

Return to Volleyball

Principles for Return to Volleyball

1. Participant health and safety is our highest priority.
2. To be safe and successful in returning to volleyball, we must follow all [public health guidelines](#), practice physical distancing, good hygiene, and continue acting responsibly.
3. To follow a process and timeline that incorporates a careful progression to restarting volleyball. Outdoor volleyball is considered safer than indoor or within enclosed spaces.
4. This document will be updated as new information becomes available. Definitions and details within this document are subject to change as guidance documents and materials from the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services are revised.
5. Local/Regional programs should be prioritized to avoid unnecessary travel.
6. Initial volleyball activities should focus on individual and small group training.
7. Participants and organizing groups should utilize a gradual and methodical return to volleyball, to minimize injury and risk.
8. Additional return to competition guidelines are being developed and will be provided when complete.

This is not a legal document; it outlines measures and best practices that support a safe return to volleyball during the outbreak of COVID-19.

Return to Volleyball Progression

The return to volleyball activities will adapt as restrictions, public health guidelines and facility policies change. The following is a progression of allowable activities in Stage 2 of Alberta's Relaunch, mitigation strategies will need to be practiced throughout all phases:

1. Individual Training & Skill Development

- a. Participants must complete [initial waivers and the daily screening](#).
- b. Volleyball or physical training can be done provided the instructor/coach and athlete maintain physical distancing of 2 metres throughout the activity. High intense activity, with heavy breathing, requires 3 metres of distancing.
- c. The ball and training aids should be [disinfected](#) prior and after use.
- d. The instructor/coach is encouraged to wear a mask.

2. Small Group Training and Skills Camps With Physical Distancing

- a. Participants must complete [initial waivers and the daily screening](#).
- b. Participants who become symptomatic during a session are required to be isolated from others and must return home immediately.
- c. Volleyball or physical training can be done provided the coach, instructor, athletes, and any other participants maintain physical distancing of 2 metres throughout the activity. High intense activity, with heavy breathing, requires 3 metres of distancing. The established gathering restrictions for Stage 2 must be followed (maximum persons: 50 indoor & 100 outdoor).
- d. Balls should be [disinfected](#) or replaced at frequent intervals, and at minimum should be done prior, once during and after each volleyball session.
- e. Contact Attendance Logs should be collected for all participants in each session by the organizer, to support public health contact tracing efforts if a participant tests positive for COVID-19. Providing information is voluntary for participants, and the organization must obtain an individual's consent and notify them about the purpose and legal authority for the collection. Information will only be requested by Alberta Health Services if a potential exposure occurs onsite. The organization must make reasonable security arrangements to protect personal information, and the Attendance Logs should be retained for 3 months and destroyed after that period in accordance with the Personal Information & Protection Act.
- f. [Spectator Guidelines](#)

Removal of physical distancing guidelines puts all participants at a higher level of risk. Organizations may also be exposed to increased levels of liability. Organizers must clearly communicate to their participants the restrictions and regulations of being involved in a Cohort Group.

3. Small Group Training and Skills Camps Without Physical Distancing ([Cohort Group](#))

- a. Participants must complete [initial waivers and the daily screening](#).
- b. Participants who become symptomatic during a session are required to be isolated from others and must return home immediately.
- c. Balls should be [disinfected](#) or replaced at frequent intervals, and at minimum should be done prior, once during and after each volleyball session.
- d. Small Group Training and skills camps without physical distancing restrictions, must proceed as a [Cohort Group](#) in Stage 2 of Alberta's Relaunch.

