

EMERGING FROM COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

A Guide for a Club's Safe Return to Swimming

~~June 22, 2020~~

UPDATES: August 24, 2020

September 15, 2020 to include 24 swimmer configuration

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



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



MASTERS SWIMMING ONTARIO



**Masters Swimming
Manitoba**

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.

There is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through pool water treated with chlorine or bromine¹. The risk of transmission via fresh water bodies is described as infinitesimally small². 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.

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. **The guidance in this document has been harmonized with other Canadian swimming organizations to the extent reasonable / possible to reduce unnecessary complexity and duplication.**

¹ [Centre for Disease Control](#), Statement last reviewed **August 24, 2020**

² [Dr. Jason Kindrachuk](#), Canada Research Chair in emerging viruses, May 24, 2020 Interview

Irrespective of club model³ 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.

NOTES: As of August 24, 2020 the pace at which facilities are reopening differs greatly from region to region. Public facilities are moving forward but not uniformly. Only a few universities opened in August while others are delayed. Facilities owned and operated by school boards seem to be delayed as their Boards focus on their classroom programs. Some private schools are not opening until January. Private facilities also differ in approach.

In [Appendix 1](#) of this document we will provide sample COVID-19 restrictions for aquatics clubs from one municipality. Clubs can use this as a model for preliminary planning. Once they receive direction from their own facilities, their club plans can be updated.

Many facilitates refer to Swimming Canada regarding capacity. SNC has stated in its [July 24, 2020 Q&As](#) that it does not have recommendations on maximums. Every provincial section is setting its own based on experience over the summer – there are significant differences. See [Appendix 2](#) for further information.

³ 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.

Our clubs may be affiliated with CIMS-MSM-MSO only. Some may additionally be affiliated with Swim Canada through one of its Provincial Swimming Organization (PSO).

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Club responsibilities

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.

*Participants*⁵ 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 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.

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.

⁴ [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts, Lifesaving Society, UPDATED July 2, 2020](#)

NOTE: the updated document has not indicated differences from the June edition.

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

⁶ [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts, Lifesaving Society, UPDATED July 2, 2020](#)

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~~ **[duplication - addressed below]**
- 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.

[Texted moved only] 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?

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 especially** during rest periods (**Different models for are provided in Appendix 2 see Lifesaving Society model below**);
- Eliminate shared equipment, i.e., use no-toy OR own-toy practice sets;
- **Do not use snorkels because they encourage spitting of the mouth's contents (ref: Lifesaving Society page 21);**
- 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 a whiteboard;~~
- **If the facility permits the use of whiteboards, ensure that:**
 - **Athletes do not congregate around them prior to practice;**
 - **Boards are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized after use;**
 - **Markers are not shared – coaches must bring your own.**
- On-deck, dryland work is discouraged.

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 ~~must~~ ~~should~~ complete a [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) before returning to training, taking into account their age and any underlying health conditions. **Your coach/club is required to record that you have completed the Self-Assessment along with your attendance for each session.**
- A participant must:
 - **not go to practice** or leave practice and inform the club contact/coach if feeling unwell or showing signs⁷ of COVID-19 **before**, during or after a practice;
 - 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 positive test can still occur.

If a swimmer/coach tests positive for COVID-19:

- Notify facility administration and Public Health ~~if a swimmer / coach reports they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.~~ (NOTE: The **facility's direction to aquatic clubs** may already cover notifications in their updated rules/conditions). **The local public health authority will provide further management recommendations which may include further testing and arrange for contact tracing;**
- 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.
- **Notify MSO using the [COVID-19 Reporting Form](#) – MSO does not request identifying information, simply that a positive test has occurred.**

⁷ 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.

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*⁸ and FAQs⁹.

