

EMERGING FROM COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

A Guide for a Club's Safe Return to Swimming

June 22, 2020

THIS GUIDANCE WILL BE UPDATED AS NEEDED
TO REFLECT COVID-19 PANDEMIC DEVELOPMENTS



**Canadian Independent
Masters Swimming
Maîtres-nageurs indépendants du Canada**



Introduction

This document is intended for CIMS, MSM and MSO affiliated clubs. It outlines club responsibilities and considerations, as swimming facilities reopen and clubs plan their return to training. It also points to relevant resources that clubs can use in preparing their return-to swimming plans.

Indoor, outdoor and OWS venues each require their own risk assessments and plans. If club-organized OWS training is envisaged, please also refer to the [OWS Guidance](#).

Facilities used by our clubs are owned and operated by cities, universities, boards of education, YMCAs and some are privately owned, e.g., sports club. OWS venues may be privately or publically owned, e.g., Provincial Park authorities.

Provincial and local governments, and facility owners will direct the timing and conditions for the reopening of facilities. It is important that clubs stay current with developments for their region and facility. Clubs should engage facility owners as soon as possible to reserve time and, if possible, provide input in the planning of the rules/conditions for return to swimming at their facility.

Our clubs may be affiliated with CIMS-MSM-MSO only. Some may also be affiliated with Swim Canada through one of its Provincial Swimming Organization (PSO) who will communicate any additional reopening requirements.

Irrespective of club model¹ or affiliation, clubs have the responsibility to translate COVID-19 reopening rules/conditions into club plans to offer safe training sessions, communicate new rules/conditions to its members and respond quickly in the event that a swimmer, coach, club staff or volunteer becomes infected with COVID-19.

¹ There is no single club model. Our clubs may be single, independent entities, whether incorporated or not. Some clubs operate as an extension of a municipal or private (e.g., YMCA, sports club) recreational program. Still others may be integrated with an age group club, operating under single administration.

Most clubs are run by its members with a governance structure overseen by a club executive while others are privately owned.

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Club responsibilities

There is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through pool water treated with chlorine or bromine². The risk of transmission via fresh water bodies is described as infinitesimally small³. The risks come from:

- The facility itself (e.g., the pool decks and surroundings, locker rooms, showers, washrooms and other amenities/equipment);
- Participant interactions (e.g., traffic flow, insufficient distancing); and
- Individual hygiene and behaviour.

Provincial and local governments, and facility owners will set out the timing and rules/conditions for sporting activities to proceed, with input from advisory bodies such as the *Lifesaving Society*⁴, *Swim Canada* etc.

These reopening conditions will set the framework within which clubs must plan their own operations and practices. Do not expect “practices as usual”. Restrictions on numbers will impact both club operations and finances.

Participants⁵ themselves will decide when they are ready to return to the pool. Once the club has a “feeling” for how practices might be conducted, a member survey is advised.

A [COVID-19 Webpage](#) provides a copy of this guidance, the Club Declaration form and all new or revised participant waivers and attestations.

Regarding Club Insurance

As we return to swimming this summer, clubs must be *members in good standing* to retain insurance through CIMS-MSM-MSO.

At this time, our insurance policy has no exclusion for COVID-19. This may change as we renew our insurance for September 1, 2020.

The directors and officers (i.e., club executive) of a CIMS-MSM-MSO registered club are responsible for the oversight of risk associated with their programs. While the planning for a return to swimming may be delegated to a committee, the club executive cannot

² [Centre for Disease Control](#), Statement last reviewed June 17, 2020

³ [Dr. Jason Kindrachuk](#), Canada Research Chair in emerging viruses, May 24, 2020 Interview

⁴ [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#), *Lifesaving Society*, June 2020

⁵ **Participants** include swimmers, coaches, volunteers and staff as applicable to the club.

delegate its fiduciary responsibilities. Therefore, *Return to Swimming* decisions must be recorded in accordance with the club's governance structure.

The club executive is responsible for all representations made to stakeholders, whether they are financial, operational, strategic or social. This includes how you handle a crisis like COVID-19 and the club's return to swimming. Members, employees, stakeholders and authorities could point to your alleged negligence, omissions and misstatement in handling the COVID-19 pandemic should there be a sentiment that your actions were inadequate.

Lifeguards / Coaches

It is expected that lifeguards will receive additional training by the facility according to the guidance from the *Lifesaving Society*. It is therefore useful to review their *Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts*⁶.

Some clubs have coaches with National Lifesaving Society (NLS) certification perform lifeguarding duties in addition to or in place of the facility's lifeguarding staff. Clubs must ensure that any coaches who are expected to also fulfill the lifeguarding role have updated COVID-19 related training.

Club Return to Swim Planning

Clubs may wish to create a COVID-19 committee. Irrespective of how a club organizes itself, planning and decisions should be recorded in accordance with the club's governance structure. Coaches need to be part of the planning process.

A *point of contact* should be appointed for any COVID-19 related communications with participants.

