



Q&A Questions from Keeping COVID in the Penalty Box: Safely Re-opening Recreation Sites

The following questions were left unanswered on August 18th during the webinar: *Keeping COVID in the Penalty Box: Safely Re-opening Recreation Sites*. Hosted by Municipalities of Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Health. A recording of the webinar can be found [here](#). For the latest updates on COVID guidelines, please refer to www.saskatchewan.ca/covid19 or the Municipalities of Saskatchewan weekly COVID-19 Update. There were also questions raised about the increased costs for running facilities under the new guidelines, these have been passed onto Minister Carr at Government Relations.

Dr. Saqib Shahab, Chief Medical Health Officer for the Province of Saskatchewan and Kelsie Dale have graciously provided the following answer to the remaining questions:

Questions Regarding Gatherings:

- 1. Can teams/organizations/communities hold banquets, Fowl Suppers, Fundraisers, or large weddings? What are the requirements for room size and spacing?**
 - a. Banquets, meetings, or social gatherings taking place in community halls, private rooms in restaurants, convention centres, conference and hotel meeting rooms, and other indoor venues must follow the Banquet and Conference Facility Guidelines in the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan. Gathering size per banquet/conference room must comply with the public gathering restrictions as per the current public health order (currently 30 persons).

- 2. We have a community centre that has 3 partitions. I understand we can have 30 per room. For a wedding we can open open the 3 rooms. Can we**



have 90 people for this event? Can a bar be opened for the event? Can food be served by caterers for this type of event?

- a. Please refer to the Banquet and Conference Facility Guidelines in the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan for guidance on holding events in community centres. The maximum number of people per room is 30 and rooms cannot be permitted to intermingle. While bars are not prohibited, they are discouraged as alcohol lowers inhibitions and the risk of lapses in physical distancing increases. Food service is permitted per the guideline.

3. Should non-household individuals be playing drop-in sports together and are teams considered a cohort?

- a. Sports where physical distancing cannot be maintained must follow the mini-league concept as outlined in the sports and activity guidelines. Sports where physical distancing can be maintained do not require mini leagues; therefore, drop-in programs are permitted.

4. Will there be consideration for bi provincial play for border communities like Lloydminster SK/AB. Lloydminster has some sporting groups that belong to AB sporting organizations, and usually play other Alberta teams.

- a. Yes, consideration for this is underway and further direction will be available in future guideline updates.

5. "What is the radius of the mini leagues? Here in Central West we pull participants from other communities for all our Hockey Programs, such as A, AA and our Jr. Team.

- a. Mini leagues must be comprised of individuals within the same neighbourhood, community or local geographical region; there is no set distance or radius. It is also based on the availability of the activity in your close geographical area.

Cleaning and Contact Tracing Questions:

- 1. What should the disinfection protocol be between each event? should arena seats be disinfected as well as high touch areas? What is the**



expectation for disinfection to safely operate our facilities when hockey games and spectators are allowed?

- a. All frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected prior to a new group being provided access to field space, including benches, dugouts, bleachers/seats, railings, gates, etc.
- 2. If a participant of a program in a recreation facility has a confirmed case of COVID-19, what are the procedures that would follow and who would be responsible to inform the facility owner/manager?**
- a. Public Health will manage contact tracing. Facility owners/manager need to follow public health direction during a case or outbreak investigation.

Facilities Questions:

- 1. What are the specific guidelines for dressing room usage? Given that athletes are in close quarters while on the ice competing for pucks, etc. will there be consideration around allowing more kids in dressing rooms. As winter approaches, having kids dress outdoors or spread out in the cold arena, it may create issues for access.**
 - a. Dressing rooms are permitted under the current sport and activity guidelines. Dressing room use must be managed in a way that allows physical distancing to be maintained and must be cleaned and disinfected frequently. The facility will need to determine how this can be achieved by their specific facility.
- 2. Are we required to have a separate entrance and exit into our facility?**
 - a. Separate entrance and exits are not required but traffic flow through the facility must be in a manner so that physical distancing can be maintained. Having separate entrances and exits is a good tool to ensure physical distancing. Depending on the facility this may or may not be possible.
- 3. Are Aquatic facilities required to follow the same guidelines for aquatic fitness classes as gym fitness classes, specifically limited to 15 people?**



