



### **Return to Play Guidelines – 2021**

Under the guidance of national and provincial sport organizations such as the Canadian Fencing Federation, Sport Canada (SC), Own The Podium (OTP), and Sport NL, the Newfoundland and Labrador Fencing Association (NLFA) is working on return to play guidelines that is considerate of the health circumstances we are currently facing in order to protect our members, families and communities. The concept is designed to gradually re-start our sport, all while respecting the rules issued by the federal and provincial Public Health authorities.

It is recommended that all member clubs must follow these protocols, although the restriction and required practices of national, provincial, and municipal public health directives always take precedence. Simply put, regardless of any exit strategy, no fencing club should resume its activities except one that follows the current advice and recommendations of provincial and local public health authorities. Please visit [www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19](http://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19), which is updated daily.

Effective Date April 10

#### **Resources:**

Government of NL Sport Guidance

Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (Public Health): Prevention Recommendations

CFF: Return to Play Protocol Own the Podium:

Risk Assessment and Mitigating Checklist Tool

### Club Expectations

Before Opening - Clubs must complete an operational plan and have a copy of it in the club.

- Clubs must complete the Own the Podium Club Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist tool.
- Clubs should consider updating their waivers / assumption of risk forms to include COVID-19.
- Clubs must ensure proper handwashing posters are posted in washrooms; where possible (private facilities), physical distancing, hand sanitizing, and self-isolating posters should also be posted.
- Where possible, clubs should clearly display floor marking to demarcate proper physical distancing in hallways and other traffic areas.
- Clubs should designate an area within the training space to keep individual bags/equipment to facilitate physical distancing.
- Install hand-sanitizing stations at every club entry and exit.
- Clubs should communicate to their members their new protocols, along with the reminder that the mode of infection for COVID-19 happens via droplet transmission through the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clubs and athletes must not share fencing masks, gloves, jackets, breeches, or any other equipment. In the absence of personal equipment, clubs should assign club equipment to a specific fencer for individual use. Every fencer should bring their own equipment to and from training rather than leaving it at the club.
- Each club should have a list of self-assessment questions to answered by each fencer at the start of each training session.
- There should be a person designated as responsible for recording all relevant information for tracking, including recording first name, last name, email address, and phone number of each person at each training session, as well as date/time/duration of the training session, and declarations of NO responses to the self-assessment. Records must maintained for 14 days to assist with contact tracing, should it be required.
- There should be a person designated as responsible for handling all COVID-19 correspondence for the club, including those to fencers, parents, club members, Public Health, NLFA, other governmental bodies, and the media at large.
- Coaches, parents, fencers, and family members over 65 years old or those with chronic health issues (including but not limited to immunosuppression, lung disease, hypertension, heart disease, asthma, diabetes) should consider staying at home until further guidance by public health officials.

### Designated Training Groups

- Fencers must be separated into Designated Training Groups prior to classes recommencing.
- Fencers must be allotted to one specific group, and should remain in that group until Phase 5. The coach also needs to remain the same for each group. However, coaches may coach more than one group.
- The number of athletes per class is determined by space considerations:
- For Phases 1 and 2 of the Return-to-Play Protocol, a minimum of a 4-metre diameter bubble must be able to be maintained for each fencer, with a maximum of 1 fencer per 25 square metres.

- For Phases 3+ of the Return-to-Play Protocol, a maximum of 1 fencer per 15 square metres is required.
- The number of athletes per class must never exceed provincial guidelines for indoor gatherings.
- Class Schedule - The maximum number of classes to be held per day is determined by phases.
- In Phases 1 and 2, a maximum of two classes may be held per day, with Designated Training Groups.
- In Phase 3, a maximum of three classes may be held per day, with Designated Training Groups.
- In Phase 4, a maximum of four classes may be held per day, with Designated Training Groups.
- In Phase 5+, there is no limit on the number of classes, but classes must be separated by 30 minutes in order to air out the space.
- In Phases 1–3, the coach and fencer participating in a private lesson should be part of the class immediately before or immediate after the private lesson; or the entire practice area needs to be cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
- In Phases 4+, up to 6 consecutive/concurrent private lessons can be given before needing to clean and disinfect the practice space.

