



# RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES

AS OF AUGUST 25, 2020

## INTRODUCTION

On May 6, 2020, the Government of BC announced BC's Restart Plan. Part of that plan was to ask that sector-specific guidelines be created. Government tasked viaSport, a non-profit society that acts as an agent for the BC Government in providing direction and oversight to amateur sport, was asked to develop Return to Sport Guidelines. Those guidelines were developed with direction from the Provincial Health Officer, and released on June 1, 2020. viaSport has now asks each Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) to develop their own Return to Sport Plan. Baseball BC, the PSO for baseball, has developed this plan for our sport. It has been drafted to be consistent with the federal and provincial health guidelines, and the provisions of the viaSport Return to Play guidelines. However, while Baseball BC has consulted with viaSport in developing our guidelines, viaSport does not provide approval for individual sport guidelines. We emphasize that the Baseball Return to Play guidelines include a requirement to respect the rules and advice of the responsible federal, provincial and municipal authorities.

We strongly encourage baseball organizations to review both the Baseball Return to Play guidelines and the overall viaSport Return to Play guidelines before developing their own written plan. Please note, that just as the Baseball BC guidelines have been approved by the Baseball BC board of directors, individual organizations also need to have their own written Return to Play plans approved by their board of directors. Further, the viaSport directive is clear that these plans must be in compliance with all orders and guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer and must be either posted on the wall of a facility or on the organization's website.

Baseball BC emphasizes the advice of public health officials and viaSport to move ahead slowly, and systematically restart activities in a way that allows your organization and local health authorities to monitor, evaluate and adjust as needed.

## OTHER GUIDELINES

With a situation that evolves daily and may differ by area, Baseball BC requires all organizations to follow the guidance from all levels of government and the BC health authorities. We also understand that each municipality has potentially different restrictions and limitations for on-field bookings and activity, therefore, we advise organizations to work with all the stakeholders relevant to your own organization and adhere to any appropriate requirements to ensure you are providing a safe environment for all participants.

The information from other authorities in this document is current to the date of the release of this document.

The sport specific guidelines provided by Baseball BC are meant to supplement the requirements and recommendations from the various levels of government, and the viaSport Guidelines.

- ViaSport Return to Sport Guidelines for BC: <https://www.viasport.ca/sites/default/files/ReturntoSportGuidelines.pdf>
- BCCDC Covid-19 Resources: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
- WorkSafeBC: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation>

- Government of Canada COVID-19 Resources: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

For additional links to information and other applicable guidelines, see Appendix F of the viaSport Guidelines.

## ADMINISTRATIVE STEPS

Government and viaSport require several steps to be completed prior to the return to play. These are essential in managing risk and ensuring a safe restart of sport for all involved. Prior to restarting, every organization must have an explicit plan for the measures they will implement and maintain.

*Note: When Baseball BC refers to an “organization” in this document, it is meant to be inclusive of each of the Baseball BC members AND their affiliated leagues, local associations, clubs, teams, and any other affiliated entity that offers organized baseball in BC.*

## POLICY

In addition to anything required by other authorities, organizations who choose to offer organized baseball at any level must develop the following policies (see viaSport Guidelines for further details):

1. COVID-19 Safety Plan (**Appendix G – viaSport Guidelines**)
2. Illness Policy and Wellness Screening (**Appendix C – viaSport Guidelines**)
3. Outbreak Plan (**Page 20 – viaSport Guidelines**)
4. First Aid Plan (**Page 20 – viaSport Guidelines**)

## APPROVAL TO RESTART

Baseball BC does not approve individual plans from organizations. Organizations who belong to other governing bodies (BC Minor, PBL, Little League, etc.) also need to ensure returning to play authorized by their respective body.

***Organizations who have not resumed activities should not jump straight to the highest threshold of activities without having tested safety protocols. It is recommended that organizations start with training activities and slowly layer in different levels of competition after a minimum period of 2 weeks.***

Return to play plans and policies for each organization must be authorized by its Board of Directors or equivalent decision makers.

The board or senior management of an organization is responsible for the oversight of risk. Each Board member or manager should review the viaSport Guidelines in detail, including the section on Risk Management.

Restarting is not mandatory – each organization must assess and decide for itself whether and when it is appropriate to restart operations.

When determining if your organization is ready to resume it is important to note that Baseball BC insurance **will not** cover any claims relating to communicable diseases or pandemics and that most policies, including Directors and Officers Insurance, now include specific pandemic exclusions.

Organizations are encouraged to update and use appropriate waivers for registration purposes when conducting baseball activity. It is important organizations understand the limitations of using waivers and are encouraged to obtain legal advice as necessary.

