



# ALBERTA WATER POLO ASSOCIATION

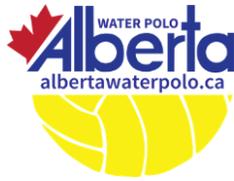
## COVID-19 RETURN TO WATER POLO GUIDELINES



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## ALBERTA WATER POLO ASSOCIATION - COVID-19 Return to Water Polo Guidelines



## OVERVIEW

The Alberta Water Polo Association is aware of our memberships desire to determine next steps and plan to return to water polo within the province of Alberta. The AWPA has been closely monitoring and following all Alberta Health reopening guidelines that are in place on the Alberta Government website [LINK](#). This document has been prepared based on the most up to date information from the Alberta Government and will continue to be updated as more information evolves surrounding COVID-19. Water Polo Canada has also worked closely with the four Aquatics Canada sport organizations (Canada Artistic Swimming, Diving Plongeon Canada, Swimming Canada and Water Polo Canada) to establish key principles for a safe return to sport.

## ESTABLISHING THE PRINCIPLES OF RETURN TO SPORT

*(Source: WPC Return to Water Polo Resource Document [LINK](#))*

*According to the Centre for Disease Control (USA), there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through swimming pools. COVID-19 has a fragile lipid outer membrane and is therefore highly susceptible to elimination by soaps and oxidants, such as chlorine. Proper maintenance and disinfection with Chlorine or Bromine should inactivate the virus (CDC 2020).*

*A return to sport must strictly adhere to the policies and procedures outlined by provincial and municipal governments and public health agencies that have been established to ensure a safe environment for all. The aquatic sports joint working group has agreed on a number of key principles that will form the foundation of the return to our respective sports. These principles include:*

*Physical Distancing: Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. Return to sport must adhere to physical distancing in accordance with requirements of public health authorities and facility operators.*

*Hygiene: In addition to physical distancing, handwashing and cough etiquette add another layer of protection against the spread of COVID-19. Return to sport plans must implement and monitor appropriate individual personal hygiene practices among staff, coaches and all participants at home (away from training) and during training.*

*Equipment Cleaning: Surfaces frequently touched with hands are most likely to be contaminated however Coronaviruses are one of the easiest types of viruses to kill with the appropriate disinfectant product when used according to the label directions.*

*Individual Health Monitoring: Daily individual health monitoring processes and tracking need to be in place. Individuals should not return to sport if they have been unwell (even mild symptoms), have had contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 or have travelled outside the country in the*



*past 14 days. Staff or athletes at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to review their specific health concerns with their primary care provider prior to attending training sessions.*

*Safe Sport Environment: In these unique times, our commitment to providing a safe sport environment for all participants cannot waver. A return to sport program must be designed to ensure all aspects of a safe sport environment can be implemented and followed.*

*Planning and Communication: A robust return to training plan that includes regular communication and education with key stakeholders including athletes, coaches and others, is key for any club.*

## **PURPOSE & PROCESS**

The purpose of this document is to outline return to water polo guidelines and best practices to date within the province of Alberta. It should be followed by all clubs who wish to reintroduce activities while also ensuring they are within the parameters of government authorities, public health orders, municipal regulations, and all facilities guidelines. Return to play will require the collective work of all AWPA clubs and members. It is extremely important this is done as safely as possible. There are still many unknowns around the eventual reopening of recreation facilities and pools. This will further require everyone's patience and support as we navigate the ever changing environment of COVID-19. We will continue to provide updates as they are made available including guidance from Water Polo Canada, and the Alberta Government in conjunction with Alberta Health.

Return to water polo will be a gradual and phased process. This includes all activities outdoors such as dryland training, indoor training when practice in pools can resume, and eventually competitions. Facilities around the province may be opening at different times and it is important clubs adhere to all of their local facility and municipality guidelines and abide by all of the restrictions and limitations in place. All guidelines and protocols should be aligned with one another; first being those of the Federal and Provincial Government, followed by local municipalities and facilities. AWPA will work alongside WPC and continue to update guidelines within this document as they change.

As we get closer to the next phases of getting back to the 'pool', there will be communication with the Alberta clubs with a series of meetings including the presidents.

Please feel free to contact the AWPA for further guidance or with any questions you may have.

## **RETURN TO WATER POLO STEPS AND STAGES**



WATER POLO CANADA - 4 Step Return to Training Guidelines (See Appendix C)

\*\* These guidelines are recommendations and may have to be adjusted to align with the Alberta Government, local municipalities, and individual facility restrictions.

**ALBERTA WATER POLO - Stages for Return to Water Polo**

Stage 1	At home training	On going
<b>Stage 2</b>	Outdoor organized group dryland with restrictions	June 2020 - Requirements and guidelines listed below
Stage 3 ** WPC Step 2 begins here	Training within facilities and public pools with restrictions	Date TBD - Requirements and guidelines will be listed at a later date
Stage 4	Competitions with restrictions	Date TBD - Requirements and guidelines will be listed at a later date
Stage 5	Post COVID-19 with no restrictions	Date TBD - Requirements and guidelines will be listed at a later date

We are currently in **Stage 2** of the AWPA Return to Play guidelines.

