



Back to Boccia GUIDELINES

Version 1.0



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The Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sports Association
L'Association canadienne de sports pour paralytiques cérébraux

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Photo Credit: François Lacasse (top left), François Mellet (top right)

Introduction

As communities across Canada begin to return to sports, this document establishes guidelines to create a safe environment to protect boccia athletes, families, and communities.

This document is intended for use by our provincial partners, clubs and the broader boccia community. Athletes, performance partners, coaches, officials, volunteers, families and administrators will all play a critical role in ensuring a successful return to boccia.

According to the national risk assessment tool developed by Own The Podium (OTP), the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) and the Canadian Olympic Committee, boccia's current overall risk score is "Very High." The safety of boccia athletes and staff will always be our top priority. At this time, only voluntary individual training is recommended. It should be noted that returning to training is an individual decision, based entirely on each athlete's individual health situation, family/coaching and facility situations. Hosting competitions is not permitted and competition is not addressed in this version of the document.

The information contained within this document is intended to supplement – not replace – any local, provincial or national regulations with which organizations must comply. In addition to using this document, programs should consult with local, provincial and national government health officials to develop their own plan that takes into consideration their own unique needs and circumstances. Clubs are also strongly encouraged to complete the [Club Risk Assessment and Club Mitigation Checklist Tool](#) prior to returning to training.

Coming back to boccia will require flexibility and an individualized approach for each athlete, program or club. This is not a race. It will be a slow and careful process. The resumption of boccia activities must not compromise the health of individuals or communities. It must be understood and anticipated that further outbreaks of COVID-19 may result in a discontinuation of boccia activities.

Please note: These guidelines are a work in progress. This is Version 1. As the pandemic changes, it is expected that there will be further updates.

Guiding Principles

- Resuming sports activities can contribute many health, economic, social and cultural benefits to Canadian society as it emerges from the COVID-19 environment.
- Returning to sport activities should not compromise the health of individuals or the community, including boccia athletes.
- The return to sports activities will be based on objective health information to ensure these activities are conducted safely and do not risk increasing COVID-19 local transmission rates.
- All decisions about the resumption of sport activities must take place with careful reference to these national principles and in compliance with the guidelines provided by federal, provincial and local public health authorities.



Back to Boccia Phases

Guidelines have been developed for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Guidelines for Phase 3 + 4 are still to be developed. Successful completion of the first two phases will be of the utmost importance before advancing to additional phases.

Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Clubs/programs to provide participants with program information that will assist them and their doctor in making an informed decision on whether to return to train. Include details such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Description of the sport activity ○ Risk mitigation steps that will be followed • Individual training (1 athlete + 1 performance partner) • One coach only (provided the performance partner is an adult and has completed background screening, as per the Rule of Two) • Coach to maintain 2 metres physical distance from athlete and performance partner at all times • Performance partners retrieve balls only for their own athlete • No sharing equipment • No spectators • No competition
Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group training (4 athletes + performance partners) • One coach only (provided the performance partner is an adult and has completed background screening, as per the Rule of Two) • Coach to maintain 2m physical distance at all times • Performance partners retrieve balls only for their own athlete • Athletes should maintain 2 metres of physical distance during training • Maximum of two athletes per boccia court • Minimum of two throwing boxes between athletes or use a double-ended court with an athlete at either end • Focus on skill development only (no head to head games) • Athletes to avoid throwing balls in same direction as other athlete practicing skill • No sharing equipment • No spectators • No competition
Phase 3	• Local/Provincial competition - TBD
Phase 4	• National Level Competition - TBD

Participant Safety

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Prior to leaving for practice, athletes, performance partners and coaches or anyone accompanying the athlete must complete self **pre-screening**.
- ✓ If an athlete or performance partner is experiencing any symptoms that are new in the past 48 hrs they must remain at home.



Participant Safety (cont'd)

