

Sport, Activity and Recreation Webinar Responses

September 4, 2020

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Cohorts: (General)

- If a 14-day period of switching cohort/mini-league is honoured, could a weekend 'tournament' occur

We would need more information about your event to comment with full certainty but, in general, tournaments/events that compel a new cohort team to be formed for a short period (e.g., a weekend) are not permitted at this time. As described, this scenario presents little benefit to players as they could not partake in team sports for a two-week period after the tournament concludes. Further, it would be virtually impossible for the tournament organizer to ensure all participants did not join another sport cohort for the two-week period.

- We can maintain physical distancing at a competition but participants would all perform on a carpet which they would put their hands on and face near. Would this shared surface between participants then necessitate a cohort model or could we still consider them physically distanced (which would allow for more participation).

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In this situation, the cohort model is not needed. We would strongly encourage participants to thoroughly wash/sanitize their hands (and feet if participating in bare feet) before and after using the carpet, and that enhanced cleaning of the carpet be undertaken.

- School Athletics: Can we please get clarification on the cross over of school sport and community sports? As of right now from how I understand it is either or. The athlete is either in community sports OR school sports. Not both. Can we please get clarification on this?
- How will cohorting between school cohorts and community cohorts work?
- If students are in a school cohort are they unable to participate in a sport cohort if it's recommended to participate in only one?
- Can my kid play in a school cohort, go to their community cohort at night/weekend, and play in a camp/training group cohort, etc. The language states we should minimize cohort participation but not must not

We acknowledge that children likely already belong to multiple cohorts (e.g., classroom cohort, family cohort, work cohort, etc). It is recommended that children are part of as few cohorts as possible. Please refer to the [Guidance on Cohorts](#) for more information. Remember that if a child/student is able to maintain 2 metres of distance from others at all times during an activity, they are not part of a cohort. For sport, physical and recreation activities that compel participants to interact at a distance of less than 2 metres, we suggest that children join only one sport or recreation cohort. This could mean choosing between playing on a school sport team or a community sport team.

Leagues, teams, associations and organizations should encourage participants to limit the number of close-contact cohorts that their members or players are part of at one time. Close-contact activities are those where cohorts are necessary because participation requires being within 2 metres of other individuals. These activities can include sports, but can also include dance and other non-sport cohort activities such as theatrical performance. Leagues, teams, associations and organizations may choose to limit their players to one cohort, or they may set a maximum number of cohorts that their members can belong to. These decisions should be based on risk tolerance and conversations with players, coaches, and parents where applicable. Some leagues and provincial sports organizations have set strict policies on participation and clearly state that a student/participant cannot concurrently be on a school and a non-school team at the same time. For greater clarity, Alberta Health strongly recommends that Albertans limit their involvement in a sport or recreation cohorts to one.

- For teams with small number of team members - say 6 or less, why is a team treated differently than a table in a restaurant or bar. Patrons in a restaurant or bar have no restrictions other than 6 or less at a table.

In a restaurant, it is presumed that those who share a table are either part of the same family or members of a personal cohort. In these settings, patrons are relaxed, rarely share items and are physically distanced to the extent possible. In close-contact sports, the cohort principle applies as well, but sector specific mitigation is layered on to account for participants coming within 2 metres of one another, higher exertion (respiration) and the sharing of equipment.

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Number of cohorts

- Could you please clarify/confirm if the expectation for sport cohorts are for participants to follow the rule of 'one sport cohort'?
- Please address AHS recommendation on whether governing sport bodies should be limiting participation to one sport cohort in our guidelines.
- Please confirm that governing sport organizations are not 'required' to limit our participants to a single sport cohort. Please also confirm that, if a governing sport organization wishes to exceed the provincial guidelines and require that our athletes only participate in one sport cohort, that we have the ability to do so.
- Could you please clarify/confirm if the expectation for sport cohorts are for participants to follow the rule of 'one sport cohort'?
- Please clarify if it is a personal choice on participation in cohorts.

To minimize the risk of both transmitting and acquiring COVID-19, we encourage all Albertans to limit the number of cohorts that they are in. Individuals should only participate in one sport, recreation or physical activity when that activity that requires individuals to be within 2 metres of others. Individuals should be aware of the risk of participating in close-contact sports cohorts and decide which one they want/are comfortable to participate in to maintain a good physical and mental health.