**OUTDOOR DRYLAND RETURN TO WATER POLO GUIDELINES**

(Source: WPC, and Alberta Government Resources)



The resumption of outdoor recreation was approved during stage one of the Alberta Government relaunch strategy with specific restrictions in place, followed by guidelines for organized outdoor sport, physical activity and recreation released on May 29th, 2020. A summary of recommended guidelines and how they can be applied to all clubs and teams who wish to provide outdoor dryland activities within Alberta can be found below. These restrictions are in place to ensure the safety of all athletes, coaches, instructors, teams and families.

A club must meet the minimum standards within this document to offer any training and ensure all members are aware of these restrictions and guidelines. Once they assess their own risk in a particular environment a club may enforce stricter guidelines.

#### General Guidelines

- Outdoor dryland activities are permitted in open parks and open spaces (e.g. soccer fields and ball diamonds). Some municipalities require booking permits for fields and outdoor spaces. Ensure the area is open to public use prior to arriving and a group does not already occupy the space.
- All teams and groups must be under the current gathering number of 50, including the instructor or coach.
- All activities must be monitored by a AWPA registered coach over the age of 18.
- Athletes, coaches and instructors must maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres, unless they are from the same household.
- Prior to and after activities, athletes should maintain physical distancing when returning to vehicles and homes and only those in the same household should share rides.
- Ensure parents know where to drop off and pick up athletes to allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- Parents are to refrain from spectating during activities to ensure the gathering number is not exceeded. No public spectators are allowed and athletes are not to mingle before or after activities.

#### Activities

- To help plan activities, coaches/instructors should ask themselves the following questions to determine the risk of the activities and whether they are allowed to proceed.
  - Does the activity violate a public health order?
  - Does the activity involve shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands?
  - Can an activity be modified to increase opportunities for physical distancing?
- Dryland type activity is permitted.
- Any game or league play is prohibited (e.g. a game of soccer, a game of softball).
- All dryland type activity in outdoor public spaces require physical distancing of at least 2 metres; consider the use of physical barriers to help athletes maintain physical distancing (e.g. cones, hula hoops etc.).
- All activities are not to include the sharing of common equipment or any common touch surface, unless the individuals are from the same household. (e.g. ball, yoga mat, jump rope, dumbbells, resistance bands, and water bottles)



- All participants should bring their own equipment with them to the activity.
- If athletes require “rented” equipment they should be assigned their own as it should not be shared among participants.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment, including water bottles prior to and after use.
- At no time should athletes be in contact with each other (e.g. no high fives, partner exercises, or group celebrations). All activities are to be non-contact in nature.

#### Participation

- Any participant who is sick or symptomatic is not to participate and must be sent home. If possible, isolate the participant from the group until they are picked up.
  - Symptoms to look for include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, headache, and a general feeling of being unwell.
- All participants must be an active member with their club and registered in the database. They are to be recorded on a daily log (See Appendix A) which includes names of participants, location, time of activity, type of activity, and that they completed the [screening checklist](#) (See Appendix B) from the Alberta Government prior to attending. This must be kept for 6 weeks to allow for contact tracing in the event of an outbreak. These records should be stored in a safe, secure location for six weeks and then disposed of to maintain the confidentiality of participants (shredding of documents).

#### Individual Actions & Precautions

- Proper hand hygiene should be practiced before and after activity. Make hand washing stations and/or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol available for all participants.
- Avoid touching your face with unclean hands.
- Practice safe sneezing and cough etiquette using the crease of the elbow.
- Mask wearing for non-vigorous activity is encouraged. It is not recommended to wear a mask during high intensity activities as breathing may be compromised.
- All participants should come already dressed for the activity.
- A “no food/snack sharing” policy and ensuring all athletes bring their own water bottles is recommended. Ensure athletes label personal belongings and equipment.

### **Appendix A: DAILY LOG FOR ACTIVITY**

Club Name:

Coach in Charge:

Date:

Location:

Time:





1.	Does the person attending the activity have any of the below symptoms:	CIRCLE ONE	
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
	• Sore throat	YES	NO
	• Chills	YES	NO
	• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
	• Runny Nose/Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
	• Feeling Unwell / Fatigued	YES	NO
	• Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea	YES	NO
	• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
	• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
	• Muscle/Joint aches	YES	NO
	• Headache	YES	NO
	• Conjunctivitis	YES	NO
2.	Have you, or anyone in your household, travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3.	Have you or your children attending the program had close unprotected contact (face to face contact within 2 metres/6 feet) with someone who is ill with cough and/or fever?	YES	NO
4.	Have you or anyone in your household been in close unprotected contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?	YES	NO

If you have answered “yes” to any of the above questions **do not** participate. Go home and use the [AHS Online Assessment Tool](#) to determine if testing is recommended.