- ✓ Symptoms may include but are not limited to:
 - Fever/feverish,
 - New or existing cough
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Nausea/diarrhea
 - Headache and extreme fatigue
 - Runny/stuffy nose
 - Loss of taste or smell
- ✓ Upon arrival at practice, athletes, performance partners and coaches must complete a **waiver** and daily **attestation form**.
- ✓ Program operators will maintain attendance records to assist in contact tracing
- ✓ Programs are not required to submit the waiver, attestation and attendance forms to the National Sport Organization, but are responsible for keeping them on file
- ✓ If an individual exhibits symptoms while in the facility, they are required to immediately:
 - Notify a coach
 - Leave the facility as soon as possible, following the recommendations in the Transportation section
 - Contact their physician for further advice
- ✓ Individuals exhibiting symptoms are strongly encouraged to seek a COVID-19 test as soon as possible.
- ✓ While there may be differences in public health recommendations from one region to the next, in general the following practices are recommended regarding mask use:
 - A mask is the first line of defence and should be worn if possible
 - In the event that a mask is not possible, a face shield is recommended
 - If neither a mask or face shield is possible, but the athlete's performance partner IS from the same household or in their 'bubble', or they can train independently, play on while maintaining physical distancing from others in the training facility
 - If none of the above are possible, the athlete should not be at training during Phase 1&2
- ✓ Athletes, and anyone accompanying the athlete, must bring their own mask/face shield. If this isn't possible, clubs or facilities may have a small inventory on hand.
- ✓ It is recommended that:
 - Hands be sanitized before and after taking off your mask/visor
 - Visors must be sanitized after every training session
 - Disposable masks must be disposed of in proper disposal container after each training session
 - If using a cloth mask, it must be taken home and washed in between practices
- ✓ Participants must clean their hands with hydroalcoholic gel / hand sanitizer (>70% alcohol base) upon:
 - Entering the facility
 - Entering/exiting the court
 - During every break in training (water, rest, after returning from playing area to view or pick up balls etc.)
 - Upon departure from the facility, before entering their vehicle and arriving home



Facility

Each facility will have unique aspects (location, size, number of courts, layout, etc.) that need to be considered. Each facility should be evaluated on a case by-case basis, taking into account local, provincial or national regulations (physical distancing, public gathering restrictions, etc). Although boccia courts (6m x 12.5m) are used as a common reference in these guidelines, it is understood that not all athletes have access to a full sized court space. Programs are encouraged to apply these guidelines to their training space as best they can. Programs should work with the facility and discuss any concerns ahead of time, providing the facility with a copy of the relevant guidelines if needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Ask facility for the details on cleaning/sanitizing protocols that will be in place and who is responsible for cleaning in between uses (facility staff vs club staff/volunteers), including:
 - Is there a cleaning log that needs to be completed?
 - Is there a break in between bookings to allow for cleaning of court/bathroom etc.?
- ✓ Confirm that the facility has sufficient HVAC to allow for proper air flow/filtration.
- ✓ Work with the facility to develop a strategy for safe entry/exit from the building. All participants are to enter, train and exit in the most efficient way possible to minimize unnecessary contact.
- ✓ Where possible, athletes, performance partners and anyone assisting the athlete, will meet in the parking lot and enter the facility together so that they can sanitize and prepare before entering. When exiting the facility, athletes, performance partners, coaches etc should leave without unnecessary delay at the end of the session.
- ✓ Participants are encouraged to use the washroom at home prior to leaving their homes. However, washrooms must be available to participants if required, and must be cleaned following each session.
- ✓ Athletes and performance partners are required to bring the following items. Each item must be clearly marked, and not be shared with others:
 - Boccia balls (their own, or a designated set of club balls)
 - Water bottle(s) filled at home (do not access water fountains or bathroom/facility taps for filling water bottles).
 - Towel
 - Sanitization products, including (but not limited to):
 - Hydroalcoholic gel hand sanitizer (>70% alcohol base)
 - Disinfectant wipes
 - Tissue paper
 - Any necessary medical supplies
- ✓ Due to the prevalence of latex allergies, if gloves are used, they should be non-latex
- ✓ Participants are strongly encouraged to leave any unnecessary and non-boccia personal items (cellphones, etc.) outside of the facility. When this is not possible, all personal items must be kept in a personal closed container with a lid or a backpack.
- ✓ Where possible, manual wheelchairs could be pushed to minimize athletes' hands being contaminated from floor.
- ✓ Wheelchairs not used for training must be left outside of gym.
- ✓ Meals are not to be eaten on site.
- ✓ Participants are encouraged to use auto door openers wherever possible.
- ✓ Performance partners must press the elevator buttons for the athletes, and use elbows instead of fingers if possible.



Facility (cont'd)

- ✓ A maximum of two people may occupy an elevator.
- ✓ Upon exiting the elevator, all persons must disinfect their hands with >70% alcohol hand sanitizer.
- ✓ All training surfaces and tables need to be disinfected after each training session using disinfectant - a non-toxic 3 percent hydrogen peroxide solution spray is recommended along with a disposable wipe/cloth.
- ✓ Training times should be staggered to allow time for the departure of the first group and the appropriate dwell time of cleaning products between the end of one session and the start of the next.
- ✓ Use **Government of Canada approved products** for cleaning, being sure to follow product instructions
- ✓ See **Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19** for additional information.

