



## **RETURN TO OC6 GUIDANCE**

### **BRITISH COLUMBIA -**

#### **PHASE 3 RETURN-TO-SPORT: PROGRESSIVELY LOOSEN**

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 - CORA continues to encourage all CORA Member Clubs to develop and implement their own COVID-19 Safety Plans suited for their organization, facilities and individual members in order to comply with the orders, guidance and requirements of the respective provincial health officers, regional health authorities, municipalities and stakeholders, including landlords and municipal recreational departments, as they pertain to the sport of outrigger and the management of health and safety at their facilities.

As of August 24, 2020, British Columbia has entered Phase 3 of the Province's Return-to-Sport Guidelines which progressively loosen restrictions on sports activities and person-to-person contact imposed during Phase 1 and Phase 2 of its COVID-19 restrictions.

As British Columbia outrigger clubs head into the fall and winter months, many paddlers are prepared to continue solo or tandem training which they resumed during Phase 2 of the Province's Return-to-Sport Guidelines. Phase 3 allows the opportunity for outrigger clubs to resume crew training in OC6, as well as OC12, OC4, OC3 and OC2, canoes in a manner that suits their organization and its members while complying with applicable regulatory requirements.

**This document is intended to assist CORA Member Clubs in developing and implementing their own COVID Safety Plans for resuming crew training under the Phase 3 Return-to-Sport: Progressively Loosen Guidelines. Members Clubs are advised to conduct their own research into measures and authorizations that may be required for their club to resume crew training at their facilities. This document does not provide legal advice. Member Clubs seeking legal advice should consult a lawyer.**

As each CORA Member Club has its own unique circumstances, ranging from club size, the make-up of its fleet, facility constraints, staffing and volunteer levels and financial resources,

CORA will not impose a 'one-size-fits-all' plan on its Member Clubs and will not require CORA approval of COVID-19 Safety Plans implemented by its Member Clubs. However, Member Clubs may submit a copy of their COVID-19 Safety Plan to CORA for reference and CORA Board members are available to assist Member Clubs with advice upon request.

## 1. VIASPORT RETURN-TO-SPORT GUIDELINES

In British Columbia, the provincial government has enlisted viaSport to develop Return-to-Sport Guidelines, which are available at this link: <https://www.viasport.ca/return-sport>. Each Member Club must familiarize themselves and comply with the requirements imposed by these guidelines, as amended and updated from time to time, and develop and implement a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

The viaSport Return-to-Sport Guidelines recognize the following five guiding principles from BC's Restart Plan:

- **Personal Hygiene** (frequent handwashing / cough into sleeve / non-medical masks / no handshaking)
- **Stay Home if You are Sick** (daily screening / symptomatic persons should isolate / returning travellers must isolate)
- **Environmental Hygiene** (frequent cleaning / enhanced surface sanitation / touchless technology)
- **Safe Social Interactions** (meet in small groups / maintain distance / outdoor over indoor)
- **Physical Modifications** (spacing within areas / movement within spaces)

Many Member Clubs will have already developed and implemented a COVID-19 Safety Plan during the Phase 2 Return-to-Sport Transition Measures during which many clubs opened up activities to OC1 and limited OC2 activities. In general, the measures and precautions required during Phase 2 will continue to apply within the context of Phase 3 with exceptions and modifications.

Phase 3 introduces the following:

- **contact activities** among low to medium numbers of persons and low to medium intensity
- **sport cohorts** which limit the number of persons each individual will come into contact with
- **competition** expanding from Phase 2 intra-club competition towards regional competitions and eventually provincial competitions

- **high performance camps and training environments** for athletes from different communities / regions undertaken in a safe and responsible manner
- **travel** for sport within regions, slowly expanding to provincial travel

Phase 3 allows participants in cohorts to be in contact while on the 'field of play'.

