



**Bay Of Quinte Men's Soccer League.
Return to play plan.**



Introduction

Sport makes an important contribution to the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of Canadians. The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on communities globally, leading to significant restrictions on all sectors of society, including sport. Resumption of sport can significantly contribute to the re-establishment of normality in Canadian society.

Ontario Soccer in consultation with its sport partners Canada Soccer, the Canadian Sport Institute Ontario and the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, has developed for its membership this Return to Play Plan and Guide for Ontario.

Canada Soccer has reviewed and approved this document and is aligned with the Province of Ontario's amateur sport guidelines and protocols.

Based on current best Public Health evidence, and guidelines from Canada's Federal and Ontario's Provincial Government, Ontario Soccer has developed this Return to Play Guide in concert with specialists in sport and exercise medicine, infectious diseases and public health.

The principles outlined in this document apply equally to recreational, competitive and high performance level soccer. The Return to play plan is a timely tool for 'how' reintroduction of soccer activity will occur in a cautious and progressive manner, to optimise participant and community safety. Decisions regarding the timing of this Return to Play Guide three (3) phase process will be determined by Ontario Soccer and the Province of Ontario directives around public health and safety. The priority at all times must be to preserve public health, minimising the risk of community transmission.

This document details the Return to Play Plan and Protocols for Ontario Soccer, targeted at the member Club and Ontario Registered Academy levels.

The Return to Play Plan will include multiple phases, recommendations, and guidelines for anyone participating in sanctioned soccer. We would like to stress that when we all return to play; soccer will look different than before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, therefore we will not be able to jump right back into the game as normal. The multiple phases will have varying degrees of time between phases to ensure the highest level of safety precaution for everyone involved in the game.

This plans detail and recommendations are guidelines for member Clubs and Academies, administrators, coaches, match officials and anyone organizing sanctioned soccer activities within the Province of Ontario. The plan will provide technical resources in the form of sample sessions that fall within the recommendations and guidelines of Canada Soccer to support members that want to offer soccer activity; as well as recommendations and guidelines for coaches, match officials, players and parents.

With a situation that evolves daily and may differ by region, Ontario Soccer continues to follow the guidance of the Province of Ontario, provincial health authorities and requires all members and affiliated Clubs and Academies to do the same. We also understand that each municipality has potentially different localized governmental restrictions and limitations for on-field bookings and activity, therefore, we advise everyone to work with your local town/city/municipality to adhere to any appropriate requirements to ensure you are providing a safe environment for all participants.

Ontario Soccer's Return to Play Plan will consist of a phased-in approach ensuring return to soccer (final stage) is done in a progressive manner. This method is to ensure the soccer system transitions as governmental health authorities modify their health and

Safety standards over time as our communities return to the new normal of life as well as sport and recreational participation.

It is recommended that Clubs and Academies use this document to design their own return to play plans and /or use to submit to their municipal facilities, if required.

Also included in this document are measures and precautions to support a safe phased-in Return to Play Plan. Included are sample sessions designed to work within the guidelines and we encourage our members and affiliated Clubs and Academies to use, tailor as appropriate, and share with each other to support soccer activity for your organizations.

We understand and appreciate the eagerness to prepare for when Return to Play happens. We ask that organizations do not develop protocols that are independent of Ontario Soccer, Ontario Health Services and Canada Soccer guidance. Organizations, teams, and/or coaches that offer soccer activity and do not comply with these recommendations and guidelines may be subject to sanctioning.

Return to play Phrase

The objective for all of us with this Return to play plan, is the health and safety of our participants.

Ontario Soccer

Ontario Soccer's Return to Play Plan consists of a three (3) phase approach that includes:

Phase 1: Return to Training (modified training)

Conditions: All Phase 1 Return to Training conditions are met.

Restrictions: No contact, no league, exhibition, festival or tournament

Games.

Phase 2: Return to Training and Modified Games (enhanced training & modified games)

Conditions: All Phase 2 Return to Train conditions are met.

Age and Stage modified competition between Clubs/Academies permitted for Inter-Squad play AND/OR within the same Region.

Restrictions: League, exhibition, festival or tournament games within the Club/Academy AND/OR Region only and following conditions as set out in Phase 2.

Phase 3: Return to Soccer (regular competition, games and training)

Conditions: Social distancing restrictions have been lifted

Restrictions: None

Ontario Soccer will determine timelines for each Phase in alignment with the Province of Ontario provincial health authorities involving government orders, restrictions and guidelines.

Training and competition Recommendations and Guidelines

1. Phase 1: Return to Training (modified training)

Conditions: All Phase 1 Return to Train conditions are met.

Restrictions: No league, exhibition, festival or tournament games.

Social Distancing Measures are still in place - Introduction of Small Group Activities respecting physical distancing measures of 2M (6 ft.).

Soccer organization to complete 'Canada Soccer Return to Soccer Assessment Tool'

Ensure alignment with Ontario Soccer's Return to Play Guide & Provincial Government guidelines prior to resuming soccer.

Please see the Canada Soccer's "Age & Stage Considerations – Phase 1" document included in this section.

Aim to keep players in small groups respecting physical distancing measures of 2M (6 ft.) so that they work with similar players. Constantly mixing players can increase the number of players interacting with an asymptomatic COVID-19 carrier.

No games during this phase.

Any soccer activity must comply with the

social distancing measures and recommendations, along with any gathering restrictions issued by the provincial government health authorities, including the arrival and departure of players (except for family members or persons residing in the same household).

Await confirmation from Ontario Soccer before moving to next phase.

Phase 2: Return to Training and Modified Games (enhanced training & modified games)

Conditions: All Phase 2 Return to Training conditions are met.

Age and Stage modified competition between Clubs/Academies permitted for Inter-Squad play AND/OR within the same Region.

Restrictions: League, exhibition, festival or tournament games within the Club/Academy and/or Region only and following guidelines below conditions as set out in Phase 2.

Note: In the following section, "participant" means players, team officials and Match Officials

Soccer Organization entering enhanced competitions must complete – 'Canada Soccer Return to Soccer Assessment Tool' and create a Return to Play plan for their organization.

Ensure alignment with Ontario Soccer & Provincial Government guidelines prior to resuming soccer.