### Day-to-Day Operations

- A daily log of all people who enter the club (along with their contact information) must be kept by the club for at least eight weeks.
- It is recommended to clean and disinfect floors, door handles, light switches, doors, doorways, and bathrooms (including faucets, soap dispensers, and toilet handles) before and after every class. (See notes below about cleaning and disinfecting.)
- If possible, open doors/windows of the facility to allow fresh air to enter the training area. Consider doing training outdoors if possible. If using fans, they should be pointed out of the training space, rather into it, to avoid spreading droplets in the training area.
- No food or meals are to be eaten during regular practices or in practice spaces. Communal water fountains/sinks should not be used to fill water bottles.
- Individuals should sanitize their hands prior to using club exercise equipment such as fencing weapons. Shared equipment must be cleaned and sanitized after every use.
- Reel clips and the last part of the cable should be sanitized after each match. Push the buttons on the fencing machine with your glove-hand or sword tip. Consider using personal phones with scoring apps instead of a communal remote for matches; otherwise sanitize the remote after each use.
- Scoring machines and reel boxes should also be cleaned and disinfected after each class.
- Cleaning Terminology
  - Cleaning: Refers to the removal of visible soil, dirt or debris. Cleaning does not kill germs but is effective at removing them from a surface.
  - Sanitizing: Refers to reducing the number of germs on a surface to a safe level, as determined by public health standards, usually in about 30 seconds. Sanitizing efforts are primarily focused on personal hygiene.
  - Disinfecting: Disinfecting refers to using a chemical/product to kill germs on a surface. Disinfecting is only effective after surfaces have been cleaned. Disinfecting times vary by product, so be sure to review product instructions.

- Hard surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers details can be found on the Health Canada website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-healthproducts/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>.

#### **Coach Expectations**

- Will wash their equipment in hot water after every day, including jacket, arm/leg protector, and pants.
- Will clean and disinfect their fencing mask, glove, and weapon after each class/private lesson.  
- Should bring their own equipment, along with a face towel and full water bottle to practice. Water bottles that don't require touching the mouthpiece (i.e., those without a cap) are recommended. Water bottles are not to be shared.
- Will monitor themselves for symptoms and complete the self-assessment prior to entering the club every time. Coaches also will check in/out of the club every time.
- It is recommended that the coaches wear a face mask any time they are instructing only (i.e., not wearing a fencing mask).

#### **Athlete Expectations**

- Will bring their own hand sanitizer/wipes with them. - Will monitor themselves for symptoms and complete the self-assessment prior to entering the club every time. Athletes will sign in/out of the club every time.
- Will only train with one designated group and only at one club in Phases 1–4.
- Fencers should bring their own equipment, along with a face towel and full water bottle to practice. Water bottles that don't require touching the mouthpiece (i.e., those without a cap) are recommended. Water bottles are not to be shared.
- All washable equipment should be machine-washed in hot water after every single use. Equipment such as weapons and masks, which cannot be machine-washed, should be cleaned and disinfected after each session.
- Maintain physical distance when possible during training.
- Do not shake hands, fist bump, or high-five.
- Wearing a face-mask during training, where frequent adjustments are inevitable between water breaks and fencing mask usage, is at the discretion of the individual, and depends on the ability to maintain physical distance at all times.
- Proper hand hygiene must be performed immediately before putting on a face mask, as well as immediately after removing the face mask. Any face-mask adjustments must be followed immediately by proper hand hygiene without cross-contamination to another surface (e.g., do not use the same hand to adjust the mask and open the bathroom door).
- Face-masks should be changed if they become soiled or wet to maintain proper function. Reusable masks must be placed immediately in a sealable container to launder at home. Disposable masks must be immediately discarded directly into a covered receptacle after removal.
- No food or meals to be eaten inside the fencing facility.
- Cough, and sneeze into your elbow! Remember transmission occurs via droplet which means through sneezing, coughing or spitting while talking.
- Change into your sports attire at home, prior to coming to the club.

- Do not breathe heavily next to someone, even if they are 2 metres away in proximity.
- Disinfect your phones frequently. Consider keeping your phone inside a sealable bag while at practice to keep it clean.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol-based sanitizers, regularly.
- Keep your belongings close by your bag. Only bring the equipment you require for practice/competition into the facility. Leave other belongings at home or in your car.
- Keep your bag/equipment in designated club areas only to maintain physical distancing.
- If you start to feel unwell while you are fencing, you should stop training immediately and leave the facility. Let your coach know that you are feeling unwell.