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

⁸ [COVID-19 Return to Swimming Resource Document](#), Swimming Canada, Updated July 10, 2020

⁹ [Return to Swimming Resource Document - FAQs v2](#), Swimming Canada, Updated July 24, 2020

- 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 returns 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, **Updated July 2020**

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

[COVID-19 Return to Swimming Resource Document, Version 2](#), Swimming Canada, July 10, 2020

[Return to Swimming Resource Document - FAQs, Version 2](#), Swimming Canada, July 24, 2020

[Preparing for a Safe Return to Operations, Version 8](#), Swim Ontario, **August 20, 2020 (same link kept evergreen)**

APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE OPERATIONAL PARAMETERS FOR AQUATIC CLUBS FOR SUMMER AND FALL 2020

Who Can Return to the Pool?

- Athletes capable of independently adhering to strict 2-meter physical distancing guidelines.
- Introduction to the sport or pre-competitive athletes
- Athletes must be able to successfully complete a practice without any physical contact/support by their coach or instructor.

Club Access Control

- Athletes and coaching staff must complete a health assessment prior to each practice.
- Athletes must arrive to practice at the scheduled time, avoiding user group mixing.
- Parents cannot enter the facility and athletes must enter & exit the facility by themselves.
- Methods to enter & exit the pool area will be explained with the site Supervisor.
- Athletes should shower at home prior to practice and upon returning home.
- Athletes should arrive with their training suit on as change room lockers are not available.
- Upon practice arrive, athletes must sanitize their hands at hand-sanitizer stations.
- Belongings must be placed on deck in a designated zone, identified by the pool supervisor. **NOTE**—in case of inclement weather at outdoor pools, athletes should be prepared to place belongings in a large plastic bag to keep contents dry.

Supervision Considerations

- All coaches acting as Affiliated Club lifeguards must complete a new facility orientation prior to their first pool booking, including Covid-19 procedures, if not already completed in the summer of 2020 for each location club practice location.
- Affiliated Club coaches must learn the new Lifesaving Society rescues procedures due to COVID-19.
- Prior to the club's first booking, coaches must share their training plan with the pool supervisor to ensure best practice guidelines are followed.
- Coaches are required to keep a training attendance log for each pool booking.

Equipment Use

- Pool setup is completed by City of Ottawa aquatic staff and/or Affiliated Club Coaches. Athletes are not permitted to set up the pool.
- All athlete equipment must be brought home and thoroughly cleaned after each practice.
- Athletes cannot share equipment or use facility equipment.
- Athletes should bring their water bottles filled. There is no use of facility water fountains.
- Coaches are not permitted to share hand-held equipment such as clipboards or pens

Operating Capacity

- Coaches and athletes must maintain physical distancing of 2 meters in and out of the pool.
- Dry-Land Training can only take place outside of the facility on green space until further notice. Clubs may also rent a room/hall within the building to conduct training of this nature. Dry-Land Training cannot be permitted on the pool deck.
- In addition to the above information, all swim clubs should review their respective sport governing body's "Return to Sport" plan.
- NOTE: Due to the varied nature of City pool layouts, pool supervisors may need to modify the guidelines above to ensure safety for all athletes and coaches.

Sport specific information

Swimming (age group, masters, triathlon)

- The maximum number of swimmers per booking is now based on the 6 swimmers per double lane format in a 25 meter pool. i.e., 6-lane pool allows 18 swimmers, 8-lane pool allows 24 swimmers.
- The maximum number of swimmers per booking is based on the 5 swimmers per double lane format in a 25 yard pool.
- Swim coaches may organize their swimmers in the following ways:
 - 1 swimmer per lane, swimming down the middle over the black line. This allows for 2 meters of separation between athletes in different lanes.
 - 1-6 swimmers per double lane. Swimmers swim up one lane over the black line and down the other lane over the black line. Swimmers must maintain a 2-meter distance from each other at all times.
 - Coaches may use other formations to run the practice, provided the 2-meter separation between swimmers is maintained.
 - Swimmers should remain in the same lane throughout the workout.

