



BC SOCCER'S RETURN TO PLAY PLAN – Phase 2 – Originally released August 24, 2020.

Updated October 14, 2020

**TIMELINES, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS AND AFFILIATED CLUBS,
ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES AND ANYONE ORGANIZING SOCCER ACTIVITIES**

Soccer's Return to Play Phase 1 commenced June 2 with on-field activity occurring earliest June 12.

Soccer's Return to Play Phase 2 commenced on August 24, 2020 with on-field contact in training and game activity within the cohort model and geographical restrictions. This progression aligned with the BC health authorities and ViaSport's move to the "Progressively Loosen" phase within in the Sport Activity Chart.

BC Soccer would like to extend its thanks to the members and affiliated clubs that completed the Return to Play Phase 2 Survey conducted between June 18 and June 22, 2020; the information gathered from the survey combined with wider good practice information from across the Canadian and BC sport sector, supported the development of the recommendations and guidelines released on August 24, 2020.

Since August 24, 2020, members and affiliated clubs have worked hard to offer responsible soccer activity under the Phase 2 guidelines and recommendations and BC Soccer thanks and congratulate you all on this.

Via Sport has acknowledged that soccer has taken a responsible approach to our collective return, which is positive. Along those lines, we are pleased to share with the members and affiliated clubs these updated (**highlighted in green**) Phase 2 recommendations and guidelines for members, affiliated clubs, administrators, coaches and anyone organizing soccer related activity under the umbrella of BC Soccer (i.e. sanctioned soccer activity).

As noted in the Phase 1 Plan and original Phase 2 Plan, the situation continues to evolve and may differ by area, therefore, we must all continue to follow the guidance from the BC health authorities along with the requirement for all members and affiliated clubs to do the same. We also understand that each **municipality has potentially different restrictions and limitations** for on-field bookings and activity, therefore, we advise everyone to work with your local city/municipalities to adhere to any appropriate requirements to ensure you are providing a safe environment for all participants.

The information in this document is current to October 14, 2020 and aligns with [ViaSport's Return to Sport Guidelines for B.C.](#)

Below are the working timelines, guidelines, measures, and precautions to support the continued responsible phased-in return to play for soccer.

WORKING TIMELINE

The following overarching timelines have not changed from the original Phase 2 guidelines and recommendations released on August 24, 2020. These timelines are ONLY able to be implemented if the BC health authorities and Via Sport continue to keep the restrictions where they are while hopefully soften them more over time as we are collectively able to get back to more normal soccer activity.

- Earliest June 12, 2020 – Return to Modified Training (Phase 1 for soccer)
- Earliest September 7, 2020* – Return to Modified Games and/or Competition Structure within identified Soccer Cohorts (Phase 2 for soccer)
- TBA – Return to Regular Type Training & Games/Competition Structure (Phase 3 for soccer)

*More detail on dates and activity is provided under the section titled “Organizing Soccer Activity” below, which is where the update (highlighted in green) has occurred.

Note: Phase 2 for soccer is in the “Progressively Loosening” phase in [ViaSport’s Sport Activity Chart on page 30 of their Return to Sport Guidelines for B.C.](#) The chart also provides added information on what may be allowed over time.

ORGANIZING SOCCER ACTIVITY

- The activity must always comply with the distancing measures and recommendations, along with any gathering restrictions issued by the BC health authorities, including the arrival and departure of players (except for family members or persons residing in the same household).
 - o As of document date – 6 feet between people is still suggested, however gatherings of 50 people or less is still required (for soccer, unless otherwise stated by the municipality/city, this is 50 people per a regular 11 v 11 full-size soccer field).
- Clearly communicate and mark (in consultation with municipality/city/facility owner) player drop-off and pick-up protocol for arrival and departure.
- Introducing limited player contact in training is allowed as of August 24, 2020.
 - o Limited contact is defined as players being able to come together and have involuntary contact (i.e. challenging for the ball, etc.).
 - o **For clarity, contact in training and in gameplay is allowed within the cohort model as defined below.**
- Games, for both youth and adult, may be considered as of September 7, 2020 with the following required modification:
 - o Limit your activities to smaller groups by having identified “Soccer Cohorts” of a maximum of 50 unique participants or up to four (4) teams.
 - A “Soccer Cohort” is defined as a closed, smaller group of no more than 50 individuals or up to four (4) teams who participate in soccer activity and remain together for the duration of a phase. The intent is to try to keep the interaction to the same cohort and group of people.