#### Parent Expectations

- Should drop off/pick their athlete outside the club facility.
- Will sign in/out if it is necessary to enter the club.
- Remind your kids about good hygiene etiquette.
- Encourage and remind your kids to clean and disinfect their fencing equipment after each use.
- Refrain from entering the club unless absolutely necessary, or unless your child is a minor and/or needs assistance. Parents should not expect to stay in the club unless their presence is necessary for the Rule of Two (during a private lesson, for instance). Adhere to proper PPE wear and physical distancing measures at all times.

#### Self-Assessment

Before going to their club, all athletes and coaches must complete a health self-assessment by answering the following questions:

1. Have I been tested positive for COVID-19 or have been tested and are awaiting results?
2. Has Public Health informed me that I may have been exposed to COVID-19?
3. Have I travelled outside of Newfoundland in the last 14 days?
4. Do I have any two or more of the following symptoms:
  - Fever over 38 degrees Celsius
  - A new cough, or worsening chronic cough
  - Runny nose
  - Sore throat
  - Headache (unexplained)
  - Diarrhea
  - Trouble breathing
  - New onset of fatigue
  - New onset of muscle pain (unexplained) - Loss of sense of taste
  - Loss of sense of smell
  - Purple markings on fingers or toes

If you are experiencing any two of the above-mentioned symptoms, contact your primary health care provider or call 811. Please consult Public Health resources for more information on the symptoms of COVID-19 and for further self-assessment tools. All athletes must inform their coach/club leader if they answer YES to any of the above questions. Clubs are responsible for documenting this information, and informing all other individuals who were present at the same time as this person of

the situation and reminding them to self-monitor, and take any other actions as directed by Public Health.

An athlete may not go to training if they answer YES to the above questions.

Athletes who have answered YES to any of questions 1-3 need to self-monitor for symptoms and refrain from going to practice for at least 14 days or as directed by Public Health. They also must symptom-free for 48 hours prior to attending practice. If, at any point, an individual in a training group is diagnosed with COVID-19, that entire group, along with any other individual the coach has been in contact with, must be informed, proper authorities must be contacted to begin contact tracing, and the full group must self-isolate for 14 days, and others must self-monitor for symptoms and respect Public Health guidance. All communication about possible cases should respect the privacy of all individuals involved. Those without symptoms within those 14 days may, following authorization from their doctor, nurse practitioner, or Public Health, return to training.

### Return to Play Phases

The following phase system will be used. In assessing new cases, only local transmissions will be counted.

| Phase   | Group                       | Allowed                                                                                                             | Risk                                                                                                                    | Provincial Status                                                                                                              |
|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase 1 | Designated training groups  | Group footwork<br>Target training<br>Light strength training<br>Stretching                                          | Groups in indoor space                                                                                                  | Alert Level 2 and 0 to 3 new cases per day in the provincial health region (e.g. Eastern region) for 3 days prior to practice. |
| Phase 2 | Designated training groups  | Direct interaction with coach<br>Private technical lessons -Line drills<br>Moderate strength training, conditioning | Close contact with coach<br>Increased breathing with physical distancing                                                | Alert Level 2 and 0 to 3 new cases per day in the provincial health region for 7 days prior to practice.                       |
| Phase 3 | Designated training groups. | Partner drills<br>"Combat" private lessons<br>Group beginner lessons                                                | Close contact with other fencers<br>Increased breathing with close contact with coach<br>Introduction of new population | Alert Level 2 and 0 or 1 new cases per day in the provincial health region for 3 days prior to practice.                       |
| Phase 4 | Designated training groups  | Bouting.                                                                                                            | Increased breathing with close contact with other fencers                                                               | Alert Level 2 and 0 or 1 new cases per day in the provincial health region for 7 days prior to practice.                       |
| Phase 5 | No restriction              | Intraclub and interclub interaction (fencers can go to multiple clubs)                                              | Interaction with people outside designated groups                                                                       | Alert Level 2 and 0 or 1 new cases per day in the provincial health region for 14 days prior to practice.                      |
| Phase 6 | No restriction              | Return to Competition                                                                                               |                                                                                                                         | Alert Level 1 or as permitted by the Province                                                                                  |