- e. Contact Attendance Logs should be collected for all participants in each session by the organizer, to support public health contact tracing efforts if a participant tests positive for COVID-19. Providing information is voluntary for participants, and the organization must obtain an individual's consent and notify them about the purpose and legal authority for the collection. Information will only be requested by Alberta Health Services if a potential exposure occurs onsite. The organization must make reasonable security arrangements to protect personal information, and the Attendance Logs should be retained for 3 months and destroyed after that period in accordance with the Personal Information & Protection Act.
- f. Alternate game-play formats (i.e. 2 vs. 2 or 4 vs. 4) should be considered in addition to other rule adaptations (i.e. attacking from behind the 3 metre line, or no blocking) to limit close contact between participants.
- g. Physical Distancing should be practiced during breaks, prior to starting, at the completion of the session, and whenever possible.
- h. [Spectator Guidelines](#).

4. Small Group Competitions & Mini Leagues ([Cohort Group](#))

- a. Participants must complete [initial waivers and the daily screening](#).
- b. Participants who become symptomatic during a session are required to be isolated from others and must return home immediately.
- c. Balls should be [disinfected](#) or replaced at frequent intervals, and at minimum should be done prior, once during and after each volleyball session.
- d. Mini Leagues & small group competitions, without physical distancing restrictions, must proceed as a [Cohort Group](#) in Stage 2 of Alberta's Relaunch.
- e. Cohort Mini Leagues will allow teams to return to playing games and help mitigate the risk of widespread transmission by limiting the number of athletes that come in close contact.
- f. Where 2 metre physical distancing between individuals is maintained or the Mini League model is employed, travel for sport, physical and recreation activities is allowed.
(Updated September 3).
- g. Teams in different Mini Leagues should not play each other.
- h. Contact Attendance Logs should be collected for all participants in each session by the organizer, to support public health contact tracing efforts if a participant tests positive for COVID-19. Providing information is voluntary for participants, and the organization must obtain an individual's consent and notify them about the purpose and legal authority for

- the collection. Information will only be requested by Alberta Health Services if a potential exposure occurs onsite. The organization must make reasonable security arrangements to protect personal information, and the Attendance Logs should be retained for 3 months and destroyed after that period in accordance with the Personal Information & Protection Act.
- i. Alternate game-play formats (i.e. 2 vs. 2 or 4 vs. 4) should be considered in addition to other rule adaptations (i.e. attacking from behind the 3 metre line, or no blocking) to limit close contact between participants.
 - j. Physical Distancing should be practiced during breaks, prior to starting, at the completion of the session, and whenever possible.
 - k. [Spectators Guidelines](#).

Cohort Groups

1. Any volleyball activity (small group training or mini league) that does not promote and apply physical distancing of 2 metres between participants, will be considered a Sport Cohort Group.
2. Cohort Groups cannot exceed 50 people in Stage 2 of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy. This includes athletes, coaches, referees, and trainers who cannot always maintain two metres of distance from others. This number does not include parents and spectators.
3. Individuals should limit the number of sport cohorts/mini leagues they belong to. A meeting with Provincial Sport Organizations, the Government of Alberta and AHS was held on Friday, September 4. The direction provided was participants should limit to one sport cohort/mini league at a time as a best practice, and sport organizations should create strategies that limit sport cohorts to one. (Updated September 3).
4. Should they leave that Cohort, they must wait fourteen days (symptom free) before joining any other Cohort.
5. Cohort Groups must be managed by a staff person or organizer who is responsible for the maintenance of the Cohort and ensures that all the guidelines are followed.
6. Provided a coach always maintains physical distancing during a Cohort's activities, that coach may participate in other Cohort groups. Physical distancing requirements are not negated if a coach handles a shared ball.
7. Physical distancing should be maintained between all participants when "off the court", not directly involved in drills or game play (during breaks, in between matches and whenever possible).