Any soccer activity must comply with physical distancing measures and recommendations, along with any gathering restrictions issued by the provincial government health authorities.

Enhanced training and modified games now include broader group interactions.

Modified game formats include 1v1 to 7v7 for U10 and under; 1v1 to 9v9 for U11 and U12 and 1v1 to 11v11 game formats for U13 and over. See Match Officiating section (Phase 2 Modified Games - Rule Adjustments) of this guide for modified rules pertaining to modified games if/when Match Officials are being utilized.

Regions are defined by the boundaries set out in Ontario Soccer's Operational Procedures:

West Region: District Associations of Elgin Middlesex, Essex County, Lambton Kent and South-West Regional;

South Region: District Associations of Hamilton and District, Niagara, and Peel Halton.

Central Region: District Associations of Durham Region, East Central Ontario, Toronto, Huronia District, North York, Scarborough, and York Region

East Region: District Associations of Eastern Ontario District, and Southeast Ontario.

North Region: District Associations of Sault Amateur, Soccer Northeastern Ontario, Soccer North, Soccer Northwest, and Sudbury Regional.

Clubs/Academies can participate in modified exhibition games, tournaments and leagues under the following conditions:

For Outdoor and Indoor Soccer: Multiple teams, from different Clubs/Academies within the same region can form groupings (bubbles) of no more than 50 players to participate in a league or sanctioned competition as per the current government order. Note: Upon any further government order changes to player size, membership will be advised accordingly.

As part of this enhancement, teams must observe a minimum of 14 days of "Team Isolation" before playing games within a different team "bubble" or against a new team outside the "bubble".

During the "Team Isolation" period, only activities within the team can take place (i.e. training, inter-squad games.)

The total number of spectators permitted to be at the facility at any one time must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the facility, and in any event cannot exceed:

- i. 50 spectators for indoor soccer activities
- ii. 100 spectators, for outdoor soccer activities

It is highly recommended that a field marshal be appointed to ensure compliance with social distancing rules and safety protocols. The field marshal should be a recognized authority within the soccer organization. This is not the role of Match Officials.

Trials/Tryouts/Open Evaluations

These activities can be executed during Phase 2 within each Region only (see page 9). Organizations must focus on ensuring the health and safety of participants attending their sessions.

The following must be adhered to:

Players not registered for outdoor 2020 in OSCAR, Ontario Soccer's official registry must complete the Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk Agreement, for each club's sessions they attend, to be eligible for insurance coverage;

Players must complete the Declaration of Compliance at each session;

A Contact Tracing Log must be completed for each session;

Players can participate in tryouts within one region only.

Await confirmation from Ontario Soccer before moving to next phase.

Recommendations for Clubs and Academies

-Ensure information included on this document is widely available to your members. All Club/Academy officials, coaches and anyone coordinating the training sessions must have read and be familiar with these guidelines.

-It is recommended that all participants utilize the "Self-Check" on Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment App

-Ensure all players and coaches are appropriately registered in OSCAR, Ontario Soccer's official participant registry.

-Prioritize use of online registration for programs to reduce gathering at Club/Academy office and/or handling of hard copies.

-Communicate all hygiene measures in advance to all your players, parents, match officials and coaches.

-Provide your employees with any protective items required by the health authorities and ensure that each member of your staff washes their hands regularly.

-Contact health authorities if an athlete, coach or match official has contracted COVID-19 and support them with contact tracing. Commence and activate your Club/Academy COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan

-Verbal and/or documented health checks for symptoms and Contact Logs/Tracing should be completed prior to every training session. See appendices section of the Guide for checklist.

-If an individual is exhibiting symptoms related to COVID-19, they must be sent home immediately. If an individual is experiencing symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat, they are legally obligated to self-isolate. As per the Declaration of Compliance, they are NOT permitted to return to training for 14 days from the day they last experienced symptoms.

-Source written approval (permit) from the landlord of your training facility (e.g. Municipality or Private Owner).

- Comply with any additional requirements imposed by the landlord.
- Ensure the venue meets all conditions in this document particularly the hygiene protocol.
- For modified games, a field marshal should be appointed to ensure compliance with social distancing rules and safety protocols. The field marshal should be a recognized authority within the soccer organization.
- Ask parents and guardians to provide written consent for players authorizing them to participate in soccer training, and ensure they understand hygiene protocol. See Appendices for example of waiver.
- Participation should be limited to the ages and levels that understand and can adhere to the distancing measures and recommendations issued by the
 - provincial government health authorities. See Canada Soccer's Age/Stage Recommendations included in the section.
- Stagger activity times between different groups to create a 15-minute buffer between sessions and avoid an overlap of players on the field.
- Limit gatherings based on restriction imposed by Government of Ontario orders.
- Recommend that only one parent/guardian accompany their child/player to the session or modified game and avoid mass gathering of parents. Parents should however remain nearby in the event of injury or emergency.
- Limit the number of team staff (coaches, trainers, etc.) that are on field, noting the requirement to have a specific number of coaches to lead the session while adhering to the Rule of Two.
- Consider the comfort level of all your volunteer coaches under the current situation. Perhaps, in the first instance, limit sessions being led by a select core group of coaches.
- Ensure that first aid materials and an AED are available at all times and are accessible.
- Game sheets must have an area where the coach will confirm that players have acknowledged no COVID-19 symptoms.
- Regularly remind and encourage people to wash their hands and adopt proper hygiene practices.
- Do not use any locker/change rooms and request all participants to change at home prior to and after sessions.
- Close all water fountains and ask that all players bring their own refreshments and do not share water bottles.
- Establish protocol for attendance to be taken at each training session.
- Option to remove age group identifiers and provide flexibility for family scheduling so players can join in with different age group or genders.
- Recommendation: This is the time to promote soccer for all and to alleviate logistical burdens on families so siblings can potentially participate on the same time, same day and same group.

Note: It is important for insurance and risk management, all participants are registered in OSCAR, Ontario Soccer's official participant registry.

-Consider shortening the length of matches and reduction in number of players assigned to teams (max roster).

- Provide information to coaches, match officials and parents about each facility, which field entrances will be for entrance and exit of the field to reduce bottlenecks. Implement screening and cleaning protocols as well as pick-up, drop-off and spectator procedures.