***It is also still imperative that sport organizations consult and collaborate with their municipal and facility partners before resuming and adding activities, as their readiness to reopen will affect a sport's ability to return.***

## BASEBALL BC GENERAL HEALTH AND PERSONAL HYGIENE GUIDELINES

***Please note that all of the below Personal Health and Hygiene Guidelines are intended to be required for anyone involved in youth or amateur baseball which includes, but is not limited to; athletes, coaches, umpires, administrators, volunteers and spectators.***

- Anyone displaying ANY illness symptoms **MUST NOT** attend.
- Disinfectant wipe down of all surfaces athletes can be exposed before every event.
- Reminder to all participants daily to avoid touching of eyes, nose or mouth
- No sharing of water bottles.
- No sharing of food of any kind.
- No spitting.
- No chewing gum or sunflower seeds.
- No sharing of any personal equipment or items
- Ride sharing to be discouraged whenever possible.
- All participants encouraged to disinfect their equipment after each event.
- All participants encouraged to wash all clothing and selves after each event.

## Baseball BC RTP Summary

	<u>Phase 1</u> (Prior to June 7)	<u>Phase 2</u> (June 7 to August 27)	<u>Phase 3</u> (August 28)	<u>Phase 4</u> (TBA)
<u>Restrictions</u>	No community programming	Maintain Social Distance (2M) No non-essential travel No group gatherings over 50 ppl	Maintain Social Distancing (2M) No group gathering over 50 ppl	Refer to PHO & local health Authorities
<u>Participants</u>	No community programming	Small groups only (10 athletes and 2 coaches) No or limited spectators  Moving to full team practices	Full team events permitted  Cohort Game Play Permitted	Large groups allowed
<u>Equipment</u>	No community programming	No shared personal equipment Disinfect any team equipment before, during and after use	Minimal shared equipment Disinfect any shared equipment before, during and after use	Some shared equipment Enhanced cleaning protocols in place
<u>Activity / Competition</u>	No community programming	Small group training only to start Moving to full team practices. In club play or modified game play may slowly be introduced.	In-club or Regional game play permitted within Cohorts	Provincial Competition's and larger scale events may return (TBA)

### RETURNING TO BASEBALL - PHASES

**Any movement between phases will be decided through collaboration with viaSport and the Provincial Health Office and announced by Baseball BC. Do not move from one phase to another on your own or without approval to do so. (See also Appendix A – viaSport Guidelines).**

#### VIASPORT PHASE 2

**Phase 2 in the viaSport Guidelines is referred to as “Transition Measures – Approx. May to September.”**

This phase applies to Baseball and informs the baseball specific measures in the “Baseball BC Phase 2”. Important to note about this viaSport phase is the following:

- 2m physical distance required between participants
- No non-essential travel
- No groups of more than 50 people
- Increased hand hygiene
- Symptom screening in place
- Preferred outdoor activity only

- Train in smaller groups
- No or limited spectators
- No contact-type activities
- In-club play only (no travel and no games between clubs)
- Minimal shared equipment – if shared need to disinfect before, during, and after

See the viaSport Guidelines for all the requirements of this phase.

## BASEBALL BC PHASE 2

### Phase 2 Guidelines and Recommendations (June 7<sup>th</sup> to July 9<sup>th</sup>)

- **Small group training and development sessions permitted.**
- Maximum of 10 athletes at an event. Maximum of 2 coaches at an event. Maximum of 1 parent per athlete at an event.
- Verbal symptom screening must be performed at every session to ensure all participants are symptom free.
- All government expectations and requirements to be met, including viaSport Phase 2 guidelines
- All Baseball BC Personal Health and Hygiene Recommended Guidelines to be reviewed and enforced as outlined above.
- 2m physical distance required between participants
- Every event to include reminders to participants regarding 2m physical distancing and include no spitting, no face touching, no contact between the athletes.
- Attendance must be taken and kept at every event for all people in attendance including parents (drivers). These records must be kept for 30 days before being destroyed.
- No team huddles before, during or after the practice for coaching or teaching purposes unless 2m physical distancing requirements are adhered to.
- All drills to be created and implemented ensuring 2m physical distancing requirements are adhered to.
- No dugout use permitted. Athletes must be set up outside of the dugout with 2m physical distancing requirements adhered to.
- No shared use of personal equipment.
- Baseballs should be sanitized prior to every event and every effort given to limit the number of athletes using one ball in a practice environment.
- Any team issue bats should be sanitized prior to every event and between every use by different athletes. No other team equipment should be shared.
- No changing or dressing rooms permitted.
- All field prep equipment to be disinfected and cleaned after every use.
- Indoor practices are permitted so long as the facility is operating in accordance with Provincial, Regional, and Municipal COVID-19 regulations. Anyone practicing indoors must amend their COVID-19 safety plan to detail how they will continue to abide by all other requirements of Phase 2 when practicing indoors.