Artistic Swimming/Diving/Water Polo

- Swimmers must always maintain a 2-meter contactless distance.
- Maximum capacity for these sports should be calculated using the following formula:
 - $(\text{Pool Length Meters} \times \text{Pool Width Meters}) / 7.5 \times 0.6$
 - This formula was developed in consultation with the Lifesaving.
 - Aquatic Supervisors will provide clubs with capacity information for each respective location.
- No opposition work or scrimmages (water polo only)

On behalf of the Aquatics Team, I would like to thank each of our club partners for your cooperation and compliance to the new COVID regulations this summer. We will continue to work with all clubs/groups to support and assist your fall program resumption plans. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or your associated Pool Supervisor.

Appendix 2 – Models for Physical Distancing in the Pool (NEW SECTION)

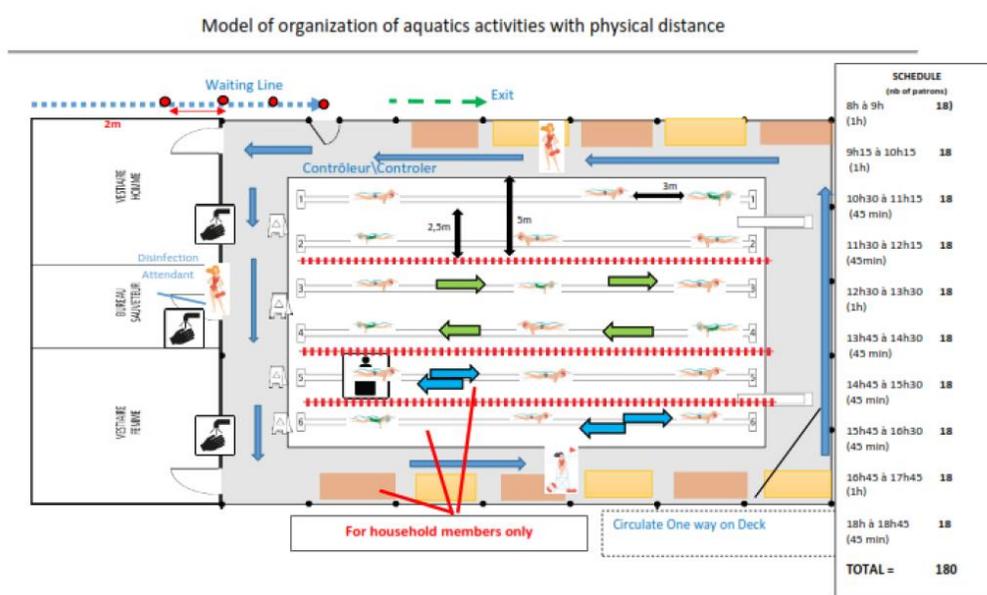
As of August 24, 2020 most models for “lane swimming” assign a number of swimmers to a double lane. There are two aspects to organizing your club’s lanes – Swimmers in Motion and Swimmers Standing between sets.

Swimmers in Motion

Athletes swim in the middle of the lane only (i.e., overtop of the lane line). On the return length, the swimmer moves to the next lane and again swims overtop of the lane line).

There should be no passing in the middle of the pool. The coaching challenge will be to match the swimmers’ speed within each double lane.

The Lifesaving Society model¹⁰ below also shows athletes from the same household swimming using a single lane.



Stationary Swimmers – Home Base

The greater risks during practice come when athletes are not in motion, i.e., resting between repeats or receiving instruction. Every swimmer needs to have a **home base** from which to start and finish a repeat.