Important definitions include:

**Contact:** *both close proximity (within two metres) or physical contact.*

**Field of Play:** *a designated area where sport activities take place. The field of play does not include dressing rooms, hallways, team benches, staging areas, etc.*

For the purposes of outrigger paddling, crews in OC2, OC3, OC4, OC6 and OC12 are in 'contact' with each other when all seats are occupied in those canoes. Paddlers will be on the 'field of play' once they are 'on the water' (i.e. the canoe leaves the dock or shoreline with its complement of paddlers). Irrespective of cohort size, at any particular practice, the people that a paddler will be 'in contact with' are those in the same canoe. However, in the event of an outbreak, the members of the entire cohort, not just those in a canoe at a practice, may be required to self-isolate, as requested by public health officials.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 risk mitigation and distancing measures will continue to apply to all participants when off the field of play or 'off the water', such as on docks, boat ramps and shorelines and in boat storage compounds, clubhouses, parking areas and greenspace, including measures for cleaning and disinfection of shared equipment.

Set out below, CORA provides Member Clubs with guidance as it pertains to the implementation of Phase 3-specific risk mitigation measures and the adaptation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 risk mitigation measures to crew training.

## **2. ALL-PHASE CONSIDERATIONS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In Phase 1, risk mitigation entailed self-isolation procedures, with sports activities restricted to those performed in isolation. In Phase 2, physically distanced sports activities emerged, allowing outrigger paddling in OC1s and limited OC2 use within social 'bubbles' to comply with physical distancing requirements.

The following overview summarizes universal steps for Member Clubs that have not already implemented a COVID-19 Safety Plan for solo boat programming and accessibility. Clubs must continue to comply with Phase 1 and Phase 2 risk mitigation and distancing measures as we move through Phase 3.

Clubs and sport organizations should consider the risks unique to their sport in order to mitigate those risks. This generally includes the following steps in developing a COVID-19 Safety Plan:

- (a) Assessing the Risks
- (b) Implementing Measures to Reduce Risk
- (c) Developing Risk Mitigation Policies
- (d) Implementing Communications
- (e) Monitoring/Updating

## **2.2 Assessing the Risks**

In addition to the risks encountered by those in vulnerable populations, Member Clubs should examine the circumstances where its members may be exposed to possible COVID-19 transmission while using club facilities and equipment. For example, each club should identify:

- (a) high touch surfaces where the virus may reside (i.e. locks, handles, handrails, lockers, seating, tables and equipment);
- (b) surfaces or items that cannot be adequately disinfected;
- (c) constricted areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained;
- (d) maximum capacities for physical spaces to maintain physical distancing; and
- (e) activities during which physical distancing cannot be maintained.

## **2.3 Implementing Measures to Reduce Risk**

- (a) In developing COVID-19 Safety Plans, there are four generally accepted measures to mitigate risk:
  - (i) elimination;
  - (ii) engineering controls;
  - (iii) administrative controls; and
  - (iv) personal protective equipment (PPE).

In developing measures to implement, Member Clubs should account for limitations imposed by its human and financial resources and its ability to properly implement such measures.

- (b) Elimination Measures

Member Clubs may eliminate the risk of COVID-19 exposure or transmission by eliminating the circumstance giving rise to the risk. For example, these measures include:

- (i) prohibiting attendance by any person who may be sick, has travelled internationally, lives in the same household as, or has been exposed to, a person confirmed to have COVID-19;
- (ii) prohibiting physical interactions such as hugging, handshakes and high-fives;
- (iii) prohibiting the use of small facilities such as change rooms that do not allow physical distancing;
- (iv) prohibiting the use of high touch areas that cannot be disinfected such as lockers or cubicles;
- (v) prohibiting the sharing of personal or club equipment, including water bottles, PFDs or paddles; and
- (vi) prohibiting gatherings over 50 people.

(c) Engineering Controls

Member Clubs may reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure or transmission through physical constructions, or reconfiguring, optimizing or simply maintaining facilities and systems. For example, these measures include:

- (i) installing plexiglass barriers in office or reception areas, between staff members and/or the public;
- (ii) assigning one-way entrances and exits;
- (iii) designating waiting areas for queues on sidewalks or docks with 2 metre markings;
- (iv) imposing specific traffic patterns within or through facilities;
- (v) decluttering or removing rubbish to allow freedom of movement and physical distancing;
- (vi) providing hand-sanitizer at facility entrances and exits, as mandated by the viaSport Return-to-Sport Guidelines;
- (vii) optimizing indoor air filtration and ventilation;
- (viii) maintaining an adequate water supply for washing; and
- (ix) installing prominent signage setting out rules and procedures.

