

October 20, 2020

Dear Sport Associations,

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) is actively investigating several situations where transmission of COVID-19 has occurred in relation to organized sports. OPH will be publicly reporting on COVID-19 transmission in organized sport settings starting Wednesday, October 21.

The purpose of this letter is for you to share this message with your coaches, trainers, team managers and participants.

Based on case management investigations, transmission may have occurred in a variety of ways including:

- during team play
- during the use of locker rooms
- during carpooling with members outside a player's household
- eating together among teammates, parents, coaches and other children
- team staff members and players who are involved in more than one team
- individuals not wearing masks

We recognize the important role of staying active plays in our overall health and well-being. In light of this increased transmission, it is important to remind everyone involved in organized sports they have a role to play and should know the risks, choose safer options and remain [COVID Wise](#) when choosing to participate in sports and recreation.

Starting Wednesday, OPH will be reporting on the number of outbreaks specific to sports and recreation settings in our [daily COVID-19 dashboard](#). Individual teams and organizations will not be named in this report.

Like some other settings, an outbreak in sports and recreation is defined as at least two players or coaches on the same team testing positive for COVID-19 with an epidemiological link.

Communication with leagues and associations

OPH follows-up with all individuals who test positive for COVID-19, as well as their close contacts. A close contact has been in close physical proximity to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. OPH identifies close contacts through a detailed review of the symptoms of the person who tested positive, where they have been and with whom they have interacted.

Be COVID Wise

Transmission of COVID-19 is possible before, during and after training. Precautions are required to reduce the risk of transmission while enabling training to occur.

- Minimize social gatherings of participants and spectators both before and after the activity. This includes spectator stands, change rooms and the areas outside of recreational facilities.
- Limit carpooling and meals (in homes or at restaurants) to those within your household

- Limit gatherings inside and outside the facilities. Ensure a two-metre physical distance and wearing masks if parents and/or participants are socializing in the facility parking lots.
- Do not coach or play for more than one team
- Wear a face mask at all times unless engaged in strenuous athletic activity
- Maintain physical distance of at least two metres from other people before, during and after the activity
- Clean and disinfect equipment between uses
- Do not share your sports gear with other people
- Practice frequent hand hygiene by using an alcohol-based hand rub or washing your hands with soap and water
- Play outside rather than indoors

It is important to remember that even with precautions, participating in sports and recreation activities is still considered a higher risk activity. Carefully consider the risk to yourself and to others when choosing to engage in sport and recreation activities

Current Provincial regulations

The modified stage 2 regulations have outlined the following measures to reduce the risk of COVID transmission:

- Sports games and/or scrimmages, both outdoor and indoor, are not permitted at this time in Ottawa;
- Allow only 10 participants (including coaches/volunteers) in the arena at one time; Allow only 25 participants (including coaches/volunteers) on fields at one time;
- Do not travel between Ottawa and other regions for training, games, exhibitions, or tournaments;
- Modify sports practices and training so that they do not include contact between people;
- Maintain 2 metre physical distance between players, coaches, officials and others at all times. This includes before and after the training sessions;
- Activities that are likely to result in individuals coming within two metres of each other (ex. carpools, tailgating) must not be practiced;
- No spectators are permitted;
- Ensure masks are always worn by athletes and coaches, except while they are engaged in vigorous physical activity;
- Maintain mask use and distancing by players, coaches and parents before and after training sessions; and,
- Locker rooms, change rooms, showers and clubhouses in the facility must be closed, except to the extent they provide access to equipment storage, a washroom or a portion of the facility that is used to provide first aid.

OPH has [resources available to support Sports and Recreation organizers](#) and participants to be COVID Wise.

Visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca for more [Guidance for Return to Sport, Recreations and Fitness](#).

We are all in this together, and through our individual and collective actions we can lower the rate of transmission and protect the health and well-being of our community.