



SWIMMING CANADA RETURN TO SWIMMING RESOURCE DOCUMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. How does the Swimming Canada framework and steps to return to training align with the phased approach in my province?

Provincial and Municipal Governments in consultation with their Public Health authorities will dictate in which Phase of their provincial re-opening plans that aquatic facilities can re-open. Step 1, as outlined in the Swimming Canada Return to Swimming Resource Document can be initiated as soon as is feasible once aquatic facilities open and must align with all Public Health guidelines that are in effect. Please consult with your Provincial Section for specific information on the requirements and procedures in your region.

2. What is the purpose of the Return to Swimming Resource Document from Swimming Canada?

The purpose of the document is to establish a framework to inform the resumption of competitive swimming in Canada starting with a step by step approach for High Performance Centres and Clubs to return to training. The document is based on recommendations and best practices for our Provincial Sections (and their clubs) and CSCA (and all coaches) to work towards. The document has been produced with a cross section of experts within Swimming, and led by Science and Medicine, incorporating all recommendations of the National COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Task Force.

3. What is the difference between the National COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Task Force and the Swimming Canada Return to Swimming Working Group?

Under the leadership of Own the Podium, a national task force has been created to address the return to sport for high performance athletes across all Olympic and Paralympic sport.

The Swimming Canada Return to Swimming Working Group is comprised of representatives from many key stakeholders in our sport. Included on the Working Group are representatives from swimmers, coaches (via the CSCA), officials (via the OCRC), provincial sections, science and medicine experts and Swimming Canada staff. The mandate of the Working Group is to develop a resource document and a framework to inform the resumption of competitive swimming in Canada.

4. Who can return to training in Step 1?

The National COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Task Force is operating under a series of overriding values for High Performance Sport to return to training in step 1, and their definitions is as follows;

- An athlete or representative nominated by the NSO, and
- Identified on the NSO podium pathway as a senior or Next Gen athlete, or
- Receiving AAP funding support



Swimming Canada has aligned with the National Task Force and has further defined what this means for swimming at Step 1. This can be used outside of High Performance Centres and within Clubs and University programs. Athletes should be prioritized as follows:

1. Olympic/Paralympic Targeted Athletes
2. Senior Carded Athletes
3. Development Carded Athletes
4. Senior National Qualifiers
5. Other Swimmers based on specific program demographics (including Masters swimmers)

5. Our club does not have any swimmers who fit into priority 1 – 4, are we able to return to training in Step 1?

The hope is that as many clubs as possible are able to return to training in Step 1. If a club does not have any swimmers from priorities 1-4 they can still return to training in Step 1. Swimmers who return to training should be limited to mature athletes capable of independently adhering to strict physical distancing requirements. Only swimmers who can successfully complete a swimming session without any physical manipulation and are not immunocompromised should be included in this step. In addition, return to training plans must adhere to all Provincial Section requirements.

6. Where do competitions fit into the return framework?

Currently, competitions are a secondary priority to a safe return to training. Swimming Canada's Officials, Competitions and Rules Committee (OCRC), in collaboration with the provincial sections, is currently working on a framework for clubs to host meets. More guidelines will follow in subsequent versions of this document.

7. Why is there a recommendation of 3 weeks at each Step in the framework?

Currently, the incubation period for COVID-19 has been estimated to be between 1 – 14 days. Symptoms typically present after 5 – 6 days, but this can vary. Having a 21-day period allows program leaders, facility operators, and any necessary public health officials to assess if the outlined protocols of the return to sport process are effective in maintaining zero infections and subsequent spreading of the virus within the training group.

8. Why is there a recommendation of 1 swimmer per lane in Step 1 of the framework?

During Step 1 of the process, the goal is to demonstrate how training can operate safely while maintaining the physical distance requirements outlined by public health officials. If swimmers swim down the centre of the lane, they will always be between 2m and 2.4m apart based on most pool set-ups. A successful Step 1, will allow for programs and facilities to move to Step 2 with more confidence and with the knowledge of key learnings from the initial step.

9. Are there any special considerations for “vulnerable populations” returning to training?

The National COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Task Force provides the following information related to vulnerable populations:



VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Athletes and support staff with medical conditions including respiratory or cardiac disease, hypertension, coagulopathies, diabetes, obesity, severe asthma, and immunosuppression due to disease, chronic condition or medication may be at increased risk of severe COVID-19 infection. In Canada 68% of all hospitalizations and 96% of all deaths due to COVID 19 have been in those aged 60 years or older¹⁰.

Return to sport protocols for para-sport athletes should also consider the following: increased susceptibility to respiratory infections, immune compromise secondary to spinal cord injury, unique equipment (e.g. wheelchairs) that requires cleaning, accessibility of medical resources, and access to alternate training options. Para-sport athletes that do not have concurrent medical conditions are at no higher risk of serious COVID-19 infection. Recent reports have highlighted that people can be infected with COVID-19 and have no symptoms, yet still transmit the virus to others. This would make close and regular monitoring in para-sport athletes of extreme importance.

Potential interventions for vulnerable para-sport athletes and support staff:

- Delaying a return to sport
- Training scheduled at designated 'lower risk' times (i.e. with no other groups or athletes around)
- Staff working off-site where possible
- Maintaining physical distancing (keeping at least 2 metres away from others)
- Exclusion of 'high risk' athletes or staff from the training environment

Those with concomitant medical conditions need individualized screening and management in consultation with an NSO or Games' Chief Medical Officer or primary care physician prior to return to training or competition environments.

The full Task Force document is available here: <https://www.ownthepodium.org/en-CA/Resources/COVID-19-Resources>

10. Should coaches and swimmers returning to training wear a mask before and after training?

Facility guidelines may dictate the use of masks and these requirements should be followed at all times. Masks should be considered when physical distancing isn't possible. Wearing a mask should in no way compromise the requirement for physical distancing.

Please see the information from the Government of Canada on how to put on, remove and clean non-medical masks: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/how-put-remove-clean-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>

11. I'm a swimmer looking to return to training, one of my family members is an essential services worker, do I need to take any special precautions?

Living with an essential services worker does introduce an increase level of risk for the spread of COVID-19 within a household. However, with appropriate hygiene, sanitation, and some physical distancing measures being practiced this risk can be largely mitigated.