVID-19 Acknowledgement of Risks Form](#)

Return to Aquatics – Principles for a safe return to sport framework ..... 3

Overarching Health, Medical and Safety Information and Considerations: ..... 4

    General info about COVID-19 and Aquatics ..... 4

    Health Monitoring ..... 5

    Returning to Training following a positive COVID-19 test ..... 5

    Home Isolation Recommendations ..... 5

    Physical Distancing ..... 6

    Hand and Personal Hygiene ..... 6

    Use of Equipment ..... 6

    Safe Sport ..... 6

Return to Sport – Water Polo Training Guidelines ..... 7

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*Thank you to Swimming Canada Natation in particular, as well as Canada Artistic Swimming and Diving Plongeon Canada, for their help in creating this document.*

*Water Polo Saskatchewan presents this document to its membership as a Return to Play reference document in accordance with the National Sport Organization Water Polo Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan, and its Chief Medical Officer.*

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**Water Polo participant must complete and sign the [WPC COVID-19 Acknowledgement of Risks Form](#) accessible online.**

## Return to Aquatics – Principles for a safe return to sport framework

The four Aquatics Canada sport organizations (Canada Artistic Swimming, Diving Plongeon Canada, Swimming Canada and Water Polo Canada) are committed to a safe and healthy return to the pool for all aquatic sport participants. To that end, the four sports have created a joint working group to share information, best practices and align in our shared belief that a safe return is possible, and that the health of our communities remains our top priority.

Each organization has developed its own sport specific return to sport framework. The tenets of each plan are consistent and follow all current public health information. These include a commitment to physical distancing at all stages of training, equipment cleanliness, hygiene, health monitoring, safe sport and on-going communication.

Sport is valued by Canadians and is a proven mechanism to strengthen, unite and build Canadian communities. Aquatic sports and our athletes are looked at as role models not only in the sport community but in the country at large. Our return to sport/work can show a way forward and can help Canadian communities re-unite. A safe return to the pool is critical to this process.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the collective aquatics community has had to significantly adapt its routines and activities in order to prioritize the health and wellbeing of Canadians as a whole. Aquatics Canada would like to thank everyone in the aquatics community for their leadership and commitment to flattening the curve. While it has been difficult to step away from the pool, our efforts have played an important part in combatting the pandemic.

### Establishing the Principles of Return to Sport

According to the Centre for Disease Control (USA), there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through swimming pools. COVID-19 has a fragile lipid outer membrane and is therefore highly susceptible to elimination by soaps and oxidants, such as chlorine. Proper maintenance and disinfection with Chlorine or Bromine should inactivate the virus (CDC 2020).

A return to sport must strictly adhere to the policies and procedures outlined by provincial and municipal governments and public health agencies that have been established to ensure a safe environment for all. The aquatic sports joint working group has agreed on a number of key principles that will form the foundation of the return to our respective sports. These principles include:

**Physical Distancing:** Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. Return to sport must adhere to physical distancing in accordance with requirements of public health authorities and facility operators. Protective mask must be worn when mandatory by your facility, city and/or SHA.

**Hygiene:** In addition to physical distancing, handwashing and cough etiquette add another layer of protection against the spread of COVID-19. Return to sport plans must implement and monitor appropriate individual personal hygiene practices among staff, coaches and all participants at home (away from training) and during training.

**Equipment Cleaning:** Surfaces frequently touched with hands are most likely to be contaminated however Coronaviruses are one of the easiest types of viruses to kill with the [appropriate disinfectant](#) product when used according to the label directions.

**Individual Health Monitoring:** Daily individual health monitoring processes and tracking need to be in place. Monitoring will be under the responsibility of participants (or parents if under 18 years old) and monitoring will be under Clubs/program responsibility. Individuals should not return to sport if they have been unwell (even mild symptoms), have had contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 or have travelled outside the country in the past 14 days. Staff or athletes at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to review their specific health concerns with their primary care provider prior to attending training sessions.