- Can athletes/coaches belong to multiple sport cohorts (team and individual) at the same time?

Leagues, teams, associations and organizations should encourage participants to limit the number of close-contact cohorts that their members or players are part of at one time. Close-contact activities are those where cohorts are necessary because participation requires being within 2 metres of other individuals. These activities can include sports, but can also include dance and other non-sport cohort activities such as theatrical performance. Leagues, teams, associations and organizations may choose to limit their players to one cohort, or they may set a maximum number of cohorts that their members can belong to. These decisions should be based on risk tolerance and conversations with players, coaches, and parents where applicable. Coaches, staff and officials who primarily interact with individuals or teams at a distance of 2 metres or greater do not need to be counted as part of the cohort. These individuals are required to wear a mask and perform proper hand hygiene if it becomes necessary to temporarily interact with cohorting participants at a distance of less than 2 meters for short periods of time.

- How can there be a prohibition on forming new cohorts for competition (I agree) while there is no limit on the number of cohorts?
- I'm not arguing with 50 but with no limit on the number of cohorts, what is the point?
- You are allowing multiple cohorts. Contradictions are very challenging in your guidelines. How many cohorts? Or allow slightly larger cohort sizes and provide firm limits on number of cohorts.

Individuals should only participate in one sport, recreation or physical activity when that activity that requires individuals to be within 2 metres of others. Tournaments/competitive events are permitted for activities where participants can either maintain 2 metre distancing at all times, or follow a cohort

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model. New cohorts can be formed for competition after a 14-day period. The cohort size for an activity that involves interaction at a distance of less than 2 metres is set at maximum of 50 individuals.

Size of cohort

- Is there any chance that we can increase our cohort size from 50 to 100, similar to BC?
- Cohort Maximums ... Can the cohort limit be increased, e.g. to 100 for competition which would align with some of the larger gathering numbers so long as competition remains within that cohort and changes would require an appropriate number of days,
- What is the 50 based on?

Alberta Health is closely monitoring all the factors above to determine whether and when an increase in cohort size is appropriate. There is no plan to raise the cohort number beyond 50 at this time. The size of a cohort is determined based on multiple Alberta-specific considerations such as transmission rates, potential scale of spread in the case of an outbreak, the public health system's capacity to conduct timely outbreak investigation and contact tracing, and our healthcare system's capacity. We also recognize that changes to guidance creates an administrative burden to leagues and organizations and our goal is to minimize that burden wherever possible.

- Will you agree to allow the PSO's to set the cohort sizes and the official specific sport return to play activity protocols with the same due diligence in a manner that takes into account the utmost safety of everyone involved as determined by the Provincial Sport Organization?
- Will AHS designate PSO's to set guidance for their respective sports? Your answer is too ambiguous and allows for abuse with difficult to enforce consequences.
- Will AHS allow PSOs and Alberta Schools Athletics Association agree on and set policies re: cohorts?

The Government of Alberta recognizes that PSO plays an integral part in ensuring safety and health of everyone involved in sports activities. PSOs are encouraged to develop their own return to play protocols that aligns with SPAR guidance and other relevant guidance set out by the government. However, the SPAR guidance is paramount and PSOs are not positioned to set cohort size on their own.

The size of a cohort is determined based on multiple Alberta-specific considerations such as transmission rates, potential scale of spread in the case of an outbreak, the public health system's capacity to conduct timely outbreak investigation and contact tracing, and our healthcare system's capacity rather than the nature of a specific sport.

- Gymnastics - so if we can maintain the physical distance we can have more than 50 people within a space and don't have to make 50 person cohorts?

If there is a way to maintain 2 metres of physical distance between each individual participant during all activities, there is no need to follow cohort model. The rest of the SPAR guidance would be applicable, however. The gathering limit of 50 people is specific to indoor social gathering such as weddings, funerals and birthday parties, and not to places of business.

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Travel for competition/play

- Please clarify what the guidelines are now as far as inter-regional travel and tournament play? Is there any effect on cohort definition and activity?