- Adhere to facility restrictions or maximum capacities for facilities. Prioritize small game formats where possible.

- Hand washing/sanitizer station(s) onsite. Provide coaches with necessary sanitization equipment.

- Consider cancelling activities where the forecast calls for thunder/lightning.

- Complete an online pre-activity orientation regarding safety – hand washing, cough suppression, no spitting or nose clearing for players, coaches, match officials and parents.

Other Precautions

Should any member organization and/or affiliated Club/Academy wishing to add stricter guidelines, measures and precautions they are able to do so for the soccer activity they oversee within their specific organization.

Recommendations and Guidelines for Players

-It is recommended that all players utilize the "Self-Check" on

Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment App

- If you experience any of the symptoms, please follow recommendations and contact your medical health provider.

- Do not carpool unless with immediate family members.

-Always follow the instructions from coaches and respect physical distancing.

-Arrive no more than 25 minutes prior to activity commencing.

- Do not congregate at the facility entry point.

-Arrive prepared to train – changing rooms will not be in use.

-Bring your own water bottles clearly labelled with your name.

- Do not share water bottles.

- Follow the hygiene protocols in this document.

- Physical distancing of two (2) metres (6 feet) must be maintained.

-No more than 1 person per 4m².

- All “non-essential” contacts should be avoided (handshakes, high 5’s, etc.).
- Only use your own equipment.
- Wash hands with hand sanitizer immediately before leaving home and after soccer activities and during scheduled breaks.
- Do not spit at any time.
- Clearly label your own water bottle. Do not share bottles.
- Any individual equipment used should be taken home and washed separately from others in the household (e.g. uniform).
- Carry hand sanitizer in order to enable good personal hygiene.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid the use of public toilets, however if necessary, ensure hands are washed thoroughly.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.
- Shower at home before and after training.

Recommendations and Guidelines for Parents

- Follow the hygiene protocols in this document.
- Avoid congregating at facility entry points.
- Remind players to arrive to training dressed and ready, as change rooms will not be available.
- Only one parent/guardian attending soccer activities.
- Parents/guardians to keep a reasonable distance from the field.
- No more than 1 person per 4m².
- Ensure to check-in with coach for completion of attendance at the soccer activity.
- At home, ensure all the player’s equipment is washed separately from the other household items.
- Ensure child is healthy and has no sign of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Drop and pickup player while maintaining desired rules and regulations around pick-up/drop-off and being a spectator if allowed.
- Snacks should be discouraged, however if allowed, ensure they are consumed and/or disposed of on site and not taken home.

Recommendations and Guidelines for Coaches

- Priority is to ensure safe environment, complete coach certification and safe sport.
- Coaches hold an online pre-activity orientation with players and parents regarding safety protocols– i.e., social distancing, modified training, pick up and drop off, hand washing, cough suppression, no spitting or nose clearing, etc., prior to commence your first training.
- Coaches should wipe down personal and field equipment using the disinfected swabs or towels, before and immediately after each session (do not go home and then clean – contaminated items may travel into the home environment).
- Only Coaches/Staff should handle equipment.
- Avoid using shared pinnies or any other additional equipment.
- Wear facemasks.
- Structure activities to maximize physical distancing.
- Age appropriate considerations may need to be taken when designing activities, for example, Active Start and Fundamentals players may need a sibling or parent to participate with them. This will allow for coaches to have support managing the group of players and social distancing will not be required between siblings or parent/child (since they are from the same household).
- Design activities so athletes may stay within their existing small groups to reduce amount of contact - with different people.
- No heading, chest or hand contact with ball (feet only).
- Regular sanitization breaks combined with water breaks.
- Use cones and other equipment to ensure appropriate spacing is in place to support distancing.
- Frequently clean all surfaces, including counters, door handles, benches, tables, etc.
- Soap or hand sanitizer should be made available to all people in various locations throughout facility.

Phase 3: Return to Soccer (regular competition, games and training)

Conditions: Social distancing restrictions have been lifted

Restrictions: None

All Game Formats are permitted.

1v1 – 11v11

Ensure alignment with Ontario Soccer and the Provincial Government guidelines prior to resuming Return to Soccer, if applicable at this time.

Recommendations for match Officials

All Match Officials must be registered with Ontario Soccer before returning to any phase of play.

A game cannot be played without players violating social distance guidelines as set out in this documentation and/or the provincial health authority directives. Match Officials (Referees) will most likely operate within the distance of almost all players at some points throughout the game. Therefore, safe distance will be very difficult to enforce and maintain.

In order to practice sound risk management protocols during Return to Play phases, be aware of the following possible return outcomes for Match Officials:

- Modified and/or condensed officiating schedules.
- Mixed levels of physical preparation following extended time off.
- Potential risks of injury and overtraining.
- Potential weight gain, weight loss, and changes to body composition.
- Potential slowed or interrupted progress with individual rehabilitation programs.
- Travel restrictions could impose financial issues for larger leagues.

Note: It is recommended that all Match Officials utilize the “Self-Check” on

Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment App

Phase 1: Return to Training (modified training)

- Canada Soccer/Ontario Soccer and the Government of Ontario have approved a Return to Training order.
- All match officiating activities must be aligned with Canada Soccer/Ontario Soccer recommended safety guidelines
- No games will be played or officiated during this phase.
- **It is imperative that Match Officials commence physical training during this phase so they are physically prepared for Phases 2 and 3.**
- Any soccer activity must comply with the social distancing measures and recommendations, along with any gathering restrictions issued by the Province of Ontario health authorities, including the arrival and departure of players (except for family members or persons residing in the same household).

Phase 2: Return to Training and Modified Games (enhanced training & modified games)

Discipline Adjustments

- Automatic cautions for any players who are involved in face-to-face (but non-mass confrontation) interactions. Shoving, jostling, and fighting for space will result in a straight Yellow Card for Unsportsmanlike Behavior. Match Officials should stay away and allow the emotional situation to deescalate before engaging from a safe distance.

- Serious physical altercations will result in an automatic red card.
- Mass confrontations will result in automatic dismissals for all involved.

