

COVID-19 Public Health Guidance: Sports and Recreational Fitness

Last Updated September 17, 2021

This document outlines guidance for owners and operators of indoor recreational facilities; including gymnasiums, health clubs, community centres, multi-purpose facilities, arenas, exercise studios, yoga and dance studios, professional and elite amateur sports leagues and events, and other fitness facilities, to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. It does not replace guidance from the Province. This document is for information purposes only, and shall not be construed as legal advice.

Provincial Roadmap to Reopen at a glance

On July 16, 2021, Ontario moved into Step 3 of the [Roadmap to Reopen](#). Residents, organizations, and businesses must abide by the public health measures for Step 3. See [O. Reg. 364/20, Schedules 1, 2 and 3](#), for regulations for Step 3. The Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts will continue to monitor the data to determine when it is safe to exit the Roadmap.

Provincial Return-to-Play Framework for Professional and Elite Amateur Sport Leagues and Events

On June 14, the Province released the [Return-to-Play Framework](#) for organizers and operators of 18 select [professional and elite-amateur sport leagues, as well as International and single sport events](#). This Framework provides the minimum requirements for return-to-play plans to reduce and manage the risk of COVID-19.

Note that the minimum requirements in the Return-to-Play Framework do not affect any applicable legislative or regulatory requirements related to health and safety, such as those in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) or the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*.

Below are some of the activities that may apply to sports and recreational fitness for Step 3. For specific questions about COVID-19 provincial regulations, please contact the **Stop the Spread Business Information Line** at 1-888-444-3659.

Step 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdoor and indoor fitness classes and personal training permitted<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The number of patrons must be limited to the number that can maintain a distance of two metres (six feet) physical distance○ Indoor capacity limited to 50%• Outdoor and indoor sports and recreational facilities open<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Spectators must wear masks in indoor areas. Masks must also be worn outdoors if unable to maintain physical distancing○ Proof of vaccination or an eligible exemption is required for spectators

To support safe operations, operators must also abide by:

- Provincial [sector-specific guidelines, Return-to-Play Framework for Professional and Elite Amateur Sport Leagues and Events](#) and [guidance documents](#).
- Additional guidelines provided by specific sport coordinating bodies.

Ontario's enhanced COVID-19 vaccine certificate

Starting September 22, 2021, the provincial government will require certain businesses and settings to obtain proof of vaccination from customers/patrons. For more information refer to the [Proof of Vaccination Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#).

Instructions for workplaces from Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health

Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health (MOH) issued [amended Instructions to businesses and organizations](#) to help keep staff and customers/patrons safe. The instructions take effect at 12:01 a.m. on **Friday, September 10, 2021**. They combine key existing requirements from the Province and Halton Region Public Health, with some new requirements. **Compliance with these instructions is mandatory.**

Workplace vaccination

Workplace vaccination policy

To reduce COVID-19 transmission in the workplace, Halton Region's MOH recommends all local employers have a [workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy](#). For workplaces with more than 100 workers physically present, Halton Region Public Health requires mandatory [COVID-19 safety plans](#) and vaccination policies in place by September 22, 2021.

Encourage everyone to get a COVID-19 vaccine

Getting vaccinated is one of the ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. Here are some ways you can support vaccination at your workplace:

- Develop a [workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy](#)
- Ensure employees are aware that everyone in Canada is eligible to receive a vaccine for free. Proof of identity is required but a health card is not required for vaccination.
- Share [COVID-19 vaccine resources](#), with staff, available in multiple languages

Additional COVID-19 public health measures

The following COVID-19 Public Health Measures recommended by Halton Region Public Health should be considered in all steps of Ontario's [Roadmap to Reopen](#).

Reduce physical contact

- Offer an online or phone registration process. If in-person registration is required, physical distancing is required and pens, PIN pads and self-pay stations must be sanitized before and after each use.
- Consider the suspension of towel and other rental services. If offered, towels should be clearly separated (clean and used) and appropriately laundered using hot water (60°C to 90°C) and dried well.
- Limit the use of water fountains to be used only for re-filling water bottles, and not for patrons to drink directly from the spout of the fountain.

Maximize physical distancing

- Encourage people to maintain physical distance by using [signage](#)
- For high intensity fitness activities and/or activities with a wide range of movement (for example, dance fitness, medicine ball or kettlebell exercises), maintain a physical distance of greater than two metres (six feet) between patrons and consider conducting the activity outdoors.
- Encourage patrons to complete their activity and exit the facility without unnecessary delay.
- If feasible or when required, create a booking system that allows a specified time slot to attend the facility. Ensure there is time between time slots for cleaning and disinfection, and to reduce crowding when entering or checking in. Request that patrons arrive no more than five minutes before their time slot.

Wear a mask and use personal protective equipment (PPE)

- [Consolidated By-law 47-20](#) requires individuals to wear a mask in indoor workplaces and public spaces, unless exempt.
- Workers are recommended to wear a mask when they cannot maintain physical distance of 2 metres (six feet) and cannot be separated by Plexiglass or a barrier.
- PPE (surgical/procedure mask and eye protection i.e. goggles or face shield) is required to be worn by workers when a distance of 2 metres (six feet) cannot be maintained from another person not wearing a mask indoors and cannot be separated by Plexiglass or a barrier.
- Masks can be removed when eating or drinking, but individuals must maintain physical distancing of two metres (six feet) between them.
- Masks are encouraged while engaging in physical activity if it can be done safely, but may be removed if necessary.
- Masks do not replace other important public health measures, such as screening, physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve and staying home when feeling ill.

Keep hands and surfaces clean

- Post [signage](#) to encourage proper hand washing.
- Ensure frequent [cleaning and disinfecting](#) of high touch surfaces and common areas including:
 - Cleaning and disinfecting equipment and class studios between users or at the end of a class and/or game.
 - Cleaning washrooms, water fountains, locker rooms, change rooms and/or showers at least twice a day and when visibly dirty.

Ensure appropriate ventilation

- Ensure heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are maintained and operating as designed.
- Maximize fresh air intake by opening windows, if possible.
- Limit the use of overhead ceiling fans especially ceiling fans on low ceilings. Avoid the use of pedestal or high-powered fans on/near the floor.

Additional resources

- Halton Region Public Health:
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance: Restaurants, Bars, Food Trucks and other Food and Drink Establishments](#) (if food, snacks and/or beverages are offered at your facility)
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance: Recreational Water Facilities](#)
- Government of Ontario
 - [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Reopening Ontario](#)
- Fitness Industry Council of Canada:
 - [Framework for Exercise Facilities Operating in a COVID-19 Environment in Ontario](#)