Tournaments, races and competitive events are permitted for sport, physical activity and recreational activities where participants can either maintain 2 metre physical distancing at all times, or follow the cohort/mini-league model. If 2 metres distance or the mini-league model are not options, the tournament/event is not permitted. Tournament/events that compel a new cohort team to be formed for a short period (e.g., a weekend) are not permitted at this time.

While our Government does not prohibit a healthy Albertan from traveling to another province to participate in an activity, other provinces may have policies related to travel and sport that teams and individuals should be familiar with. Nothing prohibits other Canadians from traveling to Alberta to participate. The individual/team is expected to follow all applicable provincial and municipal public health guidance while in Alberta, and observe any isolation requirements that may be mandated by their home province after competing in Alberta.

- Has there been any consideration for interprovincial travel?

Where 2 metre physical distancing between individuals is maintained, or the mini-league model is followed, travel within, or to, Alberta for sport, physical and recreational activities is allowed.

- Requesting clarity about travel across AHS zones. Will there be any relaxation of this limitation in the near future?

Recent amendments to the SPAR guidance removed travel restrictions across the AHS zones as long as public health guidance is followed.

- For sports and activities that can maintain physical distance from each other or opponents, such as golf and curling, would you please confirm that participants may travel across provincial borders to train and compete, assuming that all other public health guidance is observed?

Yes, travel across provincial borders for sport, physical and recreational activities is allowed where 2 metre physical distancing between individuals is maintained or the mini-league model is employed. The individuals travelling into Alberta should follow Alberta's General guidance and should be mindful of the public health guidance from the province they are travelling from. For example, provinces may require a 14 day quarantine when returning from another Canadian province.

- Three Alberta universities are currently exploring the feasibility of attending the Canada West Universities Athletic Association's Golf Championship hosted by the University of British Columbia Okanagan in early October. With the current guidelines now allowing for travel to events where physical distancing can be maintained would travel for these teams be permitted?

Participants in this event would be required to follow guidance for sport set out by the BC provincial government. There is nothing prohibiting Albertan athletes from leaving the province to attend this

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event. If all participants are able to physically distance during the event, cohorting is not necessary and when the athletes return to Alberta they will be able to attend similar local events.

- Where appropriate social/physical distancing can be maintained while travelling, can inter-region travel be opened in support of sporting competitions?
- Some school sports can physically distance while others cannot. For those that can physically distance like badminton, curling and golf, could championships be held at a provincial level?

Tournaments, races and competitive events are permitted for sport, physical activity and recreational activities where participants can maintain 2 metre physical distancing at all times, or they follow the mini-league model. Travel within and to Alberta is allowed for competitive events that can meet the aforementioned criteria.

- Can we have a cohort that is split between multiple cities, but comes together once a month? Just wanting to see if we are able to operate any sort of provincial team for our wheelchair sports.

Yes, so long as the total number of participants who participate in the event does not exceed 50, this is possible. Cohorts are necessary where the nature of the activity compels participants to be within 2 metres of one another.

- Can you offer any insight on whether or not interprovincial travel for team sports, or individual sports, where physical distancing cannot be maintained be permitted by January 2021?

Currently, travel within, or to, Alberta and between provinces for sports activities is allowed where 2 meter distancing is maintained or the mini-league model is employed.

- Ok so Team Alberta teams could practice even though athletes are spread out from all over the province as long as they have 2 meter distancing is this correct? Would they have to quarantine for 2 weeks before and after still? And they couldn't do any other sports or cohorts during the two weeks before and after the practice?

Travel within Alberta is allowed for sports where 2 metre distancing can be maintained or a mini-league model is employed. If 2 meters can not be maintained, the maximum number of participants in the Team Alberta model you have described would be 50.

Unless an individual recently returned to Alberta from international travel, or is a close contact of a person who is confirmed as having COVID-19, the person doesn't have to quarantine before and after participating in the activity.

Individuals who participate in a sport, physical or recreation activity where 2 metres distancing is not maintained may still participate in a sport or activities where physical distancing is maintained and cohorts are not required.

If an individual or team wishes to change cohorts or mini-leagues, they should not participate in a new cohort activity for 14 days.