(d) Administrative Controls

Member Clubs may reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure or transmission through club policies and procedures designed to regulate member behaviour, to track compliance and to effectively respond to exposure events.

Member Clubs should place a written obligation on its members to comply with the club's policies and procedures, whether through existing membership agreements or supplementary documents, with the right to revoke membership privileges for failure to comply. See Appendix D of the viaSport Return-to-Sport Guidelines for a sample participant agreement.

For example, COVID-19 –related policies and procedures may include:

- (i) requiring physical distancing of at least 2 metres;
  - (ii) requiring the wearing of face-coverings while indoors or in constricted areas;
  - (iii) regulating facility access and imposing occupancy limits;
  - (iv) encouraging the use of privately-owned equipment such as canoes, PFDs and paddles;
  - (v) implementing procedures to ensure that shared equipment is disinfected after each use using products that are effective against COVID-19 without damaging equipment. Effective disinfection products can be found at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html> ;
  - (vi) establishing protocols for monitoring coaches, volunteers and staff who may be exposed to a high number of potential contacts;
  - (vii) for clubs with employees, establishing rules and guidelines in compliance with WorkSafeBC requirements;
  - (viii) establishing an Illness Protocol for the quarantine, isolation and return of any member who displays COVID-19 symptoms, has travelled internationally, has tested positive for COVID-19 or has been exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19; and
  - (ix) establishing and implementing an Outbreak Plan for contact tracing and notification in the event of a COVID-19 exposure or outbreak, including
    - (A) keeping accurate contact tracing information for all members,
    - (B) recording members' use of club facilities and equipment, including date, time and location,
    - (C) assigning roles and responsibility for the timely notifying of members who may have been exposed to COVID-19, and
    - (D) assigning roles and responsibility for the timely notifying of applicable health authorities.
- (e) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Although non-medical masks, face shields, gloves or other PPE may not fully protect the wearer, the use of PPE can reduce the transmission of the virus from the wearer to others, so in cases where members cannot maintain physical distancing for a prolonged period or are exposed to a high number of potential contacts, the use of PPE is recommended.

## **2.4 Developing Risk Mitigation Policies**

- (a) Each Member Club should assess the COVID-19 risks specific to its facilities, equipment, membership, operations and resources in order to develop

appropriate policies and procedures for its members, coaches, volunteers and staff.

- (b) Member Clubs who employ staff will be required to comply with WorkSafeBC requirements.
- (c) Member Clubs may also be required to comply with requirements imposed by local municipalities or their landlords.
- (d) Policies and procedures should be phrased in simple terms, with clarifying examples.
- (e) The board or executives of each Member Club should review and formally approve its policies and procedures, monitor their implementation, and be prepared to authorize amendments as issues or regulatory changes arise from time to time.
- (f) It is important that Member Clubs maintain their Phase 1 and Phase 2 policies in force throughout Phase 3, subject to specific exceptions and modifications as necessary. Phase 3 implementation does not automatically override or supersede these earlier policies.

## **2.5 Implementing Communications**

- (a) Each Member Club must communicate its policies and procedures, including updates, directly to its members, coaches, volunteers, guests and staff in order to effectively implement its COVID-19 Safety Plan.
- (b) Communication may be through any means or media, but should include:
  - (i) direct correspondence to club members through e-mail, either attaching the policies or linking to digital copies available on the Internet; and
  - (ii) on-site posting of physical signage at entries and exits, including notice of:
    - (A) restrictions on persons with COVID-19 symptoms or feeling unwell;
    - (B) capacity limits;
    - (C) physical distancing requirements;
    - (D) requirements for face coverings;
    - (E) preferred traffic flow;
    - (F) hand-sanitizing requirements; and
    - (G) a full copy of the club's COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Signage templates and resources are available at this WorkSafeBC website: [https://www.worksafebc.com/en/forms-resources#q=covid&sort=relevancy&f:topic-facet=\[Health%20%26%20Safety\]&f:language-facet=\[English\]](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/forms-resources#q=covid&sort=relevancy&f:topic-facet=[Health%20%26%20Safety]&f:language-facet=[English])

Additional notification may be made through social media postings, recognizing that those notices may not reach all intended recipients.

