



Softball Saskatchewan
Return to Play Protocols
and Guidelines
February 24th, 2021



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Please note, the information contained in this document is subject to change at any time based on new or updated information provided by the Saskatchewan Health Authority and Government of Saskatchewan.

Where Have We Been, Where Are We

It has been about one year since we first became aware of the COVID-19 Virus. Since that time this global pandemic has changed the world we live in. Closer to home the Provincial Government has provided numerous updates that impact what can and cannot do in Saskatchewan. In the sporting world Sask Sport has been holding informational meetings with all Provincial Sport Government Bodies (PSGB's) bi-monthly to update us and provide a forum to share information with each other.

In Saskatchewan we were able to Return to Play (RTP) in June of 2020 providing we had developed and received approval from the Business Response Team (BRT) for our RTP Protocols and Guidelines. As the effects of COVID-19 changed we also needed to continually update our RTP Protocols and Guidelines. Our guidelines are intended to help our members minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 while engaged in softball activities for all our members from Timbits through to adult activities whether it be at the local Association/League, Community, Team or Provincial programs.



INDOOR SOFTBALL ACTIVITIES

Please note that COVID-19 droplet transmission is much more likely when individuals are in close contact. The likelihood of transmission between individuals participating in sport, physical activity and recreation in an indoor setting is significantly higher. Transmission is less likely in an outdoor setting, where air flow is greater and there is more space for individuals to keep physically distanced.

Indoor softball activities include but are not limited to; skills clinics, player ID/evaluations and team practices and must comply with the following guidelines (It is also important to note that Operators of sports and recreation facilities (multiplexes, gymnasiums, courts, training facilities, indoor playgrounds, etc.) in Saskatchewan must also be in compliance with these guidelines:

1. Guidelines for General Operation

- The current public health order prohibits team sporting activities, but continues to permit individual conditioning and training (18 years and younger). All team/group sports, activities, games, competitions, practices, etc. are suspended, including amateur and recreational leagues for all age groups.
- Designate one or more people to be responsible for ensuring compliance with these guidelines. This should not be someone engaged in other critical duties (Instructor, coach, etc). Please see Pre-screening guidelines below along with Appendix 1 for duties of the Sanitation & Health/Safety Champion.
- Staff and participants **will** be given information on physical distancing and other requirements prior to attending. Staff should discourage gathering.
- Signage must be posted to caution patrons about the risks of COVID-19.
- Encourage participants to arrive no more than 5 to 10 minutes before the scheduled activity to reduce people gathering in groups.
- When participating in any sport or activity, contact must be avoided.
- Encourage patrons to limit their time spent in the facility, as well as maintain physical distancing when returning to their vehicles or homes.
- Registration processes should be completed online whenever possible; however, if in-person registration is required, physical distancing and disinfecting pens between uses is required.
- Indoor play spaces are permitted; however, increased cleaning and disinfection are required.
- Instruction is permitted with no contact and appropriate physical distancing and **mask use**.
- Spectator maximum capacity for the facility is 30 people as long as two metres of physical distancing can be maintained from other members of the public not included in their household group.
- Spectators should be limited as much as possible and priority given to parents and others needed to support the players, particularly for sports involving young children.
- Discourage gatherings of spectators in common areas.
- Spectators (excluding parents and guardians where necessary for player support) **must** be kept out of participant spaces (e.g. fields of play, courts, bench areas, change rooms).
- Where rental equipment is provided, it should be assigned to one person only and be laundered or cleaned and disinfected upon return.
- **Mandatory, non-medical mask use is required during all indoor sporting activities.**
- **Large floor spaces (i.e. high school gym) can be used for multiple groups of individuals (18 years of age and under) for the purpose of conditioning and training if the following requirements are met:**
 - **Physical distancing of five metres between groups of participants, and three metres for high intensity and two metres for low intensity activities between participants is maintained.**
 - **Barriers/markings for surfaces are required to prevent interaction and physical contact between groups of participants.**
 - **Each group is limited to eight participants or less.**



- **Maximum number in the facility is 30, not including coaches and staff.**
- **Area is well ventilated.**
- **Group are managed to avoid queuing or crowding (e.g. start and end times must be staggered between groups to prevent larger numbers in change rooms and walkways).**

2. Conditioning and Training

- Athletes and performers 18 years of age and under may continue conditioning and skills training in groups of eight (8) or fewer, abiding by the required mask use and at least three metres of physical distancing between participants at all times.
- Coaches /trainers are not included in the training group numbers as long as they are masked and maintain a minimum physical distance of three metres.
- **Games and Tournaments of any kind are not permitted.**

3. Participant Capacity and Mini-League Guidance

- As of November 27, 2020, all team sport activities are suspended.
- Individual conditioning/training and individual sports activities with consistent masking in enclosed areas and consistent three metre physical distancing are permitted.
- Coaches/staff, officials and volunteers must wear a non-medical mask at all times.

4. Participant Health and Illness

- Patrons/staff who are sick or symptomatic must not enter/participate. Participants, spectators and volunteers should use the Government of Saskatchewan's self-assessment tool for COVID-19 and follow the subsequent directions.
- Participants, coaches, instructors and spectators should continuously self-monitor.
- Organizers must keep a record of attendees. All players, spectators, staff and volunteers should be provided with a sign-in on arrival option, with name, phone number and/or email to facilitate contact tracing, if necessary. Records of attendance must be retained for a minimum of one month. Where possible, do not use a common pen. Providing this information is voluntary for attendees and can only be used for the purposes of COVID-19 contact tracing.
- If a person becomes sick, they should immediately stop participating and return home.
- If a person becomes sick or injured, and first aid or further care is required:
 - Limit the number of individuals in contact with the sick person.
 - Place a mask over the individual's mouth and nose if they are not able to do so. Maintain a safe distance until the mask is in place.
- First aid providers caring for people should follow standard precautions. Those who provide direct care requiring close or direct contact should wear a mask.
- Following care, first aid providers should discard the mask and gloves following standard procedures and perform hand hygiene.