### **Phase 2 Guidelines and Recommendations Transition within this phase (July 10, 2020)**

- All guidelines listed above are applicable to this “In Phase Transition” with the following notable changes.
- **Full team practices permitted (July 10, 2020)**
- **Practices and training are still expected to follow all Phase 2 requirements and Guidelines as listed.**

### **Phase 2 Guidelines and Recommendations Transition within this phase (July 24, 2020)**

- All guidelines listed above are applicable to this “In Phase Transition” with the following notable changes.
- **Modified or In Club game play permitted (July 24, 2020)**
- **Only game play between teams from the same club are permitted in this phase**
- **Any modified or in club game play permitted in this phase to follow Baseball BC Phase 3 Guidelines and Recommendations (TBA).**
- **Social Distancing must still be maintained at all times outside of the regular course of game play.**
- **Baseballs need to be new or disinfected every time they are entered into play. Hand sanitizing should take place at the end of every half inning.**
- **Umpires must comply with social distancing requirements and may need to use alternate positioning to comply**
- **No plate meetings pre-game for lineup exchanges unless physical distancing requirements are adhered to.**
- **No mound visits by catcher or coach unless physical distancing requirements are adhered to.**
- **No postgame handshakes.**
- **All scorekeeping, announcing and scoreboards operation to be performed outside and not in buildings or booths with social distancing requirements in mind.**
- **Practices and training are still expected to follow all Phase 2 requirements and Guidelines as listed.**

### **Phase 2 Guidelines and Recommendations Transition within this phase (July 31, 2020)**

- All guidelines listed above are applicable to this “In Phase Transition” with the following notable changes.
- **Intra Club game play now permitted for any team that doesn’t have an equivalent in club playing partner.**
- **Interim Bubbles of two or three teams maximum are able to be designated to allow for game play.**
- **Please note that athletes are only permitted to participate in one bubble at any one time.**
- **Teams are not permitted to interact with teams outside of their designated Interim Bubble.**

- **Interim Bubbles to consist of teams from the closest surrounding club that is offering equivalent programming in order to reduce travel.**
- **Any Intra Club game play permitted in this phase to follow Baseball BC Phase 3 Guidelines and Recommendations (TBA).**
- **Social Distancing must still be maintained at all times outside of the regular course of game play.**
- **Baseballs need to be new or disinfected every time they are entered into play. Hand sanitizing should take place at the end of every half inning.**
- **Umpires must comply with social distancing requirements and may need to use alternate positioning to comply**
- **No plate meetings pre-game for lineup exchanges unless physical distancing requirements are adhered to.**
- **No mound visits by catcher or coach unless physical distancing requirements are adhered to.**
- **No postgame handshakes.**
- **All scorekeeping, announcing and scoreboards operation to be performed outside and not in buildings or booths with social distancing requirements in mind.**
- **Practices and training are still expected to follow all Phase 2 requirements and Guidelines as listed.**

### VIASPORT PHASE 3

**Phase 3 in the viaSport Guidelines is referred to as “Progressively Loosen.”**

Important to note about this phase is the following:

- Refer to PHO or local health authorities for current restrictions.
- Group sizes may increase.
- Limited spectators.
- Interclub or Regional Play is permitted within a **Cohort group**.
- Increased hand hygiene.
- Some shared equipment.
- Enhanced cleaning protocols in place

See the viaSport Guidelines for all the requirements of this phase.

### BASEBALL BC PHASE 3

**Phase 3 Guidelines and Recommendations (August 28, 2020)**



- **Game play permitted within Cohort groups. (A cohort is a group of participants who primarily interact with each other within the sport environment over an extended period of time.)**
  - o **Each cohort can be comprised of multiple teams in order to form a mini-league. Maximum of 100 athletes allowed.**
  - o **Cohorts should be made up of individuals/teams of similar age and skill level.**
  - o **At least two metres distancing should be maintained between all participants when off the field of play.**
  - o **While participants do not need to maintain physical distancing during quick contact sport specific activities during game play, minimized physical contact is still advised.**
  - o **All guidance related to personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom-screening still apply.**
  - o **When members of the cohort are gathering for games or activities, gatherings must not exceed 50 people (see PHO Order).**
  - o **Coaches may be counted outside the total cohort number should also consider wearing a non-medical face mask while participating in game play.**
  - o **Athletes are only permitted to participate in one cohort at any one time.**
  - o **Teams are not permitted to interact (practice or play) with teams outside of their designated cohort.**
  - o **Cohorts should remain together for an extended period of time. If looking to change cohorts, a two-week break between activities is recommended.**

#### Regarding Competition and Spectators

- Attendance taken must include spectators. These records must be kept for 30 days before being destroyed.
- Community spectators are not encouraged until Phase 4. All bleachers and stands should be closed to spectators. If an organization allows spectators, they must implement a strategy to ensure that physical distancing is maintained and minimize opportunities for interaction between athletes and the spectators while at the venue.
- Provincial Health Office (PHO) Orders related to group gatherings are still in effect, limiting group numbers to 50 people. This limit includes athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators.