- (c) In the event of paddler illness and potential COVID-19 infection, the club must use its contact tracing information and follow the guidance of public health authorities regarding communication to its members. Following a confirmed positive COVID-19 infection, the applicable regional health authority or public health officer will require the club to provide detailed scheduling and contact tracing information for affected members. Health authorities will work with the club to manage subsequent isolation, testing, treatment and monitoring.

## **2.6 Monitoring and Updates**

As Return-to-Sport phases advance and COVID-19 mitigation strategies progress, Member Clubs should be prepared to amend and update their COVID Safety Plans from time to time to respond to and comply with changes mandated by provincial and regional health authorities.

# **3. PHASE 3 RETURN-TO-SPORT: PROGRESSIVELY LOOSEN**

## **3.1 General Considerations**

As noted above, Phase 3 of the viaSport Return-to-Sport Guidelines gradually introduce contact activities, sport cohorts, limited competition, high performance camps and training environments and travel within regions.

The Phase 3 loosening of restrictions is based on allowing a low to medium number of contacts with a low to medium contact intensity among participants within a sport cohort. These three factors are described as follows:

- (a) Contact intensity is a function of proximity (close to distant) and duration (brief to prolonged).
- (b) The number of contacts is the number of people in contact with each other on the field of play at the same time. Note, however, that members of the whole cohort may be exposed to one another over a series of practices.
- (c) A sport cohort is a group of named participants with whom the cohort members will partake their contact activities and can be larger than the number of people on the field of play at any one time. For outrigger, the number of participants in a cohort will be at the discretion of the Member Club, as discussed below.

For the purposes of outrigger paddling during Phase 3, contact (being close physical proximity of less than 2 metres) is permitted between members of a cohort when they are on the water. During a practice, a paddler will be in contact with the other paddlers in the same crew, however, over the course of a series of practices, paddlers may be rostered with other paddlers in his or her cohort.



Even though contact is permitted among all members of a cohort, the number of people a paddler is in contact with during a practice should be minimized. If a cohort comprises more than one crew, interactions on and off the water should be kept within each crew. Paddlers should perform practice-related activities, such as queueing and loading canoes, hauling and launching canoes and cleaning canoes, with their crew and observe Phase 1 and Phase 2 restrictions, including symptom screening, physical distancing and wearing of masks, when off the water.

Due to the increased risk of COVID-19 exposure or transmission arising from Phase 3 contact activities, CORA recommends that Member Clubs require cohort members to sign written acknowledgements of the risk of participating in Phase 3 contact activities and agreeing to comply with the club's COVID-19 Safety Plan. See Appendix D of the viaSport Return-to-Sport Guidelines for a sample participant agreement.

### **3.2 Cohort Size and Composition**

The Canoe Kayak BC sport-specific Return-to-Sport guidelines for canoe kayak provide for whole club cohorts, which would be too large for many of CORA's Member Clubs.

Each Member Club will be responsible for establishing cohorts that best respond to the organizational structure and culture of its club. CORA recommends that cohorts be specific crews (e.g. 6 paddlers), teams (e.g. 6-10 paddlers), programs (e.g. 20 paddlers) or the entire club only in the case of smaller clubs.

CORA does not recommend large cohort sizes, primarily because of the increased risk of COVID-19 exposure and the likelihood that the entire cohort would self-isolate in the event of an outbreak.