5. Large Group Competitions

- a. Tournaments/events that compel a new cohort team to be formed for a short period (e.g., a weekend) are not permitted at this time. (Updated – September 3)
- b. TBA

Best Practices for Participants

1. Change and use the toilet at home prior to attending a volleyball session. Participants are encouraged to strictly follow all Public Health hygiene rules and general recommendations.
2. Wash or sanitize hands before, during and after each volleyball session.
3. Avoid touching their faces, and cough or sneeze into their elbow.
4. Long hair is tied back to discourage participants touching their faces.
5. Each participant should bring and label their own water bottles, towels, and hand sanitizer.
6. Do not share your equipment or personal items with other participants.
7. Avoid using change rooms, washrooms, meeting rooms, and water fountains.
8. Avoid cheering/singing, these activities have a higher risk because infected people can transmit the virus through their saliva or respiratory droplets.
9. Unnecessary contact between participants, handshakes, high-fives, hugs, etc. should be discouraged, and whenever possible all participants should maintain physical distancing of 2 metres.
10. Coaches and training staff are encouraged to wear masks, athletes should not wear masks.
11. Electronic whistles should be used over traditional whistles.
12. Individuals over 65 years of age or with underlying health conditions are deemed to be higher risk. These people should not attend volleyball activities until they have medical clearance and approval to participate. Those who live with high-risk individuals should also seek medical consultation prior to their participation.

Teams & Organizing Group Guidelines

1. Participants must complete [initial waivers and the daily screening](#) prior to attending any volleyball activity.
2. All [public health guidelines](#) and facility rules must be followed in addition to physical distancing, good hygiene, and acting responsibly.
3. Outdoor volleyball is considered safer than indoor and should be encouraged when feasible.
4. Use on-line registration and check-in procedures when possible.

5. Encourage drop off and pick times to be staggered, and for team members not to congregate or socialize before or after training.
6. Transition time between teams & groups to move in and out should be scheduled.
7. Separate training groups in multi-court facilities with court buffers and add additional space in between beach or grass courts.
8. Inform participants of general hygiene, safety precautions, and ensure these guidelines are followed throughout the activity.
9. Use [disinfectant](#) on balls at frequent intervals, particularly between different user groups.
10. Limit the number of volleyballs used and keep them designated for specific groups when possible.
11. Breaks for hand washing or sanitizing at intervals throughout the activity should be scheduled.
12. Modify drills and activities to limit/reduce infringement of physical distancing.
13. Do not mix balls with other courts or groups. If a ball enters your court, use your foot to kick it back.
14. Food, drinks, or snacks should not be provided or shared.
15. Ensure first aid policies and protocols are updated to include COVID-19 considerations.
16. A clear procedure should be established for managing any participant that develops symptoms of COVID-19 during a volleyball activity. This should include an isolation area, notification processes, and education of staff on the procedure.

Spectator Guidelines

1. Parent and spectator attendance should be minimized or discouraged, and physical distancing should be maintained.
2. Spectators should not be near the playing area, and away from all athlete spaces.
3. The maximum number of spectators is determined by the facility and how many people the space can hold while maintaining 2 metres of distance between spectators, up to a maximum of 100 spectators.
4. Unless from the same household or family cohort, spectators must maintain 2 metres of physical distancing.
5. It is strongly recommended that all spectators wear masks, particularly for indoor volleyball activities. Cheering and yelling is strongly discouraged as it presents a high risk of spreading respiratory droplets.

Insurance

1. It is important to note that most insurance policies, including that provided through Volleyball Alberta, exclude coverage related to communicable diseases or pandemics, including Directors and Officers Insurance. Therefore, return to volleyball documents should include acknowledgement of the inherent risk to the resumption of sport during a pandemic and clear strategies to mitigate these risks.
2. Ensure that participants are fully informed and consent to risks associated with participating in volleyball activities.

Facility Guidelines

1. Check the guidelines and procedures of a facility prior to arriving, below are some considerations to expect.
2. Separate doors to enter and exit the facility.
3. Directional signage and markings for participants to follow proper walkways to the courts.
4. The flow of participants may be considered so that there are no congregation points.
5. Common contact surfaces and volleyball equipment should be cleaned and [disinfected](#) regularly and between users.
6. Transition time for groups to move in and out should be scheduled.
7. Remove non-essential equipment (benches, chairs, tables, boxes) and limit the amount of shared equipment available.
8. Hand sanitizer or wash stations should be widely available for all participants.

