

RETURN TO SWIMMING PROCEDURE

Acknowledgements

This document is the result of a thorough analysis of and adherence to the Guidelines provided by Swimming Canada and Swim Ontario. It is meant to provide information and guidance as to the best practices available at this time. Additional information has been gathered over the past 4 months from various Public Health and Government sources in addition to a number of other individual source

Introduction

It is of utmost importance that the return to the pool be done in a safe manner and that all return plans adhere to the municipal, provincial, and national health guidelines and restrictions. The situation and information around COVID-19 continues to evolve. And each facility may have local differences and timelines for a safe reopening.

General Info About COVID-19 and Swimming

There are many ongoing challenges to manage for a safe and responsible return to swimming. This document is meant to complement local public health and recreation facility advice. COVID-19 has a fragile lipid outer membrane and is therefore highly susceptible to soaps and oxidants such as chlorine. According to the Centre for Disease Control there is no evidence that it can be spread to humans through the use of pools. Proper maintenance of the pool and chlorine levels should inactivate the virus.

The following health and safety information is generally applicable to all of the training environments including indoor and outdoor pools and training facilities.

Health Monitoring

Prior to entering any training facility or commencing any training activities, all athletes, coaches and staff will be required to answer the following health questions. Each person must answer “NO” to all of the following questions in order to attending a training session:

- Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19: cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, difficult breathing, fever, chills, abnormal muscle pain, headache, sore throat, painful swallowing, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal illness?
- Have you been in contact with anyone with COVID-19?
- Have you returned from a trip outside of the country within the past 14 days?

Stay Home When Sick Even with Mild Symptoms

Any individual [staff or athlete] who answers “YES” to any question above, must immediately leave the premises and consult a physician and obtain clearance to participate in sport activities. The individual may not return until clear communication from the physician is obtained by OAK. COVID-19 testing is recommended. It is recommended that the individual investigate with their primary care provider any underlying health conditions prior to returning to training sessions.

Training Group Protocol for Positive Test

- Remove the individual(s) from the training group immediately.
- Team training is suspended and all team members are placed in self isolation.
- Consult local public health authorities for recommendations and to arrange for contact tracing.
- Any further individuals who develop symptoms will be referred to appropriate public health officials for guidance on testing and management.
- Team training could return after all team members self isolate for 14 days and no other members have developed symptoms. All team members must be cleared by their physicians in accordance with Provincial guidelines.

Self Isolation

- Remain at home except to get medical care.
- Do not go to work, school, pool or other public places.
- Cancel non urgent appointments.
- Do not use public transit.
- Notify your Doctor and/or public health official by phone.
- Monitor symptoms and call your Doctor if breathing, drinking or illness is worsening.
- Wear a face mask.
- Separate 2 meters from others.
- Do not have visitors.
- Stay in a well ventilated room and have a separate bathroom if possible.
- Sanitize common use surfaces often.
- If close contacts are vulnerable consider other accommodations.
- Avoid sharing household items.
- Practice excellent hand hygiene.
- Follow all local health recommendations.

Physical Distancing:

- Maintain a minimum 2 meters distance from others at all times.
- Avoid crowded places.
- Avoid greetings with handshakes, high fives, hugging.
- Athletes and staff need to respect physical distancing during all aspects of training.
- Use protective masks along with physical distancing and frequent hand washing.
- Facility access will aim to provide one entry point and separate exit point. If entry and exit is the same, measures that provide for physical distancing will be established including signage and floor markings to guide appropriate individual movements throughout the facility.
- Physical markers (cones, tape) will be provided to indicate appropriate distancing.
- Coaches and staff will maintain appropriate distancing from each other.
- Where possible athletes should arrive in their training suits.
- Athletes are encouraged to practice good pool hygiene by showering before and after at home.
- To maintain a physical distance of 2 meters the number of athletes in each lane needs to be modified and swimmers should swim in the middle of the lane.

- Training bubbles will be established to keep the same group of athletes together. Swimmers will not be allowed to switch groups.
- Warm up dry land activities should be performed before entering the facility.
- Arrive on time - not too early or late.
- If allowed, spectators/parents must maintain physical distancing.
- Athletes are expected to maintain appropriate behaviour on social media.
- Carpooling is not recommended since 2m physical distancing can not be maintained.

Hand and Personal Hygiene

- Clean hands frequently with soap /water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer (ideally 60-90% USP grade alcohol)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- On arrival at the pool all participants must wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- When you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth and nose with tissue or crease of the elbow.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be regularly cleaned and disinfected
- Do not share food and drinks.