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Competitions/event hosting

- Will there be an official process/protocol from AHS to get approval for events, races etc.?
- Who should forward race approval if this is to be the protocol, for events that are organized by an NSO in conjunction with a PSO?
- Is there an official process/protocol from Alberta health to get approval for events, races etc. at this time?
- At what point can we plan for outside ski races - provincially and interprovincial. As well, if the national sport body is planning a race in Alberta who should they be presenting their plans to?

Unless the event has international competitors, there is no requirement for an event to be approved by Alberta Health or AHS. Organizers should do their due diligence to ensure they follow requirements set out by SPAR guidance, and other relevant guidance.

As non-essential travel into Canada remains restricted, events that invite participants from other countries to attend must not proceed without federal and provincial support.

Indoor spaces

- Our gymnastics clubs that are free span spaces of 15,000 – 45,000 square feet are in an extremely tough economic position with the maximum number of participants being at 50 in our spaces. Is there any chance that this number may end up changing and perhaps consideration for a per square footage allotment rather than just a max of 50.
- If we could look at installing non-permeable barriers within the facilities to increase capacity would that be an ok solution. We are a sport very able to maintain the physical distancing requirement and this would still be maintained to a max of 50, in these newly divided spaces.

Gymnastic clubs are considered places of business and, as such, there is no maximum number of participants set provided that there is enough room for participants to maintain 2 metres physical distance at all times. Entrances, washrooms foyers and any places where gathering may occur need to have controls in place to mitigate gathering.

- Why is indoor sport/recreation being treated so differently than say a gas station? Gas stations do not clean/sanitize pumps, doors, atm machines, enter/exit doors or CR/DR key pads and most often have only 1 person on staff, so sanitization is not possible with any regularity. Given what many facilities are doing to allow competition and keep athletes safe, I would think it's safer to be in a indoor sport facility then pumping gas. -Am I wrong?

In both instances, measures to prevent the transmission of disease are required. For example, a gas station and a sport facility are both required to perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection. Sport differs from obtaining fuel from a gas station in many ways, including in how many individuals are present in one space and the level of exertion required. Mitigation strategies for various sectors are developed based on evidence of disease transmission in the specific environments.

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- Is an outdoor size of 100 - indoor of 50 more reasonable?

Sports activities where participants cannot maintain a 2 metre distance must utilize the mini-league model, which allows no more than 50 participants, regardless of whether the activity occurs indoors or outdoors. In non-sporting contexts, gathering restrictions are as follows:

- **200 people maximum for audience-type community outdoor events**, such as festivals, firework displays, rodeos and sporting events, and outdoor performances
- **100 people maximum for other outdoor events and indoor seated/audience events**, including wedding ceremonies, funeral services, movie theatres, indoor arts and culture performances and other indoor spectator events where people remain seated
- **50 people maximum for indoor social gatherings**, including wedding and funeral receptions and birthday parties

For greater clarity, so long as audience members can be kept out of the participation area (i.e., field, court) at all times, the audience may be counted separately from sport participants. With 2 metres distance between members of different households, the maximum size of a seated audience can be 200 for outdoor events and 100 for indoor events.

- Can you clarify how facilities may be contacted regarding a positive case of participant who used an athletic facility, eg. as part of a league? Would AHS contact the coach or organizer of that league and the facility that the league was using?

If an attendee tests positive, AHS public health investigators will only request information from the team, league or facility about the attendee's participation if it is deemed that a potential exposure is likely to have occurred. Based on interview with the positive case, AHS public health investigators will determine if there are close contacts that should be made aware based on the period of infectivity and the organization's compliance with public health guidance. This might involve a call to the team representatives or players.

- Does shared equipment negate a physically distanced sport or activity?

No. Two participants who are engaged in an activity at a distance of greater than 2 metres need not form a cohort if they share equipment (e.g., play catch, throw a frisbee). Shared equipment should be sanitized between uses. If shared equipment cannot be sanitized between uses, remind players the importance of not touching their face before washing or sanitizing their hands before and after play. If these precautions are followed, the presence of shared equipment does not negate a physically distanced sport or activity.

Participants of an activity where 2 metre distancing is maintained are still encouraged to find alternative ways to use equipment. For example, prepare two sets of coloured birdies for badminton so each participant only uses his/her own colour.