The club's planning should:

- Monitor the latest COVID-19 developments and their implications;
- Prepare a training/operational plan;
- Implement updated swimmer / coach registration and obtain new waivers from all participants, including volunteers and staff if applicable;
- Prepare communications to participants for the return to Swim;
- Prepare a plan (including communications) should a participant become infected with COVID-19; and

⁶ [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#), Lifesaving Society, June 2020

- Be prepared to modify training schedule and other plans as the situation evolves.

Club must communicate new processes and rules to all participants, and follow up to ensure that measures are being respected. Clubs that are IT adept may wish to consider creating a video to communicate new processes.

Training Sessions (Operational Plan)

Indoor, outdoor and OWS venues each require their own risk assessments and plans. If the club-organized OWS training is envisaged, please also refer to the [OWS Guidance](#).

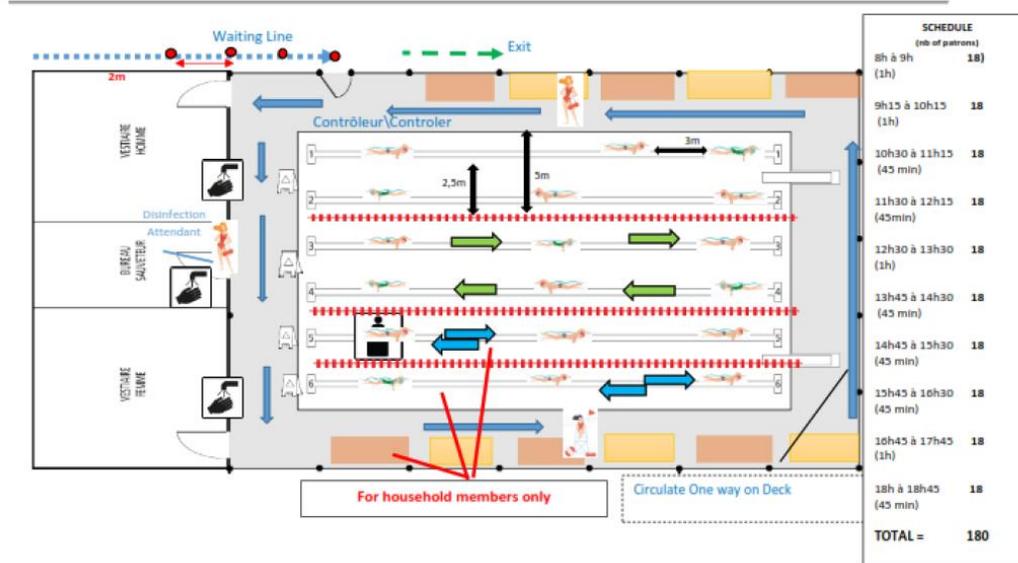
If other groups are using the venue at the same time or immediately before or after your training session, verify the facility's rules/conditions for how distancing and transitions are to be managed in order to maintain required distances and [minimize risk of transition](#). Provide arrival and departure instructions to limit the use of change rooms and waiting time on deck.

While adhering to the facility's directions, clubs should (not exhaustive):

- Keep participation to those essential, e.g., swimmers, coaches
- Keep training groups **homogeneous**, i.e., same swimmers and same coach for a given training session;
- Record attendance and retain on file to permit contact tracing should there be COVID-19 transmission;
- Verify participants for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms **before each practice**;
- Organize lanes to ensure physical distancing not only during active (swim) periods but also during rest periods (see Lifesaving Society model below⁷);
- Eliminate shared equipment, i.e., use no-toy OR own-toy practice sets;
- Only facility staff or coaches should handle equipment, e.g., lane ropes, backstroke flags, pace clocks, etc.
- Be prepared to present workouts without the use of whiteboards;
- On-deck, dryland work is discouraged.

⁷ [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#), Page 54 Lifesaving Society, June 2020

Model of organization of aquatics activities with physical distance



Participant Responsibilities

Facilities and clubs are working to provide a safe training environment.

Swimmers/coaches must take seriously their own responsibilities for reducing the risk of passing COVID-19 to others as well the risks of becoming infected themselves.

Clubs must communicate clear **rules for swimmer/coach participation**.

For example,

- In addition to club processes, all swimmers and coaches returning to training in 2019-2020 must complete updated waivers and a *COVID-19 Attestation and Agreement* ([posted on the website](#)). These will be part of the registration requirements for 2020-2021.
- Every participant should complete a [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) before returning to training, taking into account their age and any underlying health conditions.
- A participant must:
 - leave practice and inform the club contact/coach if feeling unwell or showing signs⁸ of COVID-19 during or after a practice;

⁸ Symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, abnormal muscle pain, headache, sore throat, painful swallowing, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell, and/or gastrointestinal illness.

- self-isolate if displaying symptoms or coming into contact with someone who is displaying symptoms or has COVID-19;
- self-isolate for 14 days if you or someone in your household have traveled outside the country or region.
- Athletes must be cleared for training by a physician after being diagnosed or suspected to have COVID-19.

A COVID-19 Infection Occurs – Now What?

In spite of adhering to the facility requirements and club plans, a COVID-19 infection can still happen.