Use of Equipment:

- Equipment will be cleaned with a disinfectant pre and post each training session. Simple cleaning measures can deactivate the virus.
- Athletes need to take home all equipment after each training session. Personal items and clothing brought to the pool should be kept to a minimum. Large bags should be stored separately with adequate space between each member's items. [2 meters on deck]
- Limit the amount of equipment to be brought to the pool. Coaches will communicate the necessary equipment and athletes should not share equipment.
- Do not share water bottles. Athletes and coaches should fill water bottles at home prior to coming to the pool.
- Coaches are not permitted to use white boards so that swimmers do not congregate around them. Use verbal methods to communicate training information.
- Coaches are not permitted to share handheld equipment like pens, stop watches, and clipboards. Use disinfectant wipes to clean after each session.
- For any pool equipment set up not done by pool staff (i.e. lane ropes), hand washing should occur both before and after each set up activity.

SAFE SPORT:

- All interactions between an athlete and an individual who is in a position of trust should normally and wherever possible, be in an environment or space that is both open and observable to others.
- Open and Observable environments also apply to online communication. All forms of electronic communication [email, Zoom etc.] should not be in the form of one-on-one interaction and should be in the form of a group setting.

- Training sessions should include a minimum of 3 people.

Return to Swimming Framework:

The Oakville Aquatic Club will follow the recommendations of Swimming Canada and implement a step by step approach. All plans will adhere to the local public health information and the facility procedures and requirements.

PHASE 1 - Starting July 13, 2020

The return to swimming will begin with OAK's performance groups in Phase 1. This first phase will only be initiated once municipal, provincial and federal regulations permit the resumption of this type of activity. All health, medical and safety considerations must be adhered to in this phase along with provincial section requirements. Current public health regulations in Halton region aquatic facilities allow for 4 swimmers per double lane with a maximum pool capacity of 40 persons including all staff. Community sport groups are permitted to access multiple facilities and no restrictions are placed on the total participants from the Oakville Aquatic Club. In alignment with Swim Ontario requirements, all OAK members must complete both the Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk Form and the COVID-19 Attestation and Agreement Form prior to any in person training.

Phase 1 will involve swimmers training a maximum of one session per day.

Only swimmers who can successfully complete a swimming session without any physical manipulation and are not immunocompromised may be included in this phase.

Phase 1 should be successfully implemented for a minimum of 3 weeks prior to moving to Phase 2.

Group Size

To ensure 2m physical distancing is maintained during training, a maximum of 4 swimmers per double lane-spaced accordingly are permitted in Phase 1. The group size will be limited by the number of available lanes as well as public health restrictions.

The groups in Phase 1 are limited to mature athletes capable of independently adhering to strict physical distancing guidelines.

Athletes selected for in person training in Phase 1 are prioritized as follows:

1. Olympic/Paralympic targeted athletes
2. Senior Carded athletes
3. Development Carded athletes
4. Senior National qualifiers
5. OAK Performance level athlete capable of independently adhering to strict safety guidelines
6. Other swimmers ranked based on performance level who are also capable of independently adhering to strict safety guidelines outlined here

Training Session Procedure

1. The entry point to the facility for all participants.

- Swimmers should arrive at the facility no more than 15 minutes before the session
 - Swimmers must abide by physical distancing markers
 - Swimmers should be dropped off outside the facility. Parents should remain in the vehicle and/or at a safe distance from others during the training session.
 - Only swimmers and required staff should enter the facility through the dedicated entry point in order to limit interaction with others.
 - Swimmers should arrive at the facility already in their bathing suits as changeroom access will not be permitted except for the purpose of pre-swimming showers.
 - Town of Oakville staff will conduct health assessment questions prior to admitting each swimmer.
2. Pathway to the pool, change room or other training facilities.
- Designated entry points provide the most direct pathway to the pool training facilities.
 - Designated bathroom facilities will be available for use. Personal and hand hygiene protocols should be performed before and after bathroom use.
 - Change room access will be limited. All personal belongings should be packed in a bag and brought on deck during training.
3. Departure process and pathway for all participants
- All swimmers should leave the facility as quickly as possible at the conclusion of the training session.
 - Programming for back-to-back group scheduling will provide a transition buffer (15min for indoor pools & 10min. for outdoor pools) between the end of water-time one group and the start of the water-time for the next.
 - This creates a bubble to allow facilities to clean contact surfaces
 - This creates additional physical distancing between training cohorts
 - Changerooms will not be available for public use at the conclusion of the training session.
 - Once swimmers have left the coaching staff should leave the facility as quickly as possible.
 - Once out of the facility staff and swimmers should use hand sanitizers to disinfect hands.
 - Once out of the facility all swimmers and staff should go directly to their vehicle and return home.