- It is understood that if four (4) teams is used, the number of individuals within the cohort may go above the 50 limit (for example, four teams with rosters of 18 players) BUT it must be kept to four teams.
- Coaches may be counted outside of the 50 individuals if they are able to maintain physical distancing at all times (parents as well).
- Each cohort can be comprised of multiple teams in order to form a mini league/game play between teams within the cohort.
- Cohorts should be made up of individuals/teams of similar age and ability.
- Keep players together in designated groups and make sure that each group avoids mixing with other groups as much as possible.
- If cohort participants (or teams) need to be adjusted, a 2-week break between activities is required.
- If using referees, it is recommended if possible, to assign a referee(s) to a specific cohort and avoid having that individual assigned to multiple cohorts.
- No throw-ins, kick-ins only. Handled as an indirect free kick.
 - [CLICK HERE for Kick-ins clarifications and consideration.](#)
- Player/Participants are to avoid spitting and nose clearing.
 - If a player/participant does spit or clear their nose, the coach is required to substitute the player as quickly as possible. The player must sit on the sideline for a minimum of 15% of the total game duration. (For example, the match duration is 50 minutes per the BC Soccer Small Sided Soccer Development Manual, the substituted player would need to sit for 7.5 minutes).
 - [CLICK HERE for Spitting and Nose Clearing clarification.](#)
- Players and team personnel on the sidelines must adhere to 6 feet distances per the BC health authorities.
- To respect the BC health authorities' guidance on limited travel:
 - As of September 7, 2020 – Youth Game Activity may be expanded beyond solely in-Club/organization activity to include within Youth District Geographical boundaries and/or neighbouring Youth District Geographical boundaries while adhering to the Soccer Cohorts requirement.
 - [As of October 30, 2020 – Youth Game Activity may be expanded beyond the Youth District Geographical boundaries and/or neighbouring Youth District Geographical boundaries to the following regional boundaries while adhering to the Soccer Cohorts requirement and being responsible \(to limit travel as best as possible\) in all league/game scheduling.](#)
 - Kootenays
 - Lower Mainland
 - North
 - Thompson Okanagan
 - Vancouver Island

- As of September 7, 2020 – Adult Game Activity may be expanded beyond solely in-Club/organization to include within the Adult League Member while adhering to the Soccer Cohorts requirement.
- [CLICK HERE for Drop Ball clarification.](#)
- The date that regular game and competition formats outside of cohorts may be considered is still TBA.
- Continue to:
 - Limit the number of team staff (coaches, managers, etc.) that are on-field, noting the requirement to have a specific number of coaches to lead the environment, while adhering to the Rule of Two and “Soccer Cohorts”.
 - Consider the comfort level of all your volunteer coaches under the current situation. Perhaps, in the first instance, limit sessions being led by a select core group of coaches.
 - Include the daily requirement for any and all staff/coaches and participants to verbally confirm they are not experiencing any symptoms related to COVID-19.
 - Make sure to stagger training/game times between different groups to create a buffer between sessions and avoid an overlap of players on the field.
 - Limit all occasions for gatherings.
 - Communicate all hygiene measures in advance to all your players.
 - Provide your employees with any protective items required by the BC health authorities and ensure that each member of your staff washes their hands regularly.
 - Limit participation to those able to adhere to any restrictions in place.
 - Ensure all participants are being registered per the normal process under BC Soccer.
 - Facilitate registration online (no cash).
 - Ask parents and guardians to provide written consent for players U18 and younger authorizing them to participate in soccer activity.
 - Keep a record of participants that are participating and when, so that you can contact them if needed, for example, if an infected person is identified.
 - Adhere to ViaSport’s Emergency Response and Outbreak Plan (appended to this document).
- If any organization is looking to operate referee specific training, these guidelines must be adhered to.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- The activity must always comply with the distancing measures and recommendations, along with any gathering restrictions issued by the BC health authorities, including the arrival and departure of players (except for family members or persons residing in the same household).
 - As of document date – 6 feet between people is still suggested, however gatherings of 50 people or less is still required (for soccer, unless otherwise stated by the municipality/city, this is 50 people per regular 11 v 11 full-size soccer field).
- Use cones and other equipment to ensure appropriate spacing is in place to support off-field distancing.