- **There will be ZERO tolerance for spitting on or around the field of play.** If spitting is seen by one of the match officials, the following procedure will be followed:

If aimed/directed towards an individual it is an automatic red card and send off as per IFAB Laws of the Game.

For all other types of spitting, if a player or technical staff is seen to be spitting on or around the field of play:

- o The First incident will result in a verbal warning.
- o Second incident by that same person, a Yellow Card/Caution for Unsporting Behavior will be issued.
- o Third incident by the same person will result in a second yellow card and therefore dismissal from the game.

Coaches are responsible for ensuring players are aware of the Spitting Zero Tolerance requirement, and the importance of following Covid-19 guidelines.

Modified Game Rule Adjustments (to be used with Laws of the Game 2019-2020)

- To reduce body fluid transfer onto ball surface, heading of the ball has been removed for this phase. After the first verbal warning, heading of ball will result in an indirect free kick for the opposing team.

- Throw-ins are not

permitted. The ball must be kicked into play (kick-in). All other requirements of

Throw-In Law will still be applied. After the first verbal warning, failure to comply will result in a kick-in to opposing team.

-The drop ball requirement has been removed to reduce handling of the ball and has been converted to an indirect free kick. If the drop ball is inside the penalty area, the ball automatically goes to the Goalkeeper. The Referee leaves the ball on the ground, and the Goalkeeper picks it up.

- Match Officials will allow substitutes to wear non-clashing colours (to the players on the field of play). They are not required to be official pinnies.

Process Adjustments

- The Thunder and Lightning Policy will be adjusted to read that if the game is stopped for severe weather, then the game is over in order to avoid gathering of participants in confined areas, and will not be rescheduled due to availability of fields/officials etc.

- Match Officials may come dressed in appropriate officiating gear to the game/training as dressing rooms may be closed during this stage.

- With modified games, a field marshal should be appointed to ensure compliance with social distancing rules and safety protocols. The field marshal should be a recognized authority within the soccer organization. This is not the role of Match Officials.

- Recommendation that Clubs/Academies and/or Districts provide some fitness and law refresher courses for Match Officials prior to Return to Play Phase 3. These sessions must adhere to the physical distancing measures and recommendations, along with any gathering restrictions issued by the provincial government health authorities.

- Teams are permitted unlimited player substitutions. The Coach will be responsible for tracking substitutions. The Coach can take a photo of the sub-sheet and submit to required authorities. Match Officials do not have to touch substitution forms.

- It is recommended that when travelling together to games, maximum in a car is two individuals; one in the front seat and one in the back seat.

- Where accommodations for games are required, maximum of one person per room is permitted.

- Match Officials will be assigned to more local games. Therefore, they may see similar teams more often. Note: The Grading Protocol will be flexible in 2020 to accommodate this reality.

- When a player is injured, Match Officials may only observe and refer assistance to the applicable team bench. There is to be no Match Official contact with the player.

Only team medical personnel, following proper health and safety protocols may assist the injured player.

- There will be no handshakes or high 5's between players, match officials, coaches before, during or after the game.

- Parents are not permitted to enter the playing field at the end of game or during training. If this occurs, it is an expectation that the team coach will address with the parent(s).

- When Match Officials are taking part in practical training sessions, they must follow Canada Soccer/Ontario Soccer return to play as well as the Province of Ontario health and safety guidelines.

- It is recommended that there be no cash payment to Match Officials at games. Clubs/Academies/Districts/ Leagues will advise Match Officials of their payment process and method.

- Parents/Guardians of youth Match Officials are considered general spectators, therefore at any facility, they must adhere to social distancing rules and all other health and safety protocols. Parents of Match Officials are not permitted to enter the field of play at any time (before, during or after games).

- Match Official assessors and mentors need to respect social distancing guidelines. These activities should take place away from the spectator side of the field of play.

- Where applicable, use of Ball Boys/Girls is not permitted until further notice. Players are therefore responsible for retrieving out of play balls.

- Postgame discussions between the officiating crew must respect social distancing rules.

- Where applicable, team physiotherapy should be set up at the end of the team benches towards the corner flags. This provides more space in the middle for the 4th Match Official and game announcer/convener.
- It is recommended that Match Officials take the necessary safety precautions to limit the risk of infection for themselves. Match Officials may use the COVID-19 self-assessment App.
- It is recommended that spectators need to be six (6) meters back from the touchlines. This allows room for the Assistant Referee to run the full line and still have the required two (2) meters distance.

Safety Adjustments

- Match Officials to regularly complete the COVID-19 Self-Assessment through Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment App.
- Match Officials to thoroughly wash equipment, towels, clothes, bags, water bottles, and other items after use.
- Individuals to bring a full personal use water bottle(s) and avoid touching or using public water fountains.
- Use new grip or fresh tape on flags if possible.
- Do not share pens, cards etc.
- Consider wearing a mask or a face shield when you are officiating. Use this reference to help with your decision.
- Wash hands prior to leaving for games; bring personal use hand sanitizer to the fields.
- It is recommended that gloves are worn to the field and individuals avoid touching gates, fences, benches, etc. Wear latex (or similar) gloves and discard after each game, or purchase gloves that can be washed.
- After games and at half time, limit your distance to two (2) meters (6 feet) from others.
- Avoid contact with others, such as hand shaking, fist bumps and high fives.
- Leave the field as soon as reasonably possible after training or games.
- Avoid post training/game socializing as much as possible.
- Match Officials have the right to abandon any game where the required COVID-19 protocols are not being followed. In these cases, it must be reported on a Special Incident Report to the appropriate authorities.
- It is recommended that hydration breaks be increased to allow for players and match officials that may be wearing masks/shields to take time to refresh. Please ensure coaches are aware at the start of each game as to the timing of the breaks.