Return to Training

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Where possible, every athlete should have an assistant (either a permanent performance partner or a substitute) and this performance partner should train with the same athlete throughout the training session.
- ✓ If an athlete doesn't have the same performance partner for every session, they can still come to training, provided that the new performance partner:
 - Passes the self assessment
 - Reviews the Back to Boccia recommendations
 - Completes a waiver and an attestation form
- ✓ Athletes should have a set of, and use, their own balls, or have a set of club balls designated for their use
- ✓ Balls should be disinfected before and after each training session using the following guidelines:
Health Canada Hard Surface Disinfectant and Hand Sanitizers (Covid-19).
- ✓ If sharing balls is necessary, it is recommended to:
 - Sanitize hands multiple times during training sessions.
 - Designate one set per athlete/session
 - Disinfect balls between each use
- ✓ Only the athlete or their performance partner should handle the athlete's balls and equipment
- ✓ Using a ball 'picker-upper' is recommended
- ✓ Wheelchairs not used for training should be left outside of gym
- ✓ Minimize wheelchair travel over court surface
- ✓ Disinfect other equipment such as ramps'
- ✓ Manual wheelchair users should use hand sanitizer after pushing their wheelchair
- ✓ Athletes and performance partners should use sanitizer after an athlete has moved their chair over the playing surface
- ✓ Indoor shoes worn by both the athlete (if they are ambulatory) and performance partner should be disinfected before each training session
- ✓ Leave doors open where possible to limit the use of touchpoints (door handles, push bars etc.). If this is not possible, touchpoints need to be cleaned after each session.
- ✓ Spectators are prohibited



Transportation

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ If using municipal transportation, taxi, or a ridesharing app, know the company's risk mitigation strategies so that athletes can judge their risk and make an informed decision about whether to travel (i.e. will there be more than one wheelchair user per trip, multiple pickups, are drivers wearing masks/visors)
- ✓ Where possible, book travel as close to training time as possible to minimize waiting and possible exposure
- ✓ Touch external surfaces in the vehicle as little as possible
- ✓ Wear a mask/visor if possible
- ✓ While waiting for pickup:
 - Wait outside if possible
 - Wear mask and/or face shield while waiting if possible
 - Wait somewhere distanced from the door/other people
 - Avoid touching surfaces while waiting
- ✓ If the participants feel the drivers aren't following company procedures, participants can:
 - Ask the driver to follow the procedure
 - Refuse the ride
 - Report them using the company's reporting procedures.
- ✓ If a participant develops symptoms after arrival at the facility, they should:
 - Notify coach immediately
 - Continue to wear a mask and/or face shield
 - Take a private vehicle back home (accessible taxi, rideshare)
 - Leave both windows down to assist with air flow
 - Keep driver's contact info for future contact tracing

Mental Aspects of Returning to Play

The mental aspect of returning to boccia will vary depending on the individual, context, sport, and environment. The stress of returning to training is real. Every athlete will come to their own conclusions about if and/or when they are ready to return to play, and to what degree. Dr. Amelie Soulard, Mental Performance Coach for the National Boccia Program, has developed a [three step action plan](#) for athletes who are considering a return to play. We also recommend reading Basketball Canada's outline of the [mental aspects of returning to sport](#).

Below are talking points as well as things to consider as athletes contemplate returning to play:

- Is there a willingness to return?
- No athlete will be pressured to return to play
- Personal choice is important in assuming risk (informed by medical recommendation when necessary)



Mental Aspects of Returning to Play

(cont'd)

- If an athlete is not comfortable returning to a training facility, ask your coach if a virtual training option is available
- Mutual respect is expected/encouraged amongst participating members with their choice to wear or not to wear a mask when physical distancing can be maintained.

Good Practices for Risk Mitigation

RECOMMENDATIONS

Waivers of liability are just one component of a well-developed risk mitigation plan. A waiver of liability should be used in conjunction with the development and implementation of reasonable precautionary measures based on provincial health guidelines to protect the health and safety of participants from the risk of contracting COVID-19 or from injury otherwise. Some such precautionary measures could include:

- 1 Designing a system in which facilities and equipment are regularly and thoroughly sanitized, inspected, and maintained
- 2 Develop a general safety plan that addresses foreseeable dangers that could lead to liability
- 3 Keep a written record of the safety plan along with a diary of steps taken to address safety concerns
- 4 Post visible and clear signs or pictures to inform participants of the inherent risks associated with the attending at the facility or event
- 5 Educate and inform coaches, staff, volunteers, and administrators of the various ways liability can be incurred.