- Players and team personnel on the sidelines must adhere to 6 feet distances per the BC health authorities.
- Remind parents of off-field distancing requirements.
- Recommend that only one parent/guardian accompany their child/player to the training session.

COACHING

- The activity must always comply with the distancing measures and recommendations, along with any gathering restrictions issued by the BC health authorities, including the arrival and departure of players (except for family members or persons residing in the same household).
 - o As of document date – 6 feet between people is still suggested, however gatherings of 50 people or less is still required (for soccer, unless otherwise stated by the municipality/city, this is 50 people per regular 11 v 11 full-size soccer field).
- Even with the allowance of player contact:
 - o Work to limit close contact as much as possible.
 - o Do not let players manipulate the practice equipment.
 - o Coaches should take charge of set up and collecting equipment.
 - o Ensure players do not touch the ball with their hands and Goalkeepers must not share gloves.

EQUIPMENT

- Exercise caution with any and all equipment that is being used.
- Ask players to avoid touching equipment with their hands.
- If equipment is manipulated by participants, hand sanitation and ball washing at Ingress/Egress is required.

PROVIDE A CLEAN AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

BC Soccer understands that in the vast majority of cases soccer occurs on municipality/city fields and then in some small instances some groups do own facilities, while some also have office space. The following guidance is being provided to ensure operational security procedures are in place. These procedures must also be well displayed and communicated to all users.

- Limit all occasions for gatherings by making all communal or public areas in your facility inaccessible.
- Delimit closed areas or the ones where a maximum number of people is required.
- Use markings on the ground to indicate proper distancing from staff.
- Frequently clean all surfaces, including counters, door handles, benches, toilets, etc.
- All chairs and tables in communal areas must be inaccessible or removed to avoid all gatherings.
- All doors accessible to the public must remain open to avoid contact with door handles.
- Soap or hand sanitizer must be made available to all people in various locations throughout your facility.

- Regularly remind and encourage people to wash their hands and adopt proper hygiene practices.
- Do not use any locker/change rooms and request all participants to change at home prior to and after sessions.
- Ask that all players bring their own refreshments and do not share water bottles.

OTHER PRECAUTIONS

Should any member organization and/or affiliated club wishing to add stricter guidelines, measures and precautions they are able to do so for the soccer activity they oversee within their specific organization.

CLOSING COMMENTS

BC Soccer thanks all members, affiliated clubs, and individuals across BC for your patience and for the work you are doing to support soccer and importantly for your understanding as we navigate through this challenging time.

Of importance, if your organization does look to offer soccer activity under these Phase 2 terms, we ask that you be respectful and responsible in doing so. Organizations that do offer soccer activity and do not comply with these recommendations and guidelines may be subject to sanctioning.

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENT (in appendices)

- Timelines, recommendations and guidelines for participants.
- Via Sport's Emergency Response and Outbreak Plan.

DISCLAIMER

It is important to note that this document is not a legal document and is not a substitute for actual legislation or orders of the Provincial Health Office. Links to third party web sites are provided solely for convenience.

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APPENDIX A – Timelines, recommendations and guidelines for participants.

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Note: Moving to Phase 2 for soccer moves to the "Progressively Loosening" phase in [ViaSport's Sport Activity Chart on page 30 of their Return to Sport Guidelines for B.C.](#) The chart also provides added information on what may be allow over time.

