

RETURN TO PLAY

GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS

In conjunction with Canada Soccer, Sport Manitoba and other provincial soccer associations, The Manitoba Soccer Association has developed this plan for safely easing back into the sport of soccer. The plan uses a multistage approach that respects current Provincial protocols such as physical distancing, disinfecting and use of personal protective equipment that will permit the practice of various soccer activities in a progressive, flexible plan that will evolve as our Province changes COVID-19 management requirements.

Please note that these precautions are temporary, and we will determine a timeline based on the provincial health authority guidelines. Timelines between stages may vary based on recommendations from the province. Club Licensing requirements remain in effect for all member organizations.



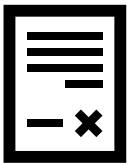
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PRE-ACTIVITY ORIENTATION

- Review provincial health authorities recommendations
- Review the Manitoba Soccer Return to Play document
- Review any other procedures established by the organization you are registered with
- Ensure you are registered with a MSA member organization
- Complete waiver form, as part of player registration process



WAIVER

- One time waiver, as part of the player registration process
- Must be completed by player and/or parent before participation
- Template provided by the Manitoba Soccer Association
- To be collected by the organization the player is registered with
- Participants must be registered with a MSA member organization before taking part in any scheduled activity



SYMPTOM REPORTING

- Players who are experiencing symptoms: stay home, inform your organization, get tested
- If tested positive, inform the MSA and your organization must begin contact tracing



RESPONSE ACTION PLAN

- If provincial health authorities determine that restrictions are to be reinstated, MSA will inform all members
- The MSA, in conjunction with the provincial health authorities, will determine which stage is appropriate at that time



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PRECAUTIONS FOR STAGES 1 – 3

- All players, coaches, and volunteers must self-assess before each scheduled activity -
<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>
- Stay informed about current pandemic status
- If any participant (players, coaches, volunteers, parents) has any symptoms, they shall not be permitted to participate or be present
- If any participant has previously been tested positive and has recovered, recommendations provided by the provincial health guidelines should be followed
- Follow municipal/provincial health authorities' regulations/guidelines for all areas
- All participants are required to go through a pre-activity orientation regarding safety and public health
 - A signed waiver is required
- Clubs/facility operator to provide signage outlining physical distancing and hygiene guidelines and should be visibly posted
 - <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/resources/index.html#posters>
- Activities are to be outdoors only, and no clubhouse or bathroom facilities are to be opened
- In emergency situations, bathroom facilities need to be sanitized before and after use by authorized person only
 - If indoors, only one person should be in the bathroom at a time
- Travel is not authorized to events/competition outside of Manitoba
 - Stage 1 & 2 – stay within own community
 - Stage 3 – travel only within Manitoba
- All activities are required to have, at minimum, hand sanitizer readily available (provided by coach/club/each player)
 - Hands must be washed or sanitized before and after each activity as monitored by a designated adult (coach, parent, volunteer)



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PRECAUTIONS FOR STAGES 1 – 3 CONTINUED

- Coaches and players will be allowed to wear masks during training – this will be at the discretion of each coach/player
- All participants are required to have their own labelled water bottle and should be kept at least 2 meters from other participants belongings
- The owner of the equipment (balls, cones, nets, etc.) must wipe down and sanitize all equipment before and after each training practice or game
- All players are to ensure their playing/training kits are washed immediately after each use
- No loitering in the parking lot before or after training or games for all participants
- Spectators must maintain a separation of at least two meters from other spectators.
- Club/facility operator to provide containers for safe disposal of hygienic materials
- No handshakes at anytime
- Timelines between RTP stages will be based on provincial guidelines to facilitate monitoring of any possible COVID-19 transmission within a practice group. Contact health authorities if an athlete, coach, or referee has contracted COVID-19 and support the authorities in contact tracing.
- All injuries should be dealt with by a designated person who should be wearing a mask and gloves while doing so



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STAGE ONE – NON-CONTACT RETURN

Soccer **training** may resume (outdoors only) if the occupancy and activity levels allow people to maintain a physical distance of at least two meters.