5. Physical Distancing

- Physical distancing must be observed at all times, with a minimum of two metres of space between individuals and spectator groups from different households.
- Areas of congregation (e.g. bleachers) must be set up and used in a way that adheres to physical distancing requirements (i.e. only allow every other row in bleachers, use visual cues, etc.).



- Pylons or other markers should define the group space.
- Schedules should be staggered and the duration of the activity should be specified to promote physical distancing
- Wherever possible, promote physical distancing by:
 - Promoting one-way traffic flow to avoid individuals from inadvertently interacting.
 - Placing stickers or signage on the wall/floor every two metres.
 - Spacing seats or assigning seating at two-metre distances.
 - Reducing capacity in each room, venue, or court in the facility.
 - Common area chairs and tables should be stacked, roped off or removed from the area to promote distancing.
 - Consider physical barriers (e.g. Plexiglas) at patron contact points.

6. Cleaning, Disinfection and Hand Hygiene

- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of commonly touched surfaces and shared equipment, such as vending machines, water fountain handles, doorknobs, handrails, light switches, countertops, tables, equipment handles and consoles.
- All frequently touched surfaces **must** be cleaned and disinfected prior to a new group being provided access to field space, including benches, dugouts, bleachers, railings, gates, etc.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning gymnasium floors to reduce the risk of transmission from shared objects (e.g. balls) and those who use wheelchairs.
- Encourage participants to bring their own equipment to the facility.
- Participant-owned equipment, including sport gloves, should be visibly clean.
- Shared equipment (e.g. softballs, bats, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- Where rental equipment is provided, it should be assigned to one person only and be laundered or cleaned and disinfected upon return.
- Place an alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada (DIN or NPN number) in dispensers or soap and water handwashing stations near doors, common use equipment, washrooms/locker rooms, courtside and team areas, and other high-touch locations for patrons and staff. Patrons should be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer when possible.
- Hand hygiene should be performed prior to play and contacting shared equipment, as well as through the duration of the activity (i.e. intermissions, breaks, etc.) and at the end.

7. Conduct

- Spitting (includes seeds, tobacco and fluids) and other similar activities increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and are not permitted.
- Individuals must not share personal items (i.e. equipment or beverage containers).
- Congratulatory gestures such as high fives and handshakes are not permitted.
- Spectators, participants and players, staff, coaches and volunteers should try to minimize cheering and whistling as much as possible to control the spread of COVID-19.
- Intentional contact during sport or activity must be avoided. Modifications to activities that avoid physical contact are required.



PRE -ACTIVITY SCREENING

Sanitation champions will ask every participant attending a sanctioned softball activity the following questions.

1. are you exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, dry cough, chest, or respiratory pain)?
2. Has any member of your household exhibited any symptoms?
3. Have you or any member of your household travelled outside Canada in the past 14 days?
4. Have you been diagnosed with or waiting on test results of Covid-19?

If the participant answers yes to any of the above questions they will not be allowed to take part in the activities and will be sent home. If a person is denied entry because of pre-screening, ensure there is a procedure in place to encourage that person to visit a medical facility or hospital immediately and ensure that persons contact information is maintained.

RETURN TO PLAY AUTHORITIES

This section identifies the assumptions considered in the drafting of these protocols and guidelines as they relate to the current Government of Saskatchewan Guidelines and Softball Saskatchewan Operating Rules and Policies.

- All member Associations/Leagues, Teams, etc must be in compliance with these guidelines.
- Only sanctioned activities are covered under our Softball Saskatchewan Insurance Program.
- It is assumed that compliance policing will be performed by local and provincial health authorities, local association/league personal, athletes and parents, along with all relevant stakeholders.

OUTDOOR SOFTBALL ACTIVITIES

Currently no outdoor softball activities are taking place. As we move closer to April and May when outdoor activities begin, we will provide more information.

We want to let the membership know that we are optimistic that we will be able to have a softball season in 2021. To that end we already have all hosts in place for our 2021 Provincial Championships. We also have back-up plans in place to have alternate Provincial Championships that may be needed if we are still dealing with travel restrictions that only allow cohorts, mini-leagues, pods, etc.

CONCLUSION

We continue to ask everyone involved in our sport to do their part to follow all Provincial Health Guidelines along with our Return to Play Protocols and Guidelines and Membership requirements with Softball Saskatchewan. Take care and stay safe.



APPENDIX #1

Sanitation and Health/Safety Champions

- ④ Each Association/League, etc should designate people to be a Sanitation and Health/Safety champion for each planned activity.
- ④ Take attendance and complete the Health & Safety Sign in Sheet at start of EVERY activity (e.g. practice, camp, etc.)
- ④ Ask Screening questions of participants before they are allowed to participate.
- ④ Conducts “safety meeting” to remind everyone of protocols before the start of every event.
- ④ Monitors physical distancing, population numbers and making sure people are following protocols.
- ④ Responsible for cleaning and sanitizing everything including:
 - Activity equipment
 - Surfaces and structures
- ④ If necessary, provide required cleaning and sanitation supplies (including masks and hand sanitizer)
- ④ Volunteers encouraged to bring their own personal safety kit (i.e. own mask, gloves, hand sanitizer, etc.)