#### Regarding game play

- Illness and Wellness Screening Policies apply
- Verbal symptom screening must be performed at every session to ensure all participants are symptom free.
- All government expectations and requirements to be met as outlined above.
- All Baseball BC Personal Health and Hygiene Recommended Guidelines to be reviewed and enforced as outlined above.
- Every event to include reminders to participants regarding physical distancing requirements and include no spitting, no face touching, no contact between the athletes.

- Attendance must be taken and kept at every event for all people in attendance including parents (drivers). These records must be kept for 30 days before being destroyed.
- No team huddles before, during or after the game for coaching or teaching purposes unless physical distancing requirements are adhered to.
- No dugout use permitted. Athletes must be set up outside of the dugout with physical distancing requirements adhered to.
- All bleachers and stands should be closed to spectators to allow for athlete's safe use while dugouts are closed. This will also aid in managing the 50-person maximum at all events
- No shared use of personal equipment.
- No plate meetings pre-game for lineup exchanges unless physical distancing requirements are adhered to.
- No mound visits by catcher or coach unless physical distancing requirements are adhered to.
- No postgame handshakes.
- A new or disinfected baseball should be entered into the game for every ball put in play.
- Any team issue bats should be sanitized prior to every event and between every use by different athletes.
- All players to sanitize their hands when returning to the dugout from the field, after each at bat and as required.
- All scorekeeping, announcing and scoreboards operation to be performed outside and not in buildings or booths with social distancing requirements in mind.
- Umpires must comply with social distancing requirements and may need to use alternate positioning to comply.
- Regional or Community based programming only. Limited travel. No overnight trips.
- No tournaments permitted.
- All field prep equipment to be disinfected and cleaned after every use.

*The recommendations and guidelines in this phase are subject to change.*

#### VIASPORT PHASE 4

#### **Phase 4 in the viaSport Guidelines is referred to as “New Normal – Future Date TBA”**

Important to note about this phase is the following:

- Refer to PHO or local health authorities for current restrictions.
- Large groups allowed.
- No restrictions on spectators.
- No restrictions on activity types.
- Provincial competitions and larger scale events may return
- Shared equipment permitted.

See the viaSport Guidelines for all the requirements of this phase.

#### BASEBALL BC PHASE 4

Traditional programming, including league play and championships can resume.

Some restrictions may be required.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES – FACILITY ADAPTATIONS

**The following guidelines and recommendations are provided for organizations, local associations and clubs and are suggested to be considered and incorporated in every phase of Return to Play.**

**These recommendations and guidelines are in addition to the viaSport guidelines for facility access and use (see page 10)**

- Facilities with multiple fields will need to ensure no cross over of scheduling leads to a situation where the restrictions related to group size are broken.
- Signage advising and educating on COVID-19 wellness, hygiene, and social distancing measures should be in place at every field and facility utilized.
- Use cones and other equipment or markings to ensure appropriate spacing is in place to support distancing.
  - All bleachers and stands should be closed to spectators to allow for athlete's safe use while dugouts are closed. This will also aid in managing the 50-person maximum at all events
- Directional traffic flow plan and markers may be required in high pedestrian traffic areas
- Field allotments must be modified to allow for all events to stay under the 50-person social gathering limits. It is suggested that you move to 1.5 times the traditional allotment window.
- No gathering should be permitted around the park until the scheduled start time of any event (please consider having arriving participants wait in their car until after the group ahead has vacated).
- Athletes should leave the park immediately after the practice or game.
- Concessions should only be opened or provided through approval of the respective health department.
- Washrooms (if the responsibility of the club or local association) need a defined cleaning schedule at a minimum of twice daily. **See municipal and health authority requirements for washrooms.**
- Water fountains (if present) should be used for only filling of water bottles. Signage should be placed advising not to drink from. **See municipal and health authority requirements for water fountains.**

## DISCLAIMER

While we aim to provide relevant and timely information, because information known about the COVID-19 coronavirus and recommended health and safety measures can rapidly change no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided.

It is important to note that the Guidelines are not a legal document and is to be used as a guide only. It is not a substitute for actual legislation or orders of the PHO. In the event of an ambiguity or conflict between the Guidelines and the Public Health Act, regulations or orders thereunder, the Act, regulations and orders prevail. Each Organization should comply with the requirements of the provincial and local government and health officials in terms of public gatherings and sporting events when determining when it is safe to return to activities.

Nothing in this document is intended to provide legal advice. Do not rely on this document or treat it as legal advice.

Anyone using the Guidelines does so at his or her own risk. Baseball BC shall not be responsible for any loss or damage of any kind arising directly or indirectly from the use of the Guidelines including, without limitation, reliance on the completeness or accuracy of the information provided.