

Tourism, Heritage & Culture – Sport & Recreation Branch

The information provided in this document reflect the Branch's efforts to provide as much clarity and guidance to our partners in the Recreation and Sport sector based on requirements by [the Mandatory Order](#). The situation is fluid and the information changes regularly. The onus is on each organization to understand the restrictions set out by the Province as well as the recommendations and requirements by Public Health and the Guidelines for New Brunswick Workplaces issued by WorkSafe NB.

In the event of any outbreaks, Public Health directives or alerts and in some instances directives from affected schools supersede the following guidance

LIVING WITH COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR SPORT AND RECREATION ORGANIZATIONS

PROOF OF VACCINATION

As of September 22, 2021, the Government of NB requires that everyone 12 years and over must show proof of vaccination to access certain events, services and businesses. The following information is supplementary to the details provided here: [Proof of COVID-19 vaccination](#).

- Proof of vaccination must include two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. Organizers do not need to validate timing between or after doses (not required to wait 14 days after 2nd dose)
- Children born between July 1st, 2009 and December 31st 2009 may continue participating and have until October 31st, 2021 to get their second vaccine. **For further clarification, all children born in 2009 regardless of when they turn 12 or not must be fully vaccinated by October 31st, 2021.** It is expected that there will be a transition period allowed for children born in 2010 who will be turning 12 in early 2022, further details will be communicated at a later time.
- Proof of vaccination is required for indoor festivals, performing arts and sporting events. It is also required to access gymnasiums, indoor pools, recreational facilities, etc. In addition, proof of vaccination is required for indoor organized gatherings (conferences and workshops), indoor group exercise (dance studios, yoga studios and climbing walls, etc), and indoor organized group recreational classes and activities (like theatre and art).
- Proof of a negative test cannot be used instead of vaccination for participants, volunteers or spectators.
- Although some organizations may decide to require proof of vaccination for outdoor activities, at this time it is not a requirement. It is recommended for close contact sports taking place in outdoor settings. Proof of vaccination is not required for access to adjacent indoor washroom facilities.
- Children under 12 years old with parents/guardians who refuse to provide proof of vaccination must be allowed to continue their activities however parents are not allowed to enter a sport or recreation venue until they provide proof of vaccination.
- Depending on the situation, it is reasonable for facility operators to expect user groups to oversee the validation of proof of vaccination of their participants. Organizations are expected to work collaboratively with facility owners and operators to ensure compliance to the vaccination requirement.
- For regular season activities where participants are consistent, proof of vaccination does not need to be provided each time they attend the activity, it can be done upon registration but the organizer or coach must be able to demonstrate compliance if asked (checklist).
- For proof of vaccination, organizers are required to see an official record of immunization with a piece of Government issued identification (driver's license, Medicare card, birth certificate, etc.). A record of immunization can be obtained from [MyHealthNB](#) portal, the RHA clinic or pharmacy that gave the vaccine, a record from Public Health, or proof of vaccination from another jurisdiction. A copy or picture of the original is acceptable.
- Individuals 12 years and over who cannot receive a vaccine because of a medical exemption, will be required to show a [medical certificate of exemption](#) signed by a healthcare provider.

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- Businesses and events where people gather or exercise must demonstrate all employees/contractors are fully vaccinated or employees are continuously masked and regularly tested and demonstrate their negative test results to the manager of the venue. Businesses can find out how to access rapid tests for their employees by contacting their local Chamber of Commerce.
- Businesses, facility operators and organizations have the option to ask employees (and contractors) for proof of vaccination or medical exemption. Where businesses choose not to require proof of vaccination from their employees, they can use other mitigation measures such as designation to non-customer contact duties, requiring testing and use of mask/physical barriers for unvaccinated employees. Businesses and organizations can contact [ONB Business Navigators](#) for more information.
- In instances where proof of vaccination is required, organizations should have a written policy that includes procedures for requesting proof of vaccination and specifics on how privacy requirements will be met. Organizations should not collect or keep copies of immunization records or proof of medical of exemption. Showing proof in person or by videoconference are appropriate ways to validate. Checklists or any other documentation showing whether a person is vaccinated, unvaccinated or medically exempted needs to be stored securely. The proof of vaccination policy must be regularly reviewed and updated to stay consistent with the evolving status of the COVID-19 pandemic and in compliance with government regulations.