- All precautionary measures are still in effect
- Distancing between different groups who are training simultaneously, near one another must be at least 2 meters; increasing the distance is actively encouraged
 - A 2 metres separation must be maintained during the activity between participants in the cohort.
 - Groups may not be larger than five persons, including coaches
 - Only 2 cohorts of five persons per ¼ field – maximum 40 persons on a full- size field (100 m x 60 m)
- No opposition games where players will come into contact with each other
- Structure activities to maximize physical distancing
- Each player brings their own ball (if possible)
- Equipment that is shared (team balls, cones, nets, etc.) must only be handled (using hands) by the owner of the equipment (i.e., in most cases, a coach)
- No heading and no hand contact with the ball
 - Recommended that players only contact the ball below the waist (avoid chest if possible)
- Recommended that bibs/pinnies are not to be used; each player can bring two of their own tops (light & dark)
 - See Coach Recommendations for Stages 1 & 2
- No spectators at any soccer activities, and no exception for a caregiver.
 - It is recommended that a parent remains in their car in the parking lot in case of an emergency.
- Any Club owned/operated Clubhouses used for the purpose of administration should follow provincial health guidelines as they relate to occupancy and safety concerns
- All participants should come dressed, ready to participate
- Benches should be removed from this stage



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STAGE TWO – LIMITED CONTACT RETURN

Soccer **training** may resume (outdoors only) with group sizes limited to provincial guidelines and including limited contact throughout. League play and tournament style events are prohibited.

- All precautionary measures are still in effect
- Training may now include activities with opposition **within the allowable group sizes as determined by the provincial guidelines**
- Distancing between different groups who are training simultaneously, near one another must be at least 2 meters; increasing the distance is actively encouraged
- Prolonged physical contact (i.e. team/group meetings/discussions, embraces, etc.) should be actively discouraged
- Each player brings their own ball (if possible)
- Equipment that is shared (team balls, cones, nets, etc.) must only be handled (using hands) by the owner of the equipment (i.e., in most cases, a coach)
- Recommended that bibs/pinnies are not to be used; each player can bring two of their own tops (light & dark)
 - See Coach Recommendations for Stages 1 & 2
- **Spectators must maintain a separation of at least two meters from other spectators.**
- Any Club owned/operated Clubhouses used for the purpose of administration should follow provincial health guidelines as they relate to occupancy and safety concerns
- All participants should come dressed, ready to participate
- In person coaching and refereeing programming may resume following provincial guidelines
- Benches should be removed from this stage



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STAGE ONE AND TWO RECOMMENDATIONS

CLUB/ORGANIZATION/FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Now is the time to promote sport for all and to alleviate logistical burdens on families. Please consider removing age/gender restrictions in order to allow two or more siblings to potentially participate in a particular training group.
- To reduce the overlap of groups arriving and leaving, it is recommended to add buffer times between practices. For example, practice ends at 7.30, participants on field have until 7.40 to have left the premises, next practice begins 7.45 and athletes leave their vehicle and walk to fields between 7.40 and 7.45.
- Provide information to coaches and parents about each facility. For example, which field access points will be used for entrance and exit of the field to reduce bottlenecks and facilitate physical distancing. Implement cleaning protocols as well as pick-up/drop-off and spectator procedures.
- Adhere to facility restrictions or maximum capacities for facilities. Prioritize small game formats where possible (Stage 2).
- Develop protocols for thunder/lightning (“When thunder roars, go indoors”.) The indoor venues available may not be suitable given existing physical distancing and max capacity restrictions. Parents should remain in the car to offer safety from inclement weather. Practices should be cancelled when the forecast calls for a chance of thunder/lightning.
- Provide safe spacing for participants personal belongings which respects physical distancing.
- Use cones to indicate physical distance for caregivers in attendance on the spectator side of the field of play.



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STAGE ONE AND TWO RECOMMENDATIONS COACH RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pre-activity orientation regarding safety – hand washing, non-illness related cough suppression, no spitting or ‘snot rockets’.
- Regarding equipment cleaning, do not go home and then clean – contaminated items may travel into coaches' home environment. This should be done publicly. Only Coaches/Staff should handle equipment.
- As per provincial health authority guidelines, wearing face masks is highly recommended.
- Coaches should specify in advance which shirt (light or dark) they'd like each athlete to wear to eliminate the need for athletes to change in public at fields
- At the Active Start and Fundamentals stages, it is encouraged to use family members of players (parents, guardians, siblings, etc.) to support on-field delivery as physical distancing would not apply to people from the same household.