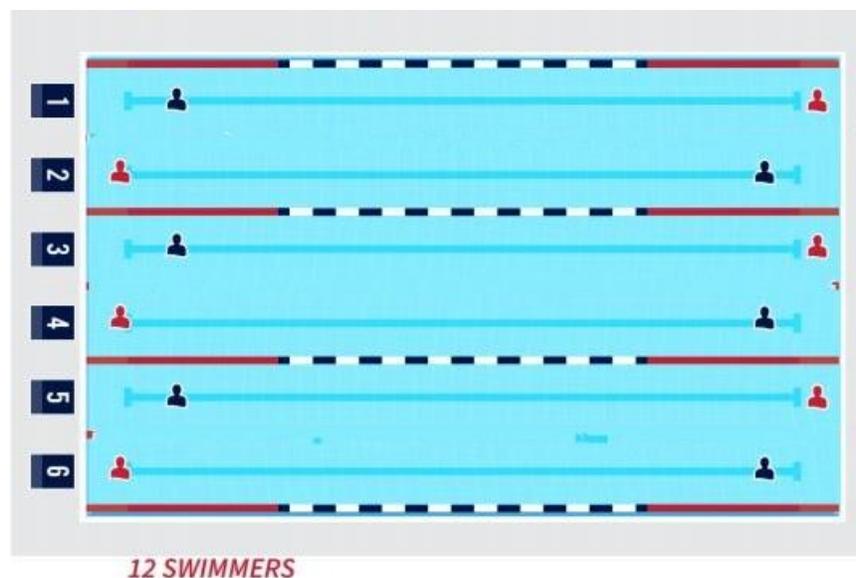
¹⁰ [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#), Page 52 Lifesaving Society, updated July 2020

The Home base concepts are also explained in a MySwimPro Wednesday Whiteboard Video session titled [“Social Distancing 101 for Swimmers.”](#)

USA Swimming has published sample home base diagrams for different pool configurations, including YARD pools¹¹. While the USA Swimming models use single lanes, the X swimmers per double lane can be achieved by simply removing every second lane line.

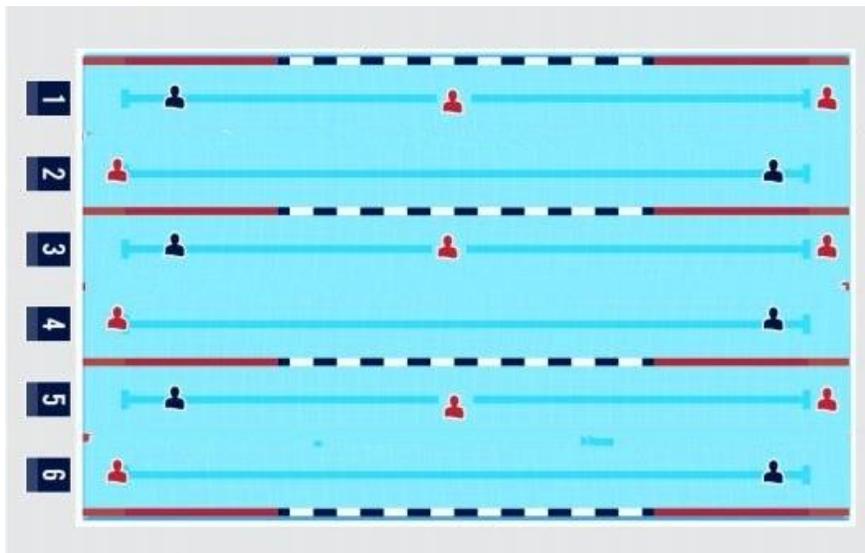
As the number of permitted swimmers, home bases are added away from the end walls. How does it work?

For a **12 swimmer 2 per double lane home base** the red swimmers in lane 1 and 2 start a repeat or a set. The blue swimmers shuffles over to the vacated spots and follow the red swimmer keeping the required distance. Swimmer remain overtop the lane line.