MASKS AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- As of September 22nd, 2021 the Government of NB requires masks to be mandatory in all indoor public spaces.
- While masks are not required by individuals while participating in an organized sport or fitness activity, they must be worn indoors at all other times. If some sports are able to incorporate wearing a mask into play or on a team bench, this will be encouraged.
- Spectators must wear masks at all times indoor except when they are eating or drinking while seated in areas that meet physical distancing of 2m and/or physical barrier requirements. Although masks are not required in outdoor settings, consider maintaining mask use by participants, coaches, volunteers and spectators off the field of play in public spaces where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- While organizations are not required to ask for proof of medical exemption from wearing masks, they could require it as per their own policies to ensure the safety of their staff and patrons. This [article](#) provides more information.
- Individuals with a medical exemption to vaccination or children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination are not required to wear a mask during organized sport or physical activity; however, given their personal level of risk and lack of vaccine protection, it is recommended that they choose layers of protective measures that best fit the situation.
- Data shows that children most frequently acquire COVID-19 from adults. For that reason, organizations may consider requiring mask use by coaches and officials in U12 programming.
- Understand that sport and recreation facilities may have additional requirements related to mask use and physical distancing.

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HAND WASHING / CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- Provide hand sanitizer or hand washing facilities and entrances and exits and encourage participants to properly hand wash or sanitize prior to activities.
- Continue regular cleaning and disinfection of all general surfaces and frequently touched equipment.

SCREENING AND CONTACT TRACING

- Consider passive or active screening as a protective measure prior to play. When used, screening should remain independent of the participant's vaccination status.
- Organizations should remind participants to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and stay home if they are feeling unwell.
- Organizations should still consider the use of waivers and declarations.
- While collection of names is no longer required, organizations should consider keeping attendance lists to assist contact tracing efforts in the event of a positive case.
- Should there be an exposure to the virus, Public Health via contact tracing efforts will provide guidance to affected individuals. Isolation and testing requirements will depend on the level of exposure as well as the vaccination status of affected individuals.
- In the event of outbreaks in schools, public health and school directives may be different depending on the circumstances. Sport and recreation organizations should adhere to those directions but may adopt stricter requirements if they feel it is required.

TRAVEL

- Effective September 22, every person entering New Brunswick must [pre-register](#). This includes New Brunswickers re-entering the province. Any isolation requirements for those that are not fully vaccinated must be followed.
- Concerns remain related to additional travel and the risk of larger gatherings. All organizations should carefully consider and assess the additional risk that out of region travel poses. Organizations should identify where out of region activity is necessary and where it can be avoided, especially with U12 programming.
- Prior to travel, learn about any increased risks in other regions or provinces along with any travel restrictions or requirements they may have.
- Consider reducing the number of people sharing hotel accommodations, consider wearing masks when travelling in buses/airplanes and minimize social activities in the community that you are visiting.

OTHER PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Consider limiting the number of participants and number of spectators at your events
- Consider limiting the number of games/ tournaments/competitions and/or adjusting the season competition schedule to limit the number of social interactions with various other groups/teams on a weekly basis (eg. double headers vs games against teams in 2 different regions in same week)

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- Where possible, consider keeping groups/teams consistent
- Consider having staggered schedules to limit number of individuals entering/exiting at one time
- Where possible, avoid handshakes with opponents and encourage players to have their own water bottles
- Consider posting signage reminding participants to wear masks and maintain physical distancing where applicable; not enter premises if they feel unwell and practice proper hygiene.
- Host virtual meetings if possible

LIVING WITH COVID-19

Core protective health measures remain important tools to limit the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses such as colds and influenza. This is particularly important for our most vulnerable populations and those unvaccinated including youth under 12 who represent a major demographic within New Brunswick's sport and recreation system.

Restrictions over the course of the pandemic have been difficult on everyone, especially the youth. More than ever system partners must strive to ensure the provision of safe supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and sport. The elimination of some of the previously existing COVID-19 controls may signal the need for organizations to consider additional safety protocols to keep their members safe while also preserving the physical, social and mental wellbeing of New Brunswickers.

Recreation and sport organizations should assess and understand the level of risk of communicable disease transmission in their respective activities and apply appropriate measures when there's an elevated risk of communicable disease. All are asked to foster an atmosphere where there is mutual respect and understanding and individuals are supportive of each other's personal protective habits and risk tolerances.

By incorporating knowledge learned from living with COVID-19 with the guidance provided in the Sport and Recreation Branch [Frequently Asked Questions document](#), sport and recreation organizations can provide activities and events while maintaining a certain level of risk mitigation to provide a healthy environment for their participants.

Organizations are responsible for implementing the measures they deem appropriate, in compliance with government regulation and directives issued through the Public Health Act, and must understand that they may be expected to abide by additional requirements determined by other organizations such as Provincial Sport Organizations, facility owners/operators, event hosts and other jurisdictions.