Someone is Symptomatic - Now What?

If a participant is symptomatic with cold, influenza-like or COVID-19 symptoms, the following steps should be taken:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The participant should go for COVID-19 testing and self-quarantine until they receive the results
- 2 If they test negative but continue to have symptoms they should self-quarantine for a minimum of 10 days and all their symptoms are resolved
- 3 May retest after five days
- 4 If they test positive for COVID-19, the steps below should be followed



Someone Tests Positive for COVID-19 - Now What?

If a participant tests positive for COVID-19, the following steps should be taken:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Immediately notify the coach/program manager
- 2 Suspend training
- 3 Notify facility
- 4 Notify anyone the participant may have come in contact with during training
- 5 Any participants that develop symptoms should be assessed and tested as appropriate
- 6 Training can resume if participants undergo two tests, five days apart and all are negative OR if participants quarantine for 14 days and develop no symptoms

Legal Disclaimer

The information included in this guide is current for the time of publishing and is aligned with the current recommendations from national and international bodies, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and Public Health Canada. However, recommendations will change quickly depending on local, provincial, national and global COVID-19 situation reports. Local resources should also be consulted for up to date information. This information is accepted on the condition that error or omissions shall not be made on the basis of any claim, demand or cause of action.

Where anything in this guide conflicts with applicable law and recommendations from local public health authorities, members must comply with applicable law and that public health advice and adapt their approach. Consult your insurance company to determine if COVID-19, and other contagious diseases, are included with your policy. The CCPSA is in the process of confirming any COVID-19 related coverage or exclusions to our insurance.

As new information is made available, efforts will be made to update and revise this document, and to circulate revisions to members. The information and recommendations outlined within this guide should be used to develop individual plans that evaluate the unique risks that each training environment presents. This document is to supplement and not replace the information outlined by public health authorities. Individuals, in consultation with a medical professional, are also required to assess and evaluate their own personal risks.

In the event of ambiguity or conflict between this guide and federal, provincial or local directives, the directives will prevail.





Photo Credit: SportAbility (middle left), François Lacasse (bottom right)

Thank You!

The Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sports Association and Boccia Canada assembled a task force to develop these requirements, which included health care professionals, boccia athletes, coaches, provincial partners, referees and classifiers who understand the sport, the athletes who play it, and the unique risks they face. These guidelines were approached with the perspective of making boccia as safe as possible while still allowing athletes to play the sport they love during these challenging times.

This document is based on the National Return to Sport Framework developed by the National COVID-19 Return to Sport Task Force, in consultation with sport partners, Chief Medical Officers (CMOs), Sport Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), as well as the recommendations outlined in the Boccia High Performance Return to Play plan.

We wish to extend our thanks to the members of the Back to Boccia Task Force for their assistance in developing these guidelines.

► Back to Boccia Task Force

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Our work was heavily informed by the work of the Boccia High Performance Return to Play Committee and the Own the Podium Task Force. We would like to thank and acknowledge them for their efforts.

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Photo Credit: Jean-Baptiste Benavent (middle left), François Lacasse (bottom left), SportAbility (bottom right)

▶ Appendix A - Provincial Public Health Links

**click the province name below for a link to public health resources*



Canada



▶ Appendix B - Other Resources

[Corona Virus Disease](#)

[Health Canada Self-Assessment Tool](#)

[Own the Podium Return to High Performance Sport Framework](#)

PROVINCIAL GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO SPORT

[Alberta](#)

[British Columbia](#)

[Manitoba](#)

[Newfoundland and Labrador](#)

[Nova Scotia](#)

[Ontario](#)

[Prince Edward Island](#)

[Québec](#)

WAIVERS

[Limiting Liability for COVID 19](#)

[Remote Training Waiver](#)

[Facility Use Waiver](#)

[Event Participation Waiver](#)

[COVID-19 Attestation Form](#)



▶ Appendix C - Key Risk Management Questions

The following questions should be at the forefront of the return to sport protocols:

SPECIFIC MEASURES TO LIMIT TRANSMISSION

What specific measures will you take to reduce the risk of transmission for athletes and staff? Be sure to be venue specific.