IF YOU WISH TO PLAY SOCCER, BEFORE YOU PLAY

- Contact your soccer club or organization to inquiry if they are looking to provide modified soccer activity.
- Do not play if you:
 - o Exhibit any coronavirus symptoms, such as a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms identified by health experts.
 - o Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
 - o Are considered vulnerable or at risk (elderly individuals, immunosuppressed persons, individuals suffering from serious health problems, notably high blood pressure, pulmonary diseases, diabetes, obesity and asthma).

PREPARING TO PLAY – PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST INFECTIONS

- Wash your hands with disinfectant soap and water for at least 20 seconds before going to the soccer activity.
- Bring your own water bottle.
- Clean your equipment, including your water bottle.
- Do not share equipment.
- Change into your soccer apparel at home (not at the field location).
- Make sure you have enough water before leaving the house to avoid having to touch a tap or water fountain handle.
- If you cough or sneeze, do so in a tissue or in your sleeve.
- Avoid touching door handles, gates, benches and all other objects where the virus could survive. If you touch something, make sure to wash your hands and disinfect the surface you have touched as quickly as possible.

WHILE PLAYING

- Comply with the distancing measures and recommendations issued by the BC health authorities, including the arrival and departure of players (except for family members or persons residing in the same household).
- Listen to your coach and keep to the area of the field the coach has instructed you to be in.
- As much as possible, keep a 2-meter distance with other players.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with other players.
- Do not shake hands or do fist bumps, with other players.
- Avoid touching the ball and other equipment with your hands.
- Goalkeeper must not share gloves.

AFTER PLAYING

- Wash your hands carefully with water and disinfectant soap or with hand sanitizer.
- Do not use locker rooms or changing areas.
- Leave the field as quickly as possible after you finish playing.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW

- Should any participants and/or individuals fail to follow these recommendations and guidelines may result in removal from participation.

CLOSING COMMENTS

BC Soccer thanks all members, affiliated clubs, and individuals across BC for your patience and for the work you are doing to support soccer and importantly for your understanding as we navigate through this challenging time.

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APPENDIX B - VIASPORT'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND OUTBREAK PLAN

The following is from Via Sport's Return to Sport Guidelines for B.C.

First Aid

In the event that first aid is required to be administered during an activity, all persons attending to the injured individual must first put on a mask and gloves.

A guide for employers and Occupational First Aid Attendants:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/ofaa-protocols-covid-19-pandemic?lang=en>

First aid protocols for an unresponsive person during COVID-19: <https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/first-aid-tips-and-resources/first-aid-tips/first-aid-protocols-for-an-unresponsive-person-during-covid-19>

Outbreak Plan

Early detection of symptoms will facilitate the immediate implementation of effective control measures. In addition, the early detection and immediate implementation of enhanced cleaning measures are two of the most important factors in limiting the size and length of an outbreak. An "outbreak" is two or more cases; a "case" is a single case of COVID-19.

1. Identify the roles and responsibilities of staff or volunteers if a case or outbreak is reported.
2. If staff (including volunteers) or a participant reports they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and have been at the workplace/activity place, implement enhanced cleaning measures to reduce risk of transmission. If you are not the facility operator, notify the facility right away.
3. Implement your illness policy ([page 32 of Via Sport's Return to Sport Guidelines](#)) and advise individuals to:
 - monitor their symptoms daily, use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to help determine if it is an emergency.
 - o Individuals can contact 8-1-1 if further health advice is required and 9-1-1 if it is an emergency.
 - o Individuals can learn more about how to manage their illness here: <http://www.bccdc.ca/healthinfo/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/if-you-are-sick>
4. In the event of a suspected case or outbreak of influenza-like-illness, immediately report and discuss the suspected outbreak with the Medical Health Officer (or delegate) at your local health authority. Call 8-1-1. Implement your Illness Policy and your enhanced measures.
5. If your organization is contacted by a medical health officer in the course of contact tracing, cooperate with local health authorities.

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