There are a number of factors that Member Clubs should consider in establishing its cohorts, which include the following:

- (a) cohorts are groups of paddlers who will train together on a regular basis, so
  - (i) cohort size should match the availability of canoes,
  - (ii) cohort members should be of similar age or skill,
  - (iii) cohorts may align with existing Club crews, teams or programs,
  - (iv) cohort size should account for attendance levels to avoid empty seats or cancelled practices, and
  - (v) cohort size should allow an equitable distribution of coaching resources;
- (b) cohorts are intended to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission by limiting the number of contacts, so smaller cohorts are more effective at reducing that risk;
- (c) large programs within a club may be split into several cohorts;

- (d) members of one cohort should not mix or train with members of any other cohort except when physical distancing can be maintained, such as in OC1;
- (e) in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak, an entire cohort may be required to self-isolate, so larger cohorts will impact more people and whole Club cohorts may be required to suspend operations;
- (f) cohorts within a Club may vary in size and may be groups of paddlers with similar risk tolerance, risk exposure or vulnerabilities;
- (g) even within larger cohorts, crew rosters can be managed to group paddlers to reduce the number of contacts within the cohort by maintaining specific crews with similar risk tolerance, risk exposure or vulnerabilities over a prolonged period of time;
- (h) cohorts should have a sufficient number of competent steerspersons for the expected number of crews, including spares;
- (i) cohorts should account for all members of the club who can commit to return to paddle;
- (j) coaches who are members of a cohort must physically distance, by using a coach boat, OC1 or dockside instruction, when coaching any other cohort;
- (k) coaches who are unable to physically distance during practices, by using a coach boat, OC1 or dockside instruction, are members of the cohort being coached and may not coach or paddle with any other cohort;
- (l) paddlers wishing to switch between cohorts must abstain from paddling with their old cohort for 14 days before paddling with their new cohort, although physically distanced OC1 paddling is allowed during this period; and
- (m) paddlers who are members of an outrigger cohort should disclose, as a courtesy, any elevated risk of exposure that they may face due to workplace exposures or other contact sports activities.

Member Clubs should accommodate the wishes of its members. If there is an overwhelming desire for cohorts of 6 to reduce the number of contacts during practices, then establish cohorts of 6. Note that cohorts of 6 will require consistent attendance by all members of the cohort, as members cannot jump between cohorts without a 14-day break (i.e. no drop-ins to fill seats). For larger cohorts, the crews in the cohort will have the opportunity to share resources such as coaches or steerspersons, but as with any practice, there is the likelihood of paddlers being left on shore or in OC1s if there are awkward numbers.

### **3.3 Contact Intensity**

The Phase 3 Guidelines suggest minimizing close physical proximity as much as possible, and limiting the number and duration of contacts between different participants when physical distancing is not possible.

When all seats in OC2, OC3, OC4, OC6 or OC12 canoes are occupied, the paddlers are in fixed positions in contact with each other, albeit with varying degrees of intensity based on the distance from one another. Paddlers in adjacent seats will have the highest degree of contact while distant seats will have a lower degree of contact, with the primary concern being exposure to a fellow paddler's airborne vapour droplets.

The following measures may reduce contact intensity between paddlers within a crew or cohort while on the water:

- (a) suggesting the wearing of face-coverings while on the water, even if for a portion of the practice;
- (b) if there is an empty seat, placing paddlers from vulnerable populations (older or immuno-compromised) adjacent to the empty seat;
- (c) minimizing close physical proximity, such as when changing seats within a canoe;
- (d) minimizing actual physical contact, such as giving high fives, handshakes or other direct physical contact;
- (e) keeping canoes at least 2 metres apart from each other;
- (f) not rafting canoes or changing paddlers between canoes;
- (g) not drafting other canoes;
- (h) reducing the duration of practices;
- (i) designing workouts that allow relaxed breathing patterns rather than heavy breathing patterns;
- (j) steering crosswind courses, subject to safety considerations;
- (k) prohibiting placement of water bottles on the floor of the canoe and encouraging bottle holders clipped to the gunwales;
- (l) prohibiting spitting or nose-blowing into the canoe or the water surrounding the canoe;
- (m) prohibiting of bailing techniques that causes excessive splashing; and
- (n) removing spray skirts/spray decks from canoes as the fabric is difficult to disinfect and may harbour germs, but this will limit or prevent the use of the canoes in rough or inclement weather.