Coaching Procedure

- To help reduce the risk of over training programs will undergo a gradual resumption of training with a focus on low intensity and technique.
- Coaches will continually review all the health, medical and safety guidelines as they evolve.
- Coaches will understand the COVID-19 facility specific procedures and guidelines.
- Coaches must keep detailed attendance records for all swimmers.
- Town of Oakville staff will conduct health screenings prior to permitting any swimmer from entering an aquatic facility.
- Before each training session, Coaches may ask swimmers the following questions:

- Do you have any of these symptoms? Cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, difficulty breathing, fever, chills, abnormal muscle pain, headache, sore throat, painful swallowing, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal illness?
- Have you been in contact with or cared for someone with COVID-19
- Have you returned from a trip outside the country in the past 2 weeks
- All answers must be NO prior to each training session.
- Coaches and staff must ensure they maintain appropriate distance from each other, lifeguards and swimmers.
- Coaches will implement strategies to educate their swimmers on the importance of social distancing and how they will reinforce the message during training.
- Workout instructions will be delivered verbally and should not be delivered in groups, i.e. not around white board.
- Workout may be distributed in advance of session
- Review workout with the group in advance of the session online. Show a pool diagram and show where swimmers should be on deck, what they should be doing and the amount of time they need to congregate.
- Video analysis must respect physical distancing requirements. Sharing videos electronically post workout is a good idea.
- Coaches should not share handheld equipment - e.g.-watches, clip boards, markers.
- Create visible markers on deck to indicate appropriate spacing.
- Start and stop points will be staggered from opposite ends of the pool.
- Coaches should make every effort to maintain physical distancing during all athlete interactions.
- Coaches will rotate swimmers between training lanes so that they can be in the outside lane and receive feedback.
- Group training bubbles must remain consistent. Athletes are not permitted to attend alternate schedules.
- Feedback may be delivered post practice via online platforms.
- Coaches should plan enough time to maintain all physical distancing and hygiene protocols.
- Coaches will encourage any athlete that if an athlete or any member of their family does not feel well, they should stay home.
- There will be no penalty for missing practice.

PHASE 2

All over-arching health, medical and safety considerations must be adhered to in this phase along with any provincial section requirements.

Phase 2 will involve additional groups of swimmers being introduced to water training. Swimmers in the group introduced in Phase 1 may increase to multiple daily training sessions. Only swimmers who can successfully complete a swimming session without any physical manipulation and are not immunocompromised may be included in this phase. Additional details will be developed in collaboration with Swimming Canada and shared in a later document.

Return to Competition

Currently all forms of competition are on hold during Phase 1. More guidelines will follow from Swimming Canada in a later document.

Return Process

- The Return to Swimming has been developed with the health and safety of the swimmers, coaches and practitioners as the top priority. All guidelines must respect municipal, provincial and federal regulations.
- OAK has formed an assessment group consisting of the Head Coaches, President, Business Manager and Facility representatives. The Return to Swimming plan has been shared with the Provincial section prior to implementation.
- The COVID-19 emergency communication plan (Appendix A) includes messaging for precautionary measures such as this Return to Swimming plan and virtual training delivered to coaches, swimmers and parents in order to clearly explain the procedures and responsibilities. Additionally communications for potential and confirmed COVID-19 cases are outlined in the document including notifying Swim ON of positive COVID-19 tests through the online submission platform. This submission will include gender, age and attendance records for the past 14 days as required by Swim ON.
- Once swimming has resumed the Head Coaches will monitor all established protocols and report back to the assessment group for further review and action. The assessment group will meet on a daily basis the first week of Phase 1 implementation, twice the second week and once the third week in order to address any concerns or issues.

The assessment group considered the following questions as guiding principles in the development of the Return to Swimming plan:

- What specific measures can be taken to reduce the risk of transmission for athletes and staff?
- What specific plans can be implemented to increase the staff's understanding of the current COVID-19 situation?
- What steps will be taken to keep staff and swimmers fully apprised of the current public health information regarding COVID-19?
- What specific plans will you develop to enhance communication with all stakeholders including members, staff and partner organizations?
- Will any policy revisions be required to support the Return to Swimming plan?

Non-Compliance

Failure to abide by any of the guidelines and/or protocols contained within this Policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with OAK's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Resources:

[Swimming Canada Resource Hub](#)
[Swim ON COVID-19 Updates](#)
[COVID-19 Self Assessment](#)
[Province of Ontario Information](#)

[COVID-19 Return to Swimming Resource Document](#)
[Preparing for a Safe Return to Operations](#)
[Health Canada Information](#)
[Emergency Order Amendment](#)