Officiating Adjustments

- Pre-game meetings with Coaches and/or Assessors can take place, if following the physical distancing measures and recommendations along with any gathering restrictions issued by the provincial government health authorities.
- Player inspections may still be completed, but must be at a distance of no less than two (2) meters (6 feet).
- Assistant Referees must stand a minimum of two (2) meters (6 feet) from the kicker during corner kicks.
- Match Officials are to use their foot to pass the ball when transferring to a player (i.e. free kicks), or direct the player to retrieve the ball themselves.
- It is optional for Assistant Referees to wear face shields as they are positioned closer to spectators and benches. This provides an additional level of protection.
- Clubs/Districts/Academies/Leagues may determine they need to reduce number of Match Officials needed for a game. League1 Ontario, League1 Ontario Reserve, OUA, OCAA, OPDL, Ontario Cup Semi-finals and Finals will have priority for three (3) officials.

Phase 3: Return to Soccer (regular competition, games and training)

- Social distancing restrictions have been lifted.
- All Game Formats are permitted.
- Ensure alignment with Ontario Soccer and the Provincial Government guidelines prior to resuming Return to Soccer, if applicable at this

Equipment Safety and Cleaning

Players, Coaches, Match Officials

Any soccer activity must comply with the health and safety protocols as outlined in this Return to Play Guide along with any new protocols issued by the Province of Ontario health authorities.

Recommendations:

- Bring a personally marked water bottle(s) to any soccer activity and avoid touching or using public water fountains. Note: Water fountains should be closed.
- Cleaning of equipment and physical distancing should be practiced and conform to recommendations from the Province of Ontario health authorities.
- Disinfect all equipment after soccer activities before storing at home.
- Match Officials do not share pens, cards etc. Where required, wipe down pens with sanitizing wipes after use.
- Each player should be provided with personal pinnies that they do not share and take home and wash. The coach/manager should not be collecting team pinnies and washing them. An alternative can be the use of two different shirts (dark and light).

- Thoroughly wash or wipe down your equipment, towels, clothes, bags, water bottles, white boards, caps, cones and other items you have used or touched immediately after use.
- Wash hands thoroughly in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer if water and soap are not immediately available.
- Do not share equipment – this includes shin guards, shirts, socks etc.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your arm or a tissue to reduce the spread of germs. Remember if you use a tissue, to dispose of it as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards. Ensure all discarded materials (tissues, wipes, sock tape etc.) are placed into an approved garbage receptacle.
- Avoid touching gates, fences, benches, etc. Option to wear gloves; latex (or similar) gloves– discard after one game, or purchase gloves that can be washed.
- Consider wearing a mask or a face shield when attending activities. Use this [reference](#) to help with your decision.
 - o Avoid touching the mask while using it and clean your hands if you do.
 - o Before putting on a mask, clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - o Remove it from behind, discard immediately into a closed bin and then clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - o Cover your mouth and nose with the mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
 - o Clean your gloves, mask or shield after each use.
 - o Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and don't reuse single-use masks.

Electronics

For electronics such as cell phones, tablets, touch screens that could be used by Coaches;

- Do not share electronics.
- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
- When possible, consider the use of cleanable covers for electronics.
- If no manufacturer guidance is available and when possible, consider the use of alcohol based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens.
- Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Provide a Safe and Clean Environment Field, Clubhouse and Office Guidelines and Protocols

The following health and safety guidelines relate to providing clean and sanitized facilities to allow a safe Return to Play. This has been developed using recommendations from the Provincial Government provincial health authorities.

Additional public resource documents can be found at:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/public-resources>

Or

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>

Reduce Transmission

Office spaces, clubhouses, rental facilities, and training and competition areas should adhere to the following guidelines to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19:

1. Any employee/player/parent/coach who is exhibiting symptoms of illness should stay home.
2. Recognize and Assess - this virus is transmitted via droplets during close, unprotected contact with an infected person, or by touching an infected surface and then the eye, nose, or mouth. It can also cause a range of symptoms including; sore throat, cough, fever and shortness of breath.

If you, or someone you have been in contact with either at work, home, or at soccer related activities and begins to exhibit any of these symptoms, it is imperative to inform your Coach, Club/Academy representative immediately. In addition, you should:

- Self isolate
- Complete the online self-assessment available here; Ontario COVID-19 Self Assessment App
- Contact Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000
- Contact your primary health care provider

Screening of all individuals should also take place at a minimum weekly, or as directed by local authorities.

Establish Controls

It is recommended that in order to reduce the possibility of transmission, it is important to establish controls, which need to be followed by all parties responsible for a safe Return to Play.

Offices

- When feasible and with the coordination of your Supervisor, work from home as often as possible until government restrictions are relaxed.
- When Return to Office is in affect, work surfaces, devices, laptops, screens, and equipment should be cleaned daily in accordance with established facility cleaning protocols.
- Employees wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before entering the workplace, after contact with others, or when surfaces in contact with others have been touched.
- Visitors sanitize hands prior to entering the offices and will be required to wear a mask.

- Numbers of staff allowed into the office should be limited in accordance with provincial guidelines.
Current regulations state two (2) metres (6 foot) distance required.

o Practice physical distancing at all times while in the office.

o Team/group meetings to take place outdoors, or in meeting rooms large enough to accommodate physical distancing rules.

o Lunchroom should be off limits for eating. Food can be heated but lunch can take place outside or designated area observing social distancing.

o Do not enter rooms/spaces where 2 meter distance cannot be maintained, including washrooms.

o Facemasks should be worn when physical distancing cannot be maintained or guaranteed, i.e., meetings, walking to washroom, etc.

o As staffing levels increase it may be necessary to implement rotating shifts or install protective barriers to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.

- Workplace, common spaces and readily accessible areas to be cleaned and sanitized thoroughly and often, and in accordance with established facility cleaning protocols.

- All staff and visitors should be required to sign in and out to ensure that contact tracing will be possible.

- Any in-person deliveries, visits or meetings that are not deemed priority should be rescheduled to another date or be conducted online.

- The use of central ventilation for heating and cooling to be minimized when possible. Open windows and doors where feasible, and use fans to force in fresh outdoor air to minimize the amount of recycled indoor air.

- Employees that do not feel well should not come to the office.

- Use of facemasks and gloves are recommended and should adhere to government directives for work place health and safety.

Field/Clubhouse

- Ensure alcohol-based hand sanitizer, cleaning solution and disposable towels are present and readily accessible for each session.

- Prior to entry and at the end of each session, all individuals to properly sanitize hands.

- Establish and clearly define separate entrance and exit locations to field/clubhouse.