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Outdoor sports

- Since the science seems to indicate that outside activities have less chance of infection, are there any considerations for outdoor sports?

It is encouraged to modify sport, physical activities and recreation to perform them in outdoor settings whenever possible. Right now, the cohort limits are the same (50) regardless of whether or not the sport is indoors or outdoors.

Miscellaneous

- 10 pin bowling. Question: Our sport, like so many others, is back to play with some restrictions. A portion of our sport is schools, who are not permitted to currently participate in our sport. Wondering why AHS / SPAR made this decision and when it will be reconsidered.

Alberta's COVID-19 Guidance for K-12 school re-entry does not prohibit 10-pin bowling in schools, or by students. On the contrary, schools are encouraged to choose physical activities that allow for physical distancing, such as bowling. Schools and school boards do have the ability to limit student involvement in sport, physical activity and recreation.

The requirement to postpone field trips and activities involving group transportation could prevent students from bowling at bowling alleys during school hours. There are two reasons for this recommendation. Firstly, it limits the time that students must spend in close proximity in a potentially poorly ventilated space (a school bus or group transport). Secondly, it limits the amount of time students spend in public spaces where they may come within two metres of another person or come into contact with exposed surfaces. At this point, a more flexible approach to field trips is being investigated for schools.

- For tournaments, is the indoor (50) and outdoor (100) maximum numbers of gathering still applicable?

For the crowd/audience, these numbers reflect the general indoor and outdoor gathering limits for non-seated events. If the audience is seated, the numbers are 100 for indoor attendance and 200 for outdoor. So long as audience members stay out of participant spaces at all times, audience may be counted separately from tournament participants.

Tournaments where participants can physically distance may proceed with these gathering limits in mind. Tournaments in sports where participants cannot physically distance must utilize the mini-league model which allows no more than 50 participants (indoor or outdoor).

- We are being told by our facilities that we need to track our member attendance but you're telling us not to share information regarding illness.... do you want us to track it or not?

Team officials should record the names of all individuals who participate in a cohort or mini-league, and are encouraged to keep attendance records for each event/activity.

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This is different from reporting requirements around illness. At this time, if the organizer becomes aware that an individual is not attending because they are symptomatic, isolating, quarantining or awaiting a COVID-19 test, the organizer should be respectful of the individual's privacy and should not share this information with anyone without the individual's consent.

If a participant becomes sick while at the facility and leaves to isolate, the team official/sports organizer should notify the facility that there was a symptomatic individual present (without disclosing their name or personal information), so that the facility staff can clean and disinfect all surfaces and areas that the individual may have come into contact with. Team officials/organizers who maintain an attendance list will better support contact tracing in the event that an investigation is conducted by AHS. This list does not have to be provided to the facility, league or parents.

- Can you please define "Participant".

Participants are distinct from facility staff, non-participating volunteers, and spectators. Anyone who is involved in or actively supporting sports play is a participant. Depending on the nature of the activity, this can include, but is not limited to, players, coaches, coaches' assistants, coaching volunteers, referees, umpires, attendants, medical staff, and sport therapists.

- Is there a stage 3 coming out anytime soon?

The timing and presentation of Stage 3 of relaunch will depend on Alberta's key metrics for COVID-19 (new cases, new hospitalizations, ICU admissions). Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health has indicated that COVID-19 transmission levels will have to remain steady before transition to Stage 3 can be considered

- Will the GoA be passing an order (?) to indemnify Sport Organizations should we get sued related to COVID?

The Government of Alberta is not indemnifying any business or organization from legal liability should one of their staff, participants, or attendees become sick with COVID-19. It is up to each business, group, and organization to ensure that they are following all of the Chief Medical Officer of Health's Orders and relevant [provincial COVID-19 guidance](#).

- Is the daily checklist something that must be done by all on-site or something that we can ask parents/athletes to agree they are complying with rather than going through it with them each day?

Attendees (participants/parents) are encouraged to use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) before participating in a sport or physical activity. This should be done at home, online, or at the entrance to the facility before the participant enters participant spaces or interacts with other participants. If the participant identifies, through self-assessment, that they are exhibiting any of the [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, they cannot enter the facility or participate in outdoor activities with other individuals.