STAFF KNOWLEDGE

What specific plans will you implement to increase the understanding and knowledge, amongst your staff (including venue support staff), of the current COVID-19 situation?

PUBLIC HEALTH AWARENESS

What specific steps will you take to keep athletes & staff fully apprised of current local public health information regarding COVID-19?

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

What specific strategies are you preparing to respond effectively to emergencies? Please include any screening measures you will implement and the type of diagnostics tests (if any) that are being utilized to screen asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals.

ISOLATION CAPACITY

What specific arrangements are in place to isolate athletes or staff if required?

COORDINATION & LOGISTICS

1. What specific plans are you making to enhance communication and collaboration with your partner organizations?
2. What specific policies and procedures will improve the coordination of logistics between agencies?

RISK COMMUNICATION

1. What specific action will be taken to communicate the risks associated with training during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What processes will limit the impact of misinformation from other sources?



▶ Appendix D - Club Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation Tool

Own the Podium Club Risk Assessment Tool

The Club Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist Tool has been developed with the intent of helping to guide local clubs delivering a wide range of sport programs.

If movement restrictions (provincial, local) and physical distancing measures remain in place or increase, the Risk Assessment may not apply. Public health restrictions (e.g. maximum number of people together, quarantine post movement, etc.) take precedence and by their nature may preclude any training.

Routine planning includes conducting risk assessments to determine the overall risk of disease spread. In view of the current outbreak of COVID-19, a disease-specific and sport-specific risk assessment and mitigation checklist was developed by Own the Podium to assess the specific risk of COVID-19 in sport-specific clubs.

To accurately provide answers to the following risk assessment and mitigation checklist, those responsible must be knowledgeable on the current COVID-19 outbreak. This should include referring to the daily provincial, local and global COVID-19 situation reports provided by WHO, Health Canada and provincial health authorities.

Note: The tool must be completed in the Excel spreadsheet as the scores are automatically calculated there.

It must be ensured that this risk assessment is conducted with input from local public health authorities, and preferably personnel with expertise in risk assessment, epidemiology, and infectious disease control measures are included from the initial stages of planning.

For the overall determination, factors under consideration include:

- The current stage of the COVID-19 outbreak where training is to be and known transmission dynamics
- The geographical distribution of and number of participants, and their individual risk profile
- The risk assessment tool
- The mitigation measures that are currently in place or feasible to implement

It is important to remember that while mitigation measures can reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections, they cannot completely eliminate the threat.

It is the **Sport Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)**, **Canadian Public Health** and **WHO's** view that all regions with community transmission should seriously restrict gatherings that bring people together and have the potential to amplify disease and support the recommended best practice of physical distancing.

▶ Appendix D - Club Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation Tool *(cont'd)*

This tool was adapted from the [WHO Mass Gathering Risk Assessment and Mitigation Check List](#) and the [Canadian R-SAT tool](#) (Appendix A of the Own the Podium Return to High Performance Sport Framework) specifically for sport-specific clubs in Canada to conduct a risk assessment and mitigation checklist to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission when resuming club based training.

Special thanks to Rowing Canada Aviron, in particular Dr. Mike Wilkinson and Jennifer Fitzpatrick, for their leadership in developing the original risk assessment and mitigation checklist for rowing clubs across Canada.

▶ Appendix E - Canadian Sport Help Line

The [Canadian Sport Helpline](#) is run in partnership with the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Mental Health in Sport, and is funded by the Government of Canada.

The Canadian Sport Helpline has been created to ensure that Canadian sport participants at all levels compete in a safe sport environment. Please visit their website for more information.

A banner for the Canadian Sport Helpline. The background is a grayscale image of a person in a hoodie. The text 'CANADIAN SPORT' is in a bold, sans-serif font. Below it, 'HELpline' is written in a very large, bold font, with 'HEL' in white and 'pline' in dark gray. To the right of 'HELpline' is a white speech bubble icon with a circular arrow. At the bottom, there are four rows of information: 'ANONYMOUS |' with a headset icon, 'CONFIDENTIAL |' with a text message icon, 'INDEPENDENT |' with an '@' icon, and 'BILINGUAL |' with a 'www' icon. To the right of these icons are the phone number '1 888 83SPORT (77678)', the email 'info@abuse-free-sport.ca', and the website 'www.abuse-free-sport.ca'. Further right, a white box contains the hours '8 am - 8 pm (ET) 7 days a week'. At the bottom right is the 'Canada' logo with a maple leaf.