- Control entry and exit to ensure physical distancing is observed. Parents should not be allowed onto field of play and should be directed to an approved viewing location. **It is important to ensure NO gatherings of large groups while activity is taking place. Please respect social/physical distancing measures as set in place by governmental public health authorities.**

- Ensure method of accurately tracking players/parents/coaches in attendance at each session to assist in contact tracing, if required.

- Screening for symptoms of players/parents/coaches to take place before each session. If symptoms present ensure the following steps are followed:

- o Individual moved to isolated area (with parent/guardian as necessary).

- o Field/facility vacated and sanitized.

- o Contact your Public Health Unit or Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000 and advise of situation.

- Define areas on field, where space is possible, for individual storage of personal items:

- o Ensure spacing of two (2) metres (6 feet) is observed.

- o Players bring and use personally marked water bottles. No sharing of water bottles permitted.

- o Place personal items on a hard surface location, which can be easily cleaned and sanitized frequently, away from spectators. i.e., sidewalk, individual plastic bins, plastic covered tabletop.

- o All items brought to the field in easily distinguishable individual player bags, and all items removed at the end of session. Anything left on field to be disposed of promptly and safely.

- Clean and disinfect team benches, score clocks, water fountains or other commonly touched surfaces.

- Facility change rooms are closed until government orders are lifted, except in cases where washroom facilities do not exist elsewhere and need to be accessed.

- Communicate with field provider (private or municipal) to ensure cleaning and acceptable use guidelines have been developed, and that all protocols established are being adhered to. Copies of protocols should be requested and/or publically posted.

- Commonly touched surfaces should be cleaned using appropriate sanitizing solution at the beginning and end of each session. Those surfaces should include but not limited to:

- o Door handles,

- o Tables,

- o Gate entrances,

- o Equipment (balls, training supplies, etc.),

- o Player equipment storage locations, and

- o Bleachers or seating used by spectators.

-No sharing of personal items such as water bottles, goalie gloves, shin guards, pinnies, towels, etc.

- Do not allow food of any type to be consumed at the field/facility.

- Ensure sufficient time is allocated in between sessions to properly sanitize facility.

Cleaning Recommendations:

Washroom and Change Rooms

- Wet mopping of floors and shower floors/walls with 30:1 bleach solution.
- Thorough cleaning of all fixtures, toilets, countertops, dispensers, doors, handles with approved sanitizing solution minimum two times per day or when visibly soiled.
- Fogging of entire space using approved sanitizing solution is optional.

Office Space

- Wiping down of desktops, door handles, dispensers, countertops, storage, phones/handsets, photocopiers with approved sanitizing solution minimum two times per day or when visibly soiled.
- Wet mop hard floor with 30:1 bleach solution.
- Fogging of office space minimum of two occasions, six hours apart prior to staff return is optional.

Field/Clubhouse

- Wet mopping of hard floors with 30:1 bleach solution.
- Thorough cleaning of all fixtures, dispensers, water fountains, door handles, fire extinguishers, vending machines, emergency devices, benches, time clocks minimum two times per day, when visibly soiled, and in between each rental group.
- Fogging of all open spaces minimum of two occasions, six hours apart prior to re-opening of facility is optional.

See appendices for more resource information.

Risk Management

As restrictions begin to ease relating to COVID-19, Canada Soccer in collaboration with Ontario Soccer are directing all member Clubs and Academies to follow Canada Soccer's **Return to Soccer Assessment Tool** for the purpose of determining preparedness to mitigate COVID-19 risks and implications upon the resumption of soccer and related activities.

The Guidelines are primarily designed to help member organizations manage their liability and remain compliant with all applicable public health authorities when returning to soccer and related activities. The Guidelines may help member organizations determine which new policies need to be adopted, including social and physical distancing for training, restricting the number of players participating in such training, and restricting game play.

The steps outlined in the [Canada Soccer Return to Soccer Guidelines include:](#)

1. The easing of stay-at-home orders from the Federal public health authority;
2. The easing of restrictions on public gatherings from the respective Provincial public health authority;
3. The easing of restrictions for field and facility usage by the respective Municipal public health authority;

4. Canada Soccer has received the Return to Soccer Plan from the Provincial or Territorial Member Association, which has been provided to the applicable Provincial or Territorial government department and/or public health authority, and where applicable, has received confirmation from the Province or Territory that it approves of the Plan; and

5. Canada Soccer has received the Return to Soccer Assessment Tool from the member organization and has provided any comments or feedback to the member organization or its Provincial or Territorial Member, if any.

Insurance

Ontario Soccer, in consultation with our insurance provider, HUB International, has been monitoring the most recent developments with COVID-19 and the impact the pandemic having on soccer activities.

During this unprecedented time, we will continue to support our member District Associations, Clubs and Academies by delivering education, communication and guidance.

First, the most critical factor under our risk management and insurance considerations is Ontario Soccer must ensure our members are compliant with the policies and procedures regarding participant registration and insurance coverage. Without exception, all participants must be registered in OSCAR, Ontario Soccer's official registry. **Without this registration, there is no standard insurance coverage.**

As we know, there are different types of risks associated with participating in sport and soccer. The current situation has potentially added to the assumption of risk. Ontario Soccer's insurance underwriter has provided us with an exclusion notice, which we are sharing with our membership at this time. The exclusion clause will be effective July 1, 2020 for Ontario Soccer. We have inquired with our insurance broker to see if additional

insurance coverage is available, and they have informed us that there is no such "pandemic" coverage currently available.

This pandemic exclusion clause is not specific to our sport in Ontario and is being applied across amateur sport throughout Canada. Considering this, Ontario Soccer has received guidance from our legal counsel and as a first step, has proceeded with an update to the Youth and Adult Participant Waivers that we recommend all members and affiliated Clubs and Academies utilize for registration purposes once we Return to Play. Please see the "Legal Considerations" section for more information.

Members must note the risk and liability for return to play is at the local community level where implementation takes place. Ultimately, Ontario Soccer and each of their members/affiliated Clubs and Academies are independently operated; affiliated organizations must be comfortable and prepared for the appropriate and reasonable steps taken to mitigate risks associated with approving and/or implementing any form of soccer programming under a Return to Play Plan.

