

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RETURN TO SPORT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

December 28, 2020

PROVINCIAL RESTRICTIONS ON EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

Q: What restrictions are in place for sport?

A: On December 24, 2020, sport-specific updates were added to the Provincial Health Officer Order on Gatherings and Events, available on [this page](#). The intent of this order is to significantly reduce social interactions and travel. The impacts on sport include:

- All indoor and outdoor adult group sport activities for people 22 years of age and older are limited to the following:
 - Indoor activities – maximum of two people unless the participants are in the same immediate household
 - Outdoor activities – maximum of four people unless participants are in the same immediate household
 - Physical distance of 3 metres is always maintained on the field of play
- The government website lists a number of sports as examples, but it is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list. **All sport** must follow these restrictions.
- Indoor and outdoor sport for people under 22 years of age can continue but:
 - Participants must maintain a physical distance of three metres from one another while on the field of play;
 - Activities should be low risk of transmitting the virus (e.g. individual activities, group training that maintains physical distance). Tournaments and competitions for teams are not allowed.
- Travel restrictions are in place for sport. Individuals can only travel to their home club at which they train regularly.
- No spectators are allowed at any sport activities unless to provide care for the participant.

Q: How long are the restrictions in place?

A: There is no expiry date on the PHO Order for events and gatherings. The Order can be revised at any time or additional orders could be put in place that supersede this order. The PHO has indicated that these restrictions will be in place until at least January 8, 2021.

Q: What has changed since the written order on December 3, 2020?

A: The restrictions related to limiting travel and no spectators that were announced verbally on November 19 are still in place. Additionally, the Events and Gatherings Order released on December 3 includes the suspension of adult (22 and older) team sport activities and outlines that sport for children and youth (under 22) can continue provided the activities are low risk and can maintain three metres of physical distance. Further updates to the Order were released on December 24 to provide additional clarity related to the definition of children and youth sport, adult group sport, high performance, travel and varsity sport.

Q: What are the current travel restrictions in place?

A: No group travel for sport is permitted. Individuals are permitted to travel to their home club. Home club is defined as the sport organization, club, or facility at which a person is registered for ongoing sport programming.

Q: What exemptions are in place for high performance athletes?

A: High performance athletes are individuals that have been identified to a targeted athlete list with the Canadian Sport Institute Pacific by their respective Provincial Sport Organization or National Sport Organization. A person who is a high-performance athlete who is already training in B.C. may train, compete and travel for that purpose if they follow the COVID safety protocols of their respective provincial or national sport organization.

Q: What restrictions are in place for spectators?

A: No spectators are permitted for sport, unless necessary to provide care to a participant (e.g. first aid attendants).

Q: Are masks required when participating in indoor sport?

A: Masks are now required to be worn by all individuals in indoor public settings. This includes common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity. Masks may be removed temporarily in indoor public places while participating in a sport or fitness activity.

Link: [Mask Mandate Order](#)

Q: Are in-person coach/officials training courses allowed to occur?

A: In person group education should only occur if absolutely necessary. The current Gathering and Events Order states, "For certainty, this Order does not apply to students and instructors when engaged in occupational training activities which cannot be provided virtually by their nature." The host organization of a training course must have a safety plan in place for the training event that outlines appropriate safety protocols such as physical distancing, mask use, etc.

Q: Are there enforcement mechanisms in place?

A: Orders can be enforced by police or other compliance and enforcement officials. Individuals or organizations who do not follow the order can be fined.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/violation-tickets>

Q: If we are a sport organizations but are running low or high intensity classes, do we need to follow Public Health's Guidance to Group Low Intensity Exercise?

A: Yes, all group fitness activities, including fitness activities run by sport organizations, must comply with current Provincial Health Officer Orders and Public Health guidance.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-public-health-guidelines-low-intensity-exercise.pdf>

ADULT SPORT

Q: What is the definition of adult?

A: Adults are 22 years of age and older. The PHO Order for Events and Gatherings differentiates between adult and youth sport activities.

Q: If three metres physical distance can be maintained, can team programming for adults continue?

A: No. Adult group sport is defined as sporting activities involving more than one person and includes training and practice for an individual team sport. Indoor group sport is only permitted in groups of up to two people (e.g. singles tennis or an athlete and a coach training session) unless the participants are in the same immediate household. Outdoor group sport is only permitted in groups of up to four people (e.g. four individuals may run together or four individuals could run soccer drills) unless the participants are in the same immediate household. All participants must maintain a distance of three metres from one another while participating in the sport activity.

Q: Are adults able to access a sport facility to train?

A: Similar to a gym setting, individuals may access a facility to train individually or with a partner or coach (up to two people). If the facility is outdoors, individuals may train in groups of up to four.

Multiple individuals or groups may be able to access a facility at one time (space permitting) provided there are no gatherings occurring. For example, more than one tennis court can be used at a time but individuals must stay to their assigned space.

Q: What happens for programs that have a mix of adult and youth participants?

A: The program may continue; however, this Order unfortunately means that those who are 22 years of age and older must follow the group sport restrictions.

Q: Can varsity athletes continue to train?

A: Varsity sport is defined in the order as a sport for which the eligibility requirements for participation are established by a national association for the regulation of intercollegiate athletics, or which is designated as a varsity sport program by a post-secondary institution. Individuals may participate in varsity sport if they are a member of a varsity sport team and they only train or practice with the post-secondary institution with which they are enrolled. At this time, varsity sport need to follow the children and youth restrictions.

SPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Q: What activities are allowed for children and youth? Can programming include games?

A: Indoor and outdoor sport for children and youth (under 22 years of age) can continue, but:

- Participants must maintain a physical distance of three metres from one another;
- Activities should be low risk of transmitting the virus (e.g. individual activities, group training that maintains physical distance). Tournaments and competitions for teams are not allowed.

Q: Has the definition of physical distance changed?

A: Previous guidelines related to sport have referred to physical distance as two metres. However, the PHO Order for Events and Gatherings specifically states that youth sports need to maintain three metres of physical distance while on the field of play.

Q: Are there maximum group sizes in place for youth?

A: Group sizes are dependent on the size of the facility and the ability to maintain physical distance of at least three metres during the activities. No matter how large the space is, group sizes cannot exceed 50 people.

Q: Can youth team sports still have games within their home club?

A: Team games and competitions are not permitted at this time. Individual sports such as tennis or badminton (1 on 1) may still play games within the club setting.

Q: Can individual sports such as swimming or speed skating still run informal time trials within the club setting?

A: If the intent of the activity is for training where officials and extra volunteers are not necessary, and all other components of the Order are followed, these activities can occur.

Q: If masks are worn, can the requirement to physical distance be reduced?

A: Masks can be worn as an additional layer of protection, but the requirement to maintain three metres of physical distance is still in place.

Q: Can I attend a group activity with my youth sport team, like a wind-up, team photo shoot or holiday party, which is scheduled outside of my dedicated training time?

A: This is considered to be an event or social gathering and is prohibited by the PHO Order. Group activities, other than time dedicated to training, are not considered to be youth sport. These activities fall under the definition of “event” found in the PHO Health Order and is addressed under Section B of the Order.