### **3.4 Applying Phase 1 and Phase 2 Measures to OC6**

As noted above, Phase 1 and Phase 2 risk mitigation measures will continue to apply during Phase 3.

COVID-19 policies and procedures implemented by Member Clubs for the use of OC1 and OC2 canoes must be adapted to the use of the larger canoes and to the increased number of paddlers attending the club's facilities. These measures include:

(a) Practice Scheduling

- (i) Practices should be scheduled in a staggered manner and with sufficient time so that leaving and returning crews and cohorts do not encounter each other on docks, in compounds or other constrained areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- (ii) Physical distancing between crews should be maintained as much as possible, even if they belong to the same cohort.
- (iii) Assembly areas where crews should wait on shore should be designated if necessary.
- (iv) Crews returning to docks should wait on the water for crews to clear the docks.
- (v) Canoes should not be stored in a manner where canoes undergoing disinfection prevent access to clean canoes by crews in adjacent timeslots.

(b) Cohort Management

Member Clubs should remind their paddlers that they are required to self monitor their own health and not come to practice when they should be self-isolating.

For larger cohorts, the management of paddlers attending OC6 practices will require additional effort. CORA recommends on-line practice sign-ups to allow the preparation of crew rosters in advance and designating one or more cohort captains for each cohort, who would check-in paddlers, interface with the Club and manage paddlers at practices.

(c) Physical Distancing

- (i) Physical distancing between paddlers should be maintained at all times except when unavoidable, such as when loading a canoe on a cart or launching a canoe.
- (ii) Paddlers should wear face-coverings at all times when physical distancing cannot be maintained during off water activities, such as loading, hauling and launching of canoes, assembling on docks and cleaning of canoes.
- (iii) CORA recommends that only one crew or cohort enter a dock or boat compound at a time, except where physical distancing can be maintained.

(d) Disinfection of Equipment

- (i) Shared equipment should be disinfected after each use, including paddles, PFDs, and high touch surfaces on canoes and at the facility

- (ii) CORA recommends eliminating the use of shared equipment that is difficult to disinfect and may harbour germs, such as PFDs and spray skirts/decks, but the removal of spray skirts/decks will limit or prevent the use of the canoes in rough or inclement weather.
- (iii) Please refer to Health Canada's website (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html>) for a wide range of disinfection products. It is important that selected products do not degrade or compromise equipment or clothing.

### **3.5 Competition**

During Phase 2, Member Clubs may have introduced intra-club competition for events where physical distancing could be maintained, such as small boats time trials.

Under Phase 3, the viaSport Return-to-Sport Guidelines allows the gradual introduction of regional and provincial competition in accordance with the viaSport Return-to-Sport Guidelines and, in the case of canoe, the Canoe Kayak BC sport specific guidelines. The scope has also been expanded to allow, in the case of outrigger, crews to compete within and between cohorts as long as physical distancing is maintained between competing crews, which would allow OC6 competition within regions. Member Clubs may host intra-club and regional races where physical distancing can be maintained (OC1, V1 and OC2), as well as crew boat races (OC6 or OC12) in cohorts where physical distancing between opponents is required. The BC Provincial Health Officer Order limiting group gathering to 50 people continues to apply to participants, officials and spectators at races, although community spectators are not encouraged during Phase 3. All competitions are required to have a detailed safety plan in place.

At this time, there are no CORA-sanctioned small boats races or OC6 races remaining in 2020 and applications for 2021 CORA race sanctioning are being accepted on the CORA website.

### **3.6 Submission of Phase 3 Plan to Relevant Authorities**

Member Clubs should submit their finalized Phase 3 COVID Safety Plans to relevant authorities and stakeholders, which may include their landlords, shared facility operators, local governments and insurance providers (for independently insured clubs). Clubs are required to work with their relevant local authorities to receive and affirm their Phase 3 plans.

Member Clubs may submit a final version of their COVID-19 Safety Plans, together with subsequent updates, to CORA for its records.