An overview of our standard insurance program and frequently asked questions are provided [HERE](#).

It is highly recommended that each District, affiliated Club/Academy and Associate Member ensure your insurance policy is up to date. Ensure you have Director and Officer (D&O) liability insurance for your Board Members and insurance coverage for business losses. Furthermore, it is recommended that each

Emergency Response Plan

member organization ensure their governing documents are current and take into account the protocols recommendations to ensure a safe return to soccer.

A specific **COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan** will need to be developed. This will serve as a mandatory risk management tool to allow for the proper environmental assessment and care of your participants on and off the field of play who may have been tested positive for COVID-19.

During the current pandemic, the luxury of time to respond as soccer leaders is not available. Management of a breach within your soccer organization must be dealt with quickly and efficiently if you have a clearly defined **COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan**.

Whenever it is practical or appropriate, the emergency response plan should be prepared in alignment with local health authorities and other trained health care personnel associated within your organization. As part of the plan, assign key roles to people within the organization.

Included below for your reference are key components of a recommended **COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan**. The underlining objective of your plan should someone test positive within your soccer organization is to ensure that the virus does not spread any further and that the infected person(s) is removed and receive immediate care from health professionals.

One key leader should be identified who oversees and leads the emergency action plan and has thorough knowledge of the protocols that need to be enacted. The charge should also be someone with direct access to your organization's leadership group (i.e., Board of Directors, Owner/Operator) to ensure top-down management of the plan. Secondly, it is imperative that records of plan execution and management is maintained on file. This ensures factual record keeping should reporting be required.

Plan Overview

Organization and Structure of the Plan

The main body of this COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan is organized in three sections, which outline the key roles and responsibilities of your soccer organization in each of the three (3) pandemic phases;

1. **Pre-pandemic Phase:** This is the critical stage for COVID-19 pandemic preparedness. The pre-pandemic phase is NOW, and planning efforts need to focus on Club/Academy education of the membership (i.e., volunteers, staff, coaches, parents, players, match officials) on Ontario Soccer and Canada Soccer's Return to Play Plan and Protocols. Please note that the Return to Play Protocols comply with the Province of Ontario emergency orders and health authority directives. In addition, coordination with facilities (especially if third-party) should be included as they may have additional plans & procedures in place.

2. **Positive Test Phase:** Confirmation of a COVID-19 positive test within your soccer organization will declare when it is time to activate your COVID-19 Action Plan. During this phase, the key goals will be to prevent further infections within your organization and minimize program disruption. This phase remains active until the infected party has been isolated and under the control of professional health authorities and there is no further threat to the health and safety of your soccer organization's participants.

3. Post-pandemic Phase: The post-pandemic period begins when the Provincial Health Officer declares that the COVID-19 pandemic is over. The primary focus of work at this time is to restore normal services, deactivate pandemic response activities, review the impact, and use the lessons learned to guide future emergency response planning.

Pre-Pandemic Phase:

1. Pre-Pandemic Activities Responsibility

Planning and Coordination

a.) Determine COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan (ERP) lead for soccer organization.

Responsibility: Board of Directors or Owner/Operator

b.) Create Emergency Response Plan for COVID-19 or add to existing ERP and include a section on pandemic influenza.

Responsibility: ERP Lead

c.) Complete Canada Soccer/Ontario Soccer's Risk Assessment On-line.

Responsibility: ERP Lead

d.) Incorporate Canada Soccer/Ontario Soccer's Return to Play protocols.

Responsibility: ERP Lead

e.) Educate all internal organizational leaders of ERP Procedures Manual.

Responsibility: ERP Lead

e.) Written communication plan flowchart if a positive test for COVID-19 in the soccer organization.

Responsibility: ERP Lead

f.) Verify Ontario Soccer, Province of Ontario and/or local Municipal government permissions for Return to Play implementation following Ontario Soccer Return to Play protocols of implementation.

Responsibility: ERP Lead

2. Positive Test Phase Responsibility

Confirmation of a COVID-19 positive test within your soccer organization

Communication System

Consistent with Federal and Provincial/Territorial privacy regulations, acts, laws, etc. coaches, staff, officials, and families of players should self-report to the single point of contact (SPOC), also known as the "ERP Lead" if:

a. they have symptoms of COVID-19, or

- b. a positive test for COVID-19 is recorded, or
- c. were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

Note: See ERP Communications Flow Chart and end of this section.

Advise Sick Individuals to Stay Home - Responsibility: ERP Lead

Sick coaches, staff members, officials, or players should not return until they are well enough based on Public Health Agency of Canada and Provincial Health Authority guidelines.

Isolate and/or Transport Those Who are Sick at Club/Academy Activities

Make sure that coaches, staff, officials, players, and families know that sick individuals should not attend a Club or Academy activity, and that they **Responsibility: ERP Lead**

should notify officials if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.

Coaches, staff, officials, and players with COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath) at any club activity must be immediately separated and isolated. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, contact their Family Physician, and follow Health Agency guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick. Individuals who have had close contact with a person who has symptoms should be separated and sent home as well. If symptoms develop, individuals and families should follow Health Agency guidelines for caring for oneself and others who are sick.

Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. That means having parent contact information readily available; parents within a safe, socially distanced but easily accessible waiting area; or if you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital. If calling an ambulance, please alert them that the person may have COVID- 19.

Clean and Disinfect Areas

Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area).

Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing them securely away from children.

Responsibility: ERP Lead

Notify Local Health Officials and Governing Bodies

Close Contacts

In accordance with Federal, Provincial and Territorial privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations, the SPOC should notify local

health officials, District, Provincial or Territorial Associations, club staff, officials, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while

maintaining confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

SPOC should work with local health officials to develop a reporting system (e.g., letter) to notify health officials and close contacts (logs and/or contact tracing information) of cases of COVID-19.

The Provincial and Territorial Health agencies and their Contact Tracing procedures will be responsible for advising those who have had close

contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 and determine whether someone should stay home and self monitor for symptoms. Members of the Club/Academy should continue to self-monitor for symptoms.