BEFORE the first practice, the club must have a plan in place to manage the possibility that a swimmer/coach has contracted COVID-19, irrespective of how or where the infection occurred.

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of the coach, the club executive or volunteers should an outbreak occur.
 - Who in the club is responsible for modifying, restricting, postponing or cancelling activities?
 - Who is responsible for communicating with participant?
- Notify facility administration and Public Health if a swimmer / coach reports they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. (NOTE: The facility itself may cover notifications in their updated rules/conditions.);
- Implement and monitor the Rules for Participation (above).
- Take the necessary actions to protect the remaining swimmers/coaches by modifying, restricting, postponing or cancelling activities.
- Communications: inform participants of the transmission and any actions regarding remaining practices/activities.

Bringing your swimmers back – Registration

Provinces currently restrict the size of a group and hence the number of swimmers per practice. Demand could exceed a club's participation capacity. As a masters-only organization, CIMS-MSM-MSO has not prioritized returning swimmers. Only integrated

clubs that are also affiliated with SNC are impacted by the prioritization outlined in the *SNC Return to Swimming Resource Document*⁹ and FAQs¹⁰.

To address capacity, clubs could initially offer a single training session per swimmer and then increasing this to fill remaining vacant spots. Allocating spots via a lottery is preferable to *first come – first served*.

Clubs should no longer offer an open training schedule whereby swimmers can move freely from one session to another. All sessions should be homogeneous – same swimmers, same coach.

As an adult-only program, provide swimmers with information on [vulnerable populations](#) and links to the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) so that they may make informed decisions on when to return to training.

Clubs are encouraged to survey their swimmers regarding their intentions to return. Some sample questions are provided below.

All swimmers and coaches returning to training in 2019-2020 must complete new waivers. These will be part of the registration requirements for 2020-2021.

Survey your swimmers

Many clubs may or may not have remained in contact with their members. As pool reopening approaches it will be important to gauge any concerns as swimmer decided when to return to the pool. A member survey / discussion will be helpful for club planning. Consider questions like.....

- 1) As pools prepare to reopen, what is your interest in club training this summer?
 - Use 5 point scale from Extremely Interested to Not all Interested
- 2) If you are not interested in a summer session, please tell us why.
 - e.g., I never swim in the summer / Financial / Nervous about COVID-19 / Other (open comment box).
- 3) How are you feeling about coming back to the pool?
 - This question simply gauges how people are feeling without being specific about the summer or fall session

⁹ [COVID-19 Return to Swimming Resource Document](#), Swimming Canada, May 29, 2020 (Note: this document is likely to be updated as conditions change.)

¹⁰ [Return to Swimming Resource Document - FAQs](#), Swimming Canada

- e.g., Mostly excited about coming back / Happy that some of the things I love are starting to open / Tentative, I'm not sure it's quite time to reopen / Nervous about how things may have changed / Other (with a comment box)
- 4) Currently, it is unclear how many swimmers will be allowed in the pool at one time. Knowing that our operating expenses have not changed, please look at the TEMPORARY suggestions below and select those with which you agree (select all that apply)
 - a. Shorten practices temporarily to allow more swimmers to move through a timeslot (e.g., 2 x 45 minutes instead of 1 x 90 minutes)
 - b. Allow swimmers to initially swim only once per week and increase to fill vacant spaces
 - c. Staggered arrival and departure times from practice, to allow movement through the change rooms
 - d. Different "home base" for each swimmer, instead of everyone starting and finishing at the wall
 - e. Practices no longer written on white board, but available at the end of the pool or given to each swimmer
 - f. Comment / Suggestions

 - 5) Understanding that the facility owners will not likely discount pool rates if they limit the number of participants, what best represents your feelings about a TEMPORARY fee increase?
 - a. Heck no. If you raise fees, I am out.
 - b. I'd give my right arm to be back in the pool, so money doesn't matter
 - c. I won't pay double the fees, but I would support a fee increase
 - d. I'd rather wait to get back in the pool when fees return to what I'm used to
 - e. Comments / suggestions

 - 6) When we return to the pool, we will follow the guidelines laid out by the facility owner, in consultation with public health officials and the provincial guidelines. Is there anything that you are specifically worried about that you would like us to consider?
 - Open ended question for comment

 - 7) Thank you for your continued support. We welcome any comments or feedback on how to move forward?
 - Open ended question for comment

Additional Resources

Note that all resources are updated as more information becomes available.

[CIMS-MSM-MSO COVID-19 Resource page](#)

[Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#), Lifesaving Society, June 2020

Check if the Society in your province has adapted the national guidance, as is the case for [BC and the Yukon Branch](#) and [la Société de sauvetage \(Québec\)](#).

[COVID-19 Return to Swimming Resource Document](#), Swimming Canada, May 29, 2020

[Return to Swimming Resource Document - FAQs](#), Swimming Canada, May 2020

[Preparing for a Safe Return to Operations](#), Swim Ontario, May 2020

[Swim BC Return to Swimming Guidelines](#), Swim BC, June 2020