



**ONTARIO PARA
NETWORK**

'RETURN TO SPORT' UPDATED GUIDELINES

Effective March 1, 2022



Last updated:
March 1, 2022

Gradually Easing Public Health Measures

With key public health and health system indicators continue to improve, Ontario is cautiously and gradually easing public health and workplace safety measures.

The following is a list of guidelines developed by ONPARA in alignment with resources from the Province of Ontario.

Our primary goal is to protect the health and safety of our athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and our entire wheelchair sports community. It is important for us to continue being extra careful about following COVID protocols, even as restrictions continue to be lifted.

All ONPARA members and affiliated clubs/programs should comply with the requirements and recommendations of Ontario Public Health and their local municipal health authority. Links to those resources can be found at the end of this document.

Be well and stay safe!



ASSUMPTION OF RISK

Even with a vaccine for COVID-19 there will always be a risk of contracting the virus when participating in any public activity.

The Ontario Para Network does not carry insurance that covers pandemic diseases or contagions including COVID-19. When practicing and/or training, participants are responsible for their surroundings, equipment, and their own safety, and assume all risks associated with participation in physical activity.

Key Steps for a Safe Return to Sport

Prior to resuming activities, all ONPARA clubs and programs must:

1. Ensure that all members are registered with ONPARA for 2021/2022 (effective Oct 1 – Sept 30)

2. Obtain an updated Certificate of Insurance for all club activities/events

3. Review ONPARA's current Return to Sport guidelines

4. Review and follow ONPARA's Screening & Health Attestation Tool and Risk Mitigation Strategy & Outbreak Protocol

5. Develop a safety plan aligned with ONPARA's current Return to Sport guidelines. Safety plan must be available upon request.

6. Share information with all members



According to ONPARA's Risk Mitigation Strategy & Outbreak Protocol, individuals **MAY NOT PARTICIPATE** in any programming if they:

- Exhibit any symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19
- Have been advised by a medical professional or public health official to self-isolate
- Have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days and have symptoms of COVID-19

Individuals experiencing symptoms or concerned they may have COVID-19 should use the [Ontario COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool](#).

ONPARA Proof of Vaccination Guidelines

As of March 1, 2022 under the updated public health measures, individuals are no longer required to provide proof of vaccination or [active medical exemption](#) to access facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities.

However, businesses and organizations **may choose** to continue requiring proof of vaccination.

ONPARA recommends that all affiliated clubs and programs, as well as sanctioned events, follow the rules, guidelines, and requirements of their respective facilities with regards to proof of vaccination requirements.

- Clubs and programs may also independently choose to set stricter guidelines than those of the facility and continue requiring proof of vaccination for all club-based activities.
- All requirements should always be clearly communicated to members and volunteers in a timely manner.



ONPARA Provincial Team Programs (Team Ontario)

Proof of vaccination or medical exemption will continue to be **required** for participation in ONPARA provincial team programs in **wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby** for the remainder of the 2021-2022 season in accordance with the requirements set by the NSOs for all 2022 national events. This extends to all athletes, coaches, bench staff, officials, and volunteers.

Vaccination requirements for ONPARA's provincial **wheelchair tennis** program will be dependent on facility guidelines. Please note that proof of vaccination may be required to participate in certain tournaments.

Facility Guidelines and Requirements

- Businesses, organizations, and facilities must comply with the [advice, recommendations, and instructions of public health officials](#). This includes advice, recommendations or instructions on: face coverings, physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting, and screening.
 - Please note that some facilities may choose to set stricter guidelines for their patrons than those recommended by their local public health officials
- **Facilities must continue to have a [screening process](#) and [safety plan](#) in place.**
- Athletes, coaches, volunteers, and all others participating in sport, recreation, and fitness activities should be aware of all policies & protocols mandated by the facility they are using.
- Under **current guidelines**, all capacity limits have been lifted for patrons (participants and spectators) of facilities used for indoor sports and recreational fitness activities (such as gyms, businesses offering personal fitness training, and sporting events).



Sport-Specific Guidelines

Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Tennis, Wheelchair Rugby

1. Full practices, training sessions, games, and events are permitted with no limitations on in-sport contact.
 - a) All non-essential contact should continue to be avoided (handshakes, high 5s, etc.).
2. Physical distancing of 2m should be maintained at all times when not on the field of play.
3. When indoors, masks or face coverings that cover the mouth and nose must continue to be worn by:
 - Coaches and assistants at all times;
 - Spectators and volunteers at all times;
 - Officials when not actively officiating games;
 - Athletes when not participating in physical activity
4. When outdoors, masks or face coverings are recommended whenever physical distancing of 2m is not possible.

Clubs/programs may choose to set stricter mask guidelines for members than those recommended by their facilities or local public health officials.



Sport-Specific Guidelines (cont.)

Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Tennis, Wheelchair Rugby

5. Athletes are encouraged to arrive to practices/games “dressed and ready to play” whenever possible to avoid the use of smaller shared spaces such as changerooms, locker rooms, etc.
6. No sharing of personal items including water bottles, towels, snacks, etc. Athletes should bring their own water bottles filled from home and avoid the use of public water fountains when possible.
7. All equipment including balls, pumps, push rims, and other high-contact touch points should be cleaned and disinfected before and immediately after playing.
8. All ONPARA-sanctioned clubs, programs, and events in operation under current guidelines must follow the ‘Key Steps for a Safe Return to Sport’ (page 3). Coaches and administrators are responsible for:
 - Contact Tracing ([Attendance Tracking Sheet](#))
 - Screening ([Screening Tool](#))
 - Risk Mitigation ([Risk Mitigation & Outbreak Protocol](#))



Sport-Specific Guidelines (Summary)

Indoor and outdoor activities	Permitted		
Use of indoor facilities and changerooms	Permitted		
Scrimmages and Competitions (including in-sport contact)	Permitted		
Travel to other cities/regions within province	Permitted		
Club/Program Safety Plan	Required		
Attendance Tracking/Contact Tracing	Recommended		
Equipment disinfecting after each game/practice	Required		
Maximum Number of Participants	No limits		
Maximum Number of Spectators	No limits		
Face Masks	<u>Indoors</u> Athletes: Required when not playing Coaches, Assistants, Spectators: Required Officials: Required when not officiating		<u>Outdoors</u> Recommended when physical distancing of 2m cannot be maintained.
Physical Distancing	<u>Athletes & Coaches</u> On court/bench: No Everywhere else: Yes	<u>Officials & Assistants</u> On court: No Everywhere else: Yes	<u>Spectators</u> Required at all times

Wheelchair Athletics

Athletics Ontario is the official Provincial governing body for para athletics. All para track and para throws athletes should follow the return to play guidelines set by Athletics Ontario. [AO's COVID guidelines](#)



Resources

There are a high number of para-athletes with compromised immune/respiratory systems. Any athlete with a medical condition which may elevate the risk of serious COVID-19 symptoms is encouraged to consult their medical professional before beginning participation.

Province of Ontario

- COVID-19 Self-Assessment: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- Updated Public Health Measures and Advice: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures>
- COVID-19: Stop the Spread: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread#section-6>
- COVID-19 and workplace health and safety : <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-workplace-health-safety>
- Liability Protection: [Bill 218, Supporting Ontario's Recovery and Municipal Elections Act, 2020](#)

Public Health Ontario

- [Multilingual COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Physical Distancing Fact Sheet](#)
- [Handwashing Fact Sheet](#)

ONPARA COVID-19 Updates: <https://onpara.ca/covid-19-information-and-resources/>