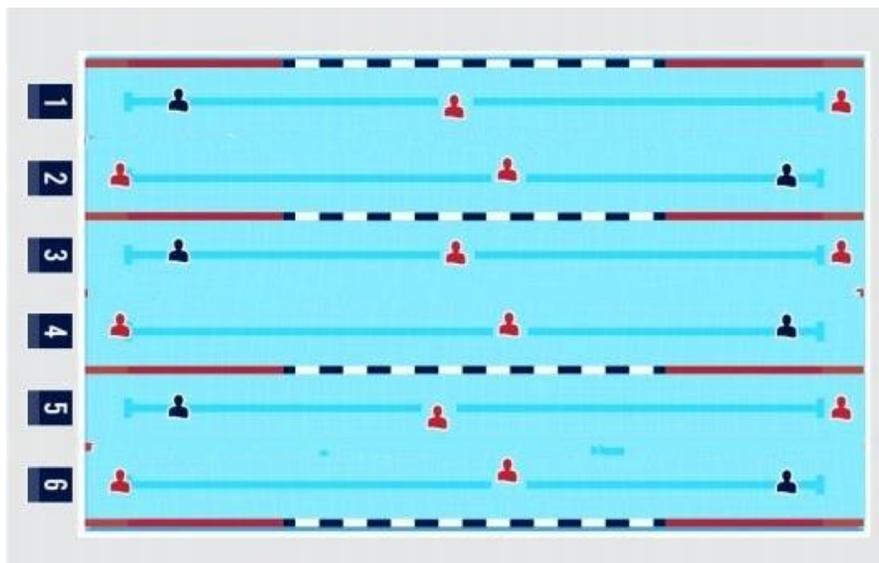


As numbers increase, yard pools with narrower lanes can use a **15 swimmer 3 per double lane model**, with the additional swimmer starting from the backstroke flags or from the middle of the pool at least 2 metres apart. Again, the red swimmers start the set or repeat, followed by the blue swimmers who have shuffled over to the vacated spots.

¹¹ USA Swimming – See pool Home Base diagrams; updated July 30, 2020



Similarly the **18 swimmer (6 per double lane) model** adds a second red swimmer to the middle of the pool or under the backstroke flags. All the red swimmers start a repeat or set. The blue swimmers move to the vacated spot and follow, keeping at least 2 metres distance.