### Appendix C: RETURN TO SPORT - WATER POLO TRAINING GUIDELINES

(Source: WPC)

4-STEP RETURN TO TRAINING GUIDELINES			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
<b>Canada Public Health</b>	<u>PHYSICAL DISTANCING APPLIED</u>		<u>NO PHYSICAL DISTANCING</u>
<b>Travel Restrictions</b>	Limited inter-region & inter-province travel only		Domestic travel permitted



<b>Training Location</b>	Personal swimming pool OR Open water	Use of open water & lakes Training within facilities and public pools <b>Must maintain physical distancing.</b>	Training within facilities NO physical distancing	
<b>Training Options</b>	In-water training (solo) if access to own pool only, or open water.	Training with limited members, small sub-groups and distance of 2 meters maintained. Swimming, throwing (passing/shooting) and other technical drills can be completed.  No full contact/defending drills, wrestling, scrimmage  Equipment must be disinfected incl. balls after each segment  <b>*See below for further details</b>	Full training and competition regionally (within provinces)  Small group competition allowed ( <i>Local teams with no fans</i> )	Full training and competition domestically  Large group competition allowed ( <i>Normal competition with fans</i> )

## STEP 2 – Supporting Guidelines

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>Public Health</b>	Public Health guidelines must be followed at all times.
<b>Arrival Procedures</b>	All participants should consider wearing masks outside of the pool during transit to and from the facility while ensuring they wash their hands or use hand sanitizer for 20 seconds upon arrival at the facilities. Work creatively with facility managers to create an entry and exit plan that maintains physical distancing and minimizes transition time. Athletes or staff with symptoms or roommates with symptoms <b>should not be</b> permitted to attend training until cleared by a doctor.
<b>Sanitation Procedures</b>	Participants will wipe down equipment after every use.
<b>Offices or Shared Spaces</b>	Staff will wash hands before entering office and wipe down after its use. No sharing of office supplies. Limit number of people within the office depending on size and respecting 2m distancing.
<b>Equipment</b>	Equipment must be wiped down at the before and at the end of each training session (balls, nets etc.)
<b>Team Meetings</b>	Team meetings should be held by Zoom (or similar platform) or in open space that allows for physical distancing

### AQUATIC TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>Participants in the pool</b>	Athletes in the pool require roughly 12.56 sq. to ensure they can practice 2m distance in the water. The following recommendations can be made for swimming pool sizes and adjusted based on different pool configurations to allow for physical distancing. 25m x 25m – 12 athletes or less 25m x 30m – 15 athletes or less 25m x 50m – 20 athletes or less
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	<i>*Note the recommendations above can be adapted based on the space available within facilities</i>
<b>Personal Bins on Pool Deck (optional)</b>	All sport related equipment should be sanitized and left at the pool, athletes can be given their own personal bin or box on the pool deck for sport related equipment such as bathing caps, goggles, WP hats, etc.
<b>Change area</b>	Athletes can arrive in their training suit and be given a bin on deck to put their clothes, or they can pass through the locker room in a staggered fashion while respecting physical distancing and arrive on the pool deck with a towel only.
<b>Interactions between Team Members</b>	2 m distance maintained at all times.
<b>Warm up</b>	Limit dry land training on the pool deck. Any dryland or pre-pool activities should be performed before entering the facility. Options of completing warm up can be done outdoors in open air or in another location if permitted.
<b>Hydration</b>	Only water personal water bottles on deck, <u>no food allowed.</u>
<b>Toilet</b>	Sanitation measures after use by each person – facility specific rules should apply
<b>Swim training</b>	Can be conducted using every second lane, can be subgroups or rotating groups in the water with swimming/static technical work.
<b>Individual ball or technical skills</b>	2 meters + distance for horizontal drills
<b>Passing &amp; Shooting</b>	Shooting open net, on a board, on rebounded, passing with partners or subgroups respecting 2 m distance, and shooting on goalie
<b>Duels/ opposition - close contact work</b>	
<b>Close contact situational activities, or scrimmages</b>	<b>Not permitted</b>
<b>Cool Down</b>	Can be completed in the pool respecting 2m distance, it is advised to be completed at home.
<b>Post Training Meetings</b>	Team meetings should be held by Zoom (or similar platform) or in open space that allows for physical distancing

## RESOURCE LINKS

Alberta Government Relaunch Strategy: <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-relaunch-strategy.aspx>

Alberta Biz Connect: <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>

COVID- 19 Information for Albertans: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Outdoor Activities Guidance: <https://www.alberta.ca/guidance-on-outdoor-activities.aspx>



Guidance for Organized Outdoor Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation with Screening

Checklist: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-organized-sport-physical-activity-and-recreation.pdf>

WPC COVID- 19 Resources: <https://waterpolo.ca/covid19resources.aspx>

WPC COVID- 19 Updates and Advisories: <https://waterpolo.ca/covid19updatesadvisory.aspx>

WPC COVID-19 Return to Water Polo Resource Document:

[https://www.waterpolo.ca/admin/docs/ReturnWPResource\\_May%2029\\_EN.pdf](https://www.waterpolo.ca/admin/docs/ReturnWPResource_May%2029_EN.pdf)