**Safe Sport Environment:** In these unique times, our commitment to providing a safe sport environment for all participants cannot waver. A return to sport program must be designed to ensure all aspects of a safe sport environment can be implemented and followed.

**Planning and Communication:** A robust return to training plan that includes regular communication and education with key stakeholders including athletes, coaches and others, is key for any club.

Finally, our four Aquatics National Sport Organizations would like to thank Dr. Suzanne Leclerc, CMO of the Institut national du sport du Québec, who has collaborated closely with us to produce this document.

## Overarching Health, Medical and Safety Information and Considerations:

Water Polo Canada wants to thank Swimming Canada Natation for giving us permission to use and adapt this section's content.

### General info about COVID-19 and Aquatics

COVID-19 is a type of coronavirus mostly found in animals, but when humans become infected, symptoms can range from mild to severe depending on a number of variables. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Tragic consequences of this virus are being experienced around the world, including within Canada. There are many ongoing challenges for all of us to manage, and for our Canadian aquatics community, a safe and responsible return to sport is paramount. The intent of the following information is not to provide permission to return to sport, but rather to supply the reader with a guide to current medical recommendations in an attempt to mitigate risks related to COVID-19. The goal is to avoid becoming infected, and spreading to other people in the community. This document is meant to complement not replace local public health and recreation facility advice.

COVID-19 has a fragile lipid outer membrane, and is therefore highly susceptible to soaps and oxidants, such as chlorine. According to the Centre for Disease Control, there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools, hot tubs or spas. Proper operation maintenance, disinfection with chlorine or bromine of pools should inactivate the virus (CDC 2020). A related coronavirus which caused the SARS epidemic in 2003, was found to be inactivated by UV treatment and disinfectors.

The following health, medical, and safety information are considered to be applicable to all Steps of the Return to Aquatics Framework until such time that public health information and guidelines change. In addition, this information is generally applicable to all training environments including indoor pools, outdoor pools, open water, gym and outdoor land training. Provincial and Municipal Public Health information and guidelines must be respected at all times and supersede the information below.

## Health Monitoring

- Members who are sick or symptomatic must not enter/participate. Participants, spectators and volunteers should use the Government of Saskatchewan's online self-assessment tool to help determine if the illness may be COVID-19. The tool provides people with next steps depending on their responses.
- Athletes, coaches, and staff must answer 'NO' to all the following questions prior to attending any training session:
  - Do I have any of the symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, difficult breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, abnormal muscle pain, headache, sore throat, painful swallowing, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal illness?
  - Have I been in contact with or cared for someone with COVID-19?
  - Have I returned from a trip outside the country within the last 2 weeks?
  - Stay home when sick, even with mild symptoms
- If a person becomes sick, they should immediately stop participating and return home.
- Any athlete or staff member that is required to leave a training session as a consequence of experiencing signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 is required to contact their physician to consider the appropriateness of further investigations. Further investigations may include a test for COVID-19, which then may lead to the notification of appropriate public health officials regarding a positive test result. Public health officials will determine any requirements related to facility and/or group operations, as well as any requirements around contact tracing as it relates to managing the spread of the virus. The athlete or staff member may not return until receiving clearance from the physician, and if a test for COVID-19 was completed, a negative test result will be required before further training is permitted. If home isolation is required, guidelines have been provided in a subsequent section below.
- Staff or athletes at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to review their specific health concerns with their primary care provider prior to attending training sessions.
  - Common underlying health conditions which may place an individual at higher risk would include hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma and those who are otherwise immunocompromised.

## Returning to Training following a positive COVID-19 test

The decision on when it is appropriate to return to training following a positive COVID-19 test will require medical advice and clearance by the attending physician and in accordance with Provincial guidelines. Recommendations will vary based on a number of factors and may include further testing in some cases. Please seek the advice of your health care practitioner.