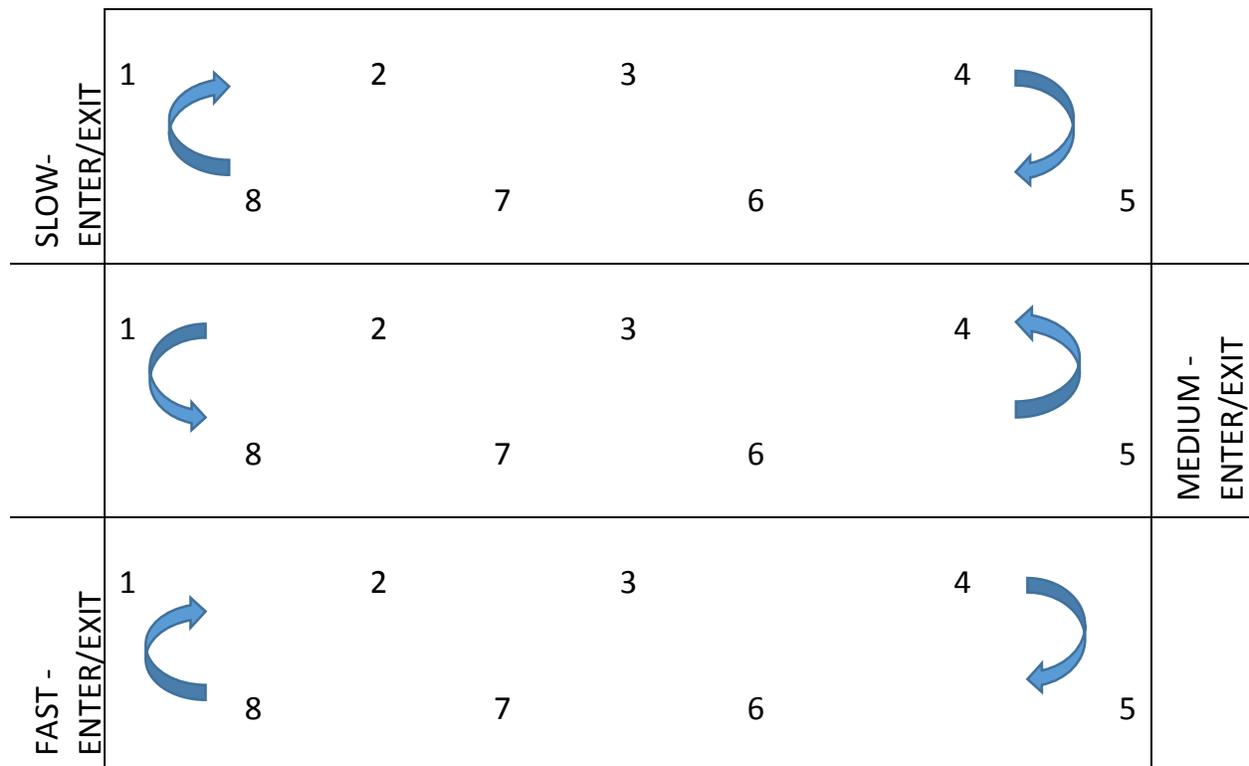


<NEW September 15, 2020 – 24 swimmer model>

One MSO club has had the following **24 swimmer (8 per double lane)** distancing configuration approved by their local Public Health, which approves Return to Sport plans.

- Physical distancing of at least 2-metres (6 feet) must be maintained at all times between members, unless from the same household or social circle.

- There are entry and exit points for each double lane, as well as in-motion and stopping positions for each swimmer in the lane (see Figure 1 – Lane Configuration & Swimmer Positions).
 - The coach will assign swimmers to lanes to maintain similar speeds and abilities. Swimmers in-motion, adjust their speed to maintain proper distance from the swimmer ahead.
 - Swimmers will swim over the lane line, shuffle over to the next lane and return.
 - Every swimmer has a home base when not swimming. Swimmers 1, 2, 3 & 4 will be spaced 2 metres apart over one lane line. Swimmers 5, 6, 7 & 8 will be offset and remain 2 meters apart over their own lane line.
 - Only swimmers 1 and 5 will have a home base at the wall.
 - If a swimmer must stop during a set (to drink water, catch their breath), they must exit the pool at their lane’s assigned entry/exit point. When the swimmer is ready to re-enter the water, they should wait until it is safe to do so and re-enter in their assigned lane position.
 - Members will not be permitted to switch lanes or positions unless directed by the coach.
 - Swimmers will enter the pool in 10 second intervals.



In its [Stage 3 Return to Pool Swimming Framework](#), Swim Ontario introduced a 5 week “gradual” return framework which reaches 8 swimmers per double lane OR 4 swimmers per single lane SCM and 6 swimmers per single lane LCM – each format requires facility approval.

In its August 11, 2020 updated plan. Subject to the maximums allowed by local authorities and specific facilities, the [FNQ \(Quebec\)](#) Return to Swimming policy has progressed from 4 swimmers per double lane in a 25 m pool (8 in a 50 m pool) to:

- 25 m pool: 6 - 8 swimmers per single lane
- 50 m pool: 10 -12 swimmers per single lane.

While swimmers must remain 2 metres apart at all times, no diagrams of home base position were provided in the FNQ document.

[Swim Manitoba](#) does not set maximums. They refer only to 2 metre distance at all times as well as any limits set by the Government of Manitoba.

[Swim BC \(June 19, 2020\)](#) appears to refer only to 2 metre distancing. They provide charts from the Lifesaving Society Pool charts, a 6 per double SCM lane and a 10 per double LCM lane configuration in their appendix.