Activity Recommendations:

- Structure activities to maximize physical distancing
- Age Appropriate recommendations may need to be taken when designing activities, for example, Active Start and Fundamentals players may need a parent/guardian/sibling to participate with them. This will allow for coaches to have support managing the group of players and aid in the maintenance of physical distancing. As such, physical distancing would not be required between siblings or parent/child (since they are from the same household).
 - It is highly recommended to use design activities around the “player, parent & ball” concept – this includes activities with a partner or opposition.
- Design activities so athletes may stay within their existing small groups within Stage 2 to reduce amount of contact with different people.
- No heading/hand contact with ball (feet only).
- Regular sanitization breaks combined with water breaks.



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STAGE ONE AND TWO RECOMMENDATIONS

PARENT/GUARDIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure child is healthy and no sign of symptoms. Follow symptom reporting guidelines as per the pre-orientation section.
- Make sure child has all items they need to participate.
- Spectators must maintain a separation of at least two meters from other spectators.



STAGE ONE AND TWO RECOMMENDATIONS

PLAYER RECOMMENDATIONS

Players are recommended to come prepared with:

- Hand Sanitizer
- Sanitizer Wipes
- Two (2) cotton masks – in case one gets soiled/dirty/compromised
- Ziploc bag containing: (clearly labeled)
 - Labelled water bottle - where mouth spout is covered by lid and not to open air
 - Snack(s)
 - Tissues for any allergies or to blow nose for non-illness related circumstances
 - Hand sanitizer and wipes
- Soccer organizations can loan balls to players if they do not have one.
- Players are responsible to bring personal player equipment to the field in order to practice and should be sanitized at the field; includes goalkeeper gloves.



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STAGE THREE – RESUMPTION OF COMPETITION

Soccer games/competition may resume (outdoors only) in all format types. Training may be increased to full, regular training provided general public health guidelines are followed.

- All precautionary measures are still in effect
- Spectators must maintain a separation of at least two meters from other spectators.
- Games should be scheduled to consider reducing traffic between groups arriving and departing
- Recommended to begin with internal small sided friendly matches where applicable before league play begins
- Recommended that game lengths be reduced in order to avoid fatigue, burnout and potential injury if there is game congestion in scheduling
- Recommended that substitutes and technical staff in the technical area wear a mask.
- In leagues where there are substitution restrictions, recommended to allow for unlimited substitutions throughout the match to avoid fatigue and injury
- Substitutes are required to observe physical distancing when on the bench/sideline (at least 2 meters) based on provincial health guidelines
- No changerooms are permitted at this stage



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STAGE THREE RECOMMENDATIONS

CLUB/ORGANIZATION/FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stages 1 & 2 Recommendations still apply
- Consider shortening the length of matches and a reduction in the number of players assigned to teams (max roster) in Stage 3.
- Recommended to clean/sanitize all outdoor bathrooms prior to each day's use.
- Change rooms not allowed to be used.
 - Players and officials need to arrive dressed to participate.



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STAGE THREE RECOMMENDATIONS MATCH OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Referees do not need to be involved in Stages 1 and 2, but they will be involved in structured games in Stage 3. For individual referee training, follow general provincial health guidelines.
- Referees are to come dressed to the game, so they have no need for changing rooms.
- Reduce the number of Match Officials needed for completion of a match (e.g., one Head Referee vs. Head Referee and 2 Assistant Referees, or 2 Referees similar to Futsal) where possible.
- Referees should not share any gear (watches, flags, cards).
- Work with organizations regarding Extreme Weather Policy implementation as building capacity (a factor if participants are expected to go indoors) may still be limited in Stage 3.
- When assigning, consider reducing the number of referees coming and going to fields by having referees do back-to-back games in different roles (where applicable) and with consideration to the health of the referee.

Laws of the Game – Modifications:

- Yellow and Red cards given to athletes from a safe distance as per physical distancing guidelines
- Physical altercations are an immediate dismissal from match. Referees should stay away and allow situation to dissolve before engaging from a safe distance.
- For instances where there is an injured player, designated person may attend to the player

Referee Education/Mentorship Considerations

- Assessments and mentorship need to respect physical distancing guidelines and those mentors/assessors should do so from the spectator side of the pitch
- Recommendation of video assessments – referees can mic up and record audio to overlay audio and video
- Video chat for post game debrief versus immediately after in person