## Home Isolation Recommendations

If you find yourself ill with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19,

- Remain at home except to get urgent medical care.
- Do not go to work, school, pool or other public places.
- Cancel non urgent appointments.
- Do not use public transport.
- Notify your doctor or local health department by phone, as testing may be required.
- Monitor your symptoms and seek medical attention if you are having difficulty breathing, are unable to drink fluids, or if your illness is significantly worsening.
- Wear a face masks when around others, particularly when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Separate from household members, at least 2 meters at all times.
- Do not have visitors.
- Stay in a well ventilated room (open windows) and use your own bathroom if possible.
- Sanitize common use surfaces frequently.
- If close contacts are vulnerable in terms of their health, consider alternative accommodations.
- Avoid sharing household items.
- Maintain excellent hand hygiene.
- Follow any other local health regulations

### Physical Distancing

As of June 11, 2021, SHA as raised all the physical distancing recommendation.

However Athletes/coaches wishing to maintain physical distancing can do so if they are more comfortable with it.

### Hand and Personal Hygiene

The following measures are still recommended:

- Clean/wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer (>60% alcohol). Coaches and athletes are encouraged to carry a personal supply of hand sanitizer for use as needed before, during and after training.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- On arrival and departure of the facility, athletes, coaches, and staff must wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough.
- All frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected prior to a new group being provided access to the pool deck, including benches, bleachers, railings, door handles, etc.
- Do not share food and drinks.

### Use of Equipment

As of June 11, 2021, SHA as raised all the extensive special Covid-19 cleaning measures.

### Safe Sport

- All efforts should be made to ensure that Open and Observable environments are maintained at all times. Open and observable environments means making meaningful and concerted efforts to

avoid situations where a coach, official or other representative might be alone with an athlete and/or vulnerable individual. All interactions between an athlete and an individual who is in a position of trust should normally, and wherever possible, be in an environment or space that is both “open” and “observable” to others.

- All training sessions shall respect the principles outlined in the Coaching Association of Canada’s Responsible Coaching Movement including the Rule of Two.

### Return to Sport – Water Polo Training Guidelines

4-STEP RETURN TO TRAINING GUIDELINES				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<b>Canada/Sask Public Health</b>	<u>3m PHYSICAL DISTANCING APPLIED</u>		SHA Contact indoor sport	<u>NO PHYSICAL DISTANCING</u>
<b>Travel Restrictions</b>	Local travel only – No inter provincial, no inter regional travel			Domestic travel permitted
<b>Training Location</b>	Personal swimming pool OR Open water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All location permitted.</li> </ul>	
<b>Training Options</b>	In-water training (solo) if access to own pool only, or open water.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No limitation in maximum of athletes/coaches</li> <li>• Physical contact and game allowed</li> </ul>

### STEP 4 – Supporting Guidelines

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS	
<b>Public Health</b>	All Covid-19 restriction have been lifted.
<b>Arrival Procedures</b>	All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.
<b>Sanitation Procedures</b>	All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.
<b>Offices or Shared Spaces</b>	All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.
<b>Equipment</b>	All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.
<b>All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.</b>	All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.



**AQUATIC TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS**

<p align="center"><b>Participants in the pool</b></p>	<p><i>Based on the ongoing lifting of restrictions across the country at different rates Water Polo Canada is asking Province Sport Organizations to consider the following addition to this section.</i></p> <p><i>All Covid-19 restricitons have been lifted.</i></p> <p><i>However Provincial Sport Organizations and Clubs are encouraged to work closely with their facility managers and Public Health Officials to determine if any local specific measures have been maintained, and follow them.</i></p> <p><i>Finally if individual members wish to maintain mask and/or physical distance, they should be comfortable to do so.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Personal Bins on Pool Deck (optional)</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Change area &amp;</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Interactions between Team Members</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Warm up</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Hydration</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Toilet</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 procedures have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Swim training</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 restriction have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Individual ball or technical skills</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 restriction have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Passing &amp; Shooting</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 restriction have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Duels/ opposition - close contact work</b></p>	
<p align="center"><b>Close contact situational activities, or scrimmages</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 restriction have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Cool Down</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 restriction have been lifted.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Post Training Meetings</b></p>	<p><i>All Covid-19 restriction have been lifted.</i></p>