- a. Aquatic fitness classes should follow the class size outlined in the gym and fitness facility guideline and must ensure physical distancing at all times.
- 4. Is the person renting the facility responsible to adhere to the latest regulations or is it still the Municipality, even though there is a rental agreement?**
 - a. Both the facility owner, operator and renter are responsible for ensuring the guidelines are met. Ultimately the facility owner is responsible for ensuring the renters are following the guidelines (i.e. if a team is disregarding spacing as marked in the facility then that should be corrected or consider the team no longer able to use the facility). We cannot comment on the impact that a rental agreement may have on shifting liability associated with issues of non-compliance.
- 5. Dr. Shahab, given the various types of indoor recreation facilities (from rinks to meeting rooms), will you consider establishing occupancy caps that relate to square footage of spaces, rather than a specific number?**
 - a. This has been explored in the past but is not up for consideration at this time.
- 6. Can you touch on what guidelines recreation directors should follow, regarding community group rentals for the fall. (ex: a taekwondo group renting one hall in our community centre for 4 hours, while another group is renting another hall at the same time.)**
 - a. The Sport and Activity Guidelines would outline guidelines specific to sports and the venues that they are played in. The Banquets and Conference Facility guidelines would offer information for the use of these types of spaces for non-sport related activities.
- 7. What are Arenas doing with coin operated vending machines, and chair massagers?**
 - a. They are high touch common areas and must be cleaned and disinfected frequently per the guideline.



8. How do smaller rinks without capabilities to hire sufficient staff to monitor and enforce guidelines as they are currently set out? Will rural rinks be considered in the updated guidelines?

- a. They will need to find a way to set up the facility to comply with the guidelines and hold users of the space responsible (i.e. through rental agreements, having a named person responsible, volunteers for designated days to ensure cleaning and disinfection, etc.). If complaints or evidence of non-compliance becomes evident there should be a plan in place to manage these issues and a point person designated (this may be a volunteer) to take the lead in ensuring compliance. The risk of transmission is not reduced in rural rinks, so mitigation measures still need to be adhered to.

9. We have a unsupervised gym facility and the pickle ball club is requesting to get going this fall. There are a small number of players, would this be allowed and what procedures should we put in place.

- a. Yes, this would be permitted provided the requirements in the guidelines would be met. Please refer to the Sport and Activity guidelines for applicable requirements.

Questions around Masks:

1. So masking mitigates and reduces risk, but masking does not change the number allowed in a facility? Is that correct?

- a. Yes, that is correct.

2. Has there been discussion about making masks mandatory in public indoor spaces?

- a. Discussions regarding masking are ongoing. At this time masking while in indoor public spaces is strongly encouraged, especially when the ability to maintain 2-meter physical distancing from others is unpredictable.



3. Also, are athletes required to wear masks during activity, if not otherwise provided for?

- a. Masking during a strenuous activity (i.e. in the course of game play) is not recommended. Physical distancing should be maintained wherever possible. The mini-league structure and other guidelines are intended to minimize the number of persons in contact with each other when physical distancing is not possible due to the nature of the sport.

4. Is there the opportunity for a sports team of 15 being in one dressing if they are utilizing masks?

- a. Dressing room use is permitted within the Sports and Activities guidelines. They must be managed in a way that allows physical distancing to be maintained and must be cleaned and disinfected frequently. If a team of 15 can fit in a dressing room with proper physical distancing being maintained that is permitted. Mask use would add an additional protective measure but not replace the need for physical distancing.

5. Would it be necessary for a municipality to put in a bylaw that masks/face shields are the law and you can not enter a recreational facility without them?

- a. Municipal bylaws may be more restrictive than provincial guidance. The provincial approach is to strongly encourage mask use at this time- this continues to be re-evaluated as the situation evolves.