The SPOC must notify the Provincial or Territorial Association of any cases of COVID-19. A weekly reporting system should be instituted for SPOC to advise the Provincial or Territorial Association of any cases of COVID 19, suspected cases, and where athletes or staff have been refused admittance to any training session. Even if there are no suspected cases, a 'nil' report should be required.

Responsibility: ERP Lead

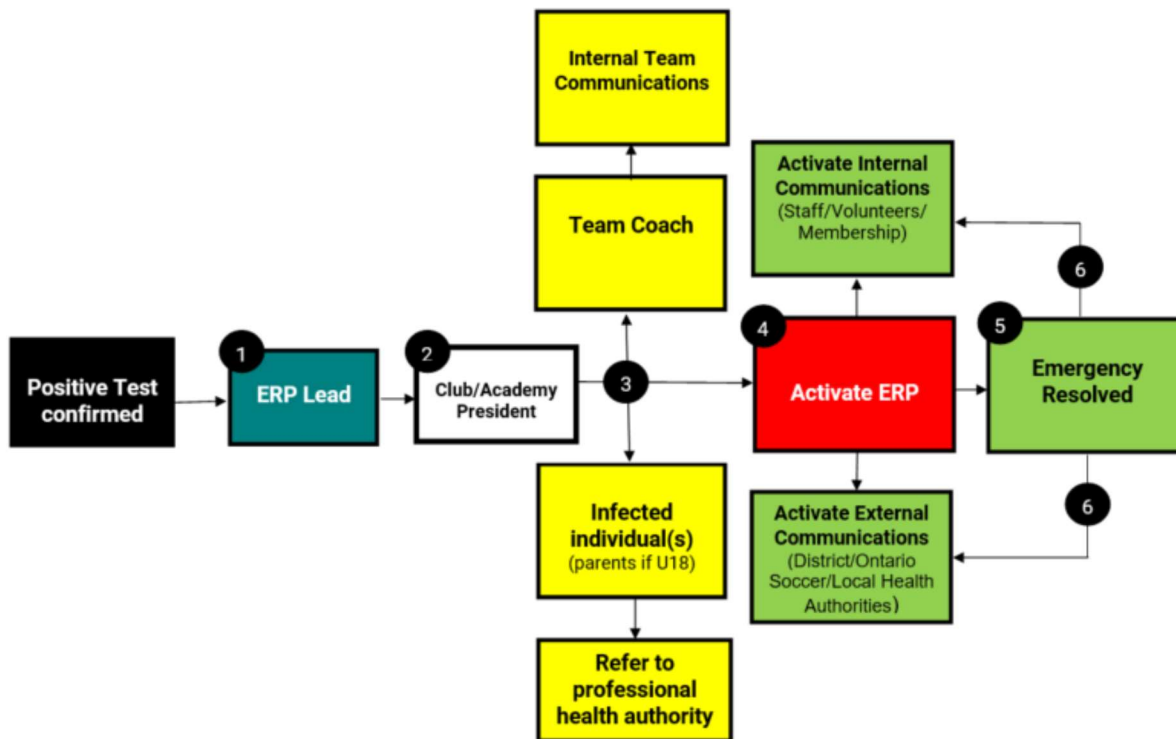
3. Post-pandemic Phase

Responsibility Action and Communications

- a. Confirm Provincial Health Officer has declared the COVID-19 pandemic is over.
Responsibility: ERP Lead
- b. Send official written notice to your membership (i.e., volunteers, staff, coaches, parents, players, match officials) that the pandemic is officially over, the province's state of emergency order has been lifted and soccer activities can resume its full operations. Note: During this phase, there may be specific sport protocols to follow from Canada Soccer/Ontario Soccer and/or the Provincial health authorities (i.e., implementation of Infection Control Policies and Procedures).
Responsibility: President
- c. Conduct a full review of your COVID-19 Return to Play Implementation Plan as well as your COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan. Include a list of recommendations for improvements.
Responsibility: ERP Lead
- d. Update your soccer organizations Emergency Response Plan for future use and have approved

Responsibility: ERP Lead in conjunction with Board of Directors or Owner/Operator

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (ERP) Communications Flow Chart



Legal Considerations

As stated previously in the Risk Management and Insurance section of this Guide, member organizations must note the risk and liability of Return to Play is at the local community level where implementation takes place. Ontario Soccer and each of their members/affiliated Clubs and Academies are independently operated. Therefore, affiliated organizations must be comfortable and prepared for the appropriate and reasonable steps that need to be taken in order to mitigate risks associated with approving and/or implementing any form of soccer programming under a Return to Play Plan.

Youth and Adult Participant Waivers are required for all participants registered with affiliated Clubs and Academies and/or Ontario Soccer. (Age of Majority is 18 years of age)

Contained within the Appendices section of this Guide and through the links attached, you will find;

1. Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk Agreement

This form is to be signed by the parent or guardian of participants under the age of majority.

<https://www.ontariosoccer.net/page/show/5787197-ontario-soccer-return-to-play-guide>

2. Release of liability, waiver of claims and indemnity agreement. This waiver is to be signed by participants of the age of majority and over.

<https://www.ontariosoccer.net/page/show/5787197-ontario-soccer-return-to-play-guide>

Ontario Soccer's Return to Play Campaign

Pitch in, Play ON! is a Return to Play marketing campaign designed by Ontario Soccer for its membership to help drive awareness and registration as Clubs, Academies, Districts Associations and Leagues transition back to Return to Play.

The goal is community engagement and renewed participation in (sanctioned) soccer at all levels.

Brand Elements:

Pitch in

- Double-meaning with pitch for the traditional 'soccer pitch', but also meaning to 'pitch in' and help bring soccer back to its feet.

Play ON!

- Common phrase in soccer spoken by the match official, meaning 'continue'.
- Dominant element in Play. Inspire. Unite. & Return to Play.
- Capital treatment and underline of the ON to signify Ontario, linking to Ontario Soccer.

Summary

In summary, the "Return to Play Protocols" included in this document represent multiple phases, and includes recommendations and guidelines directed at Ontario Soccer affiliated Clubs and Ontario Registered Academies participating in sanctioned soccer activities. When we have received clearance for return to play from both Canada Soccer and the Province of Ontario, the new reality for all of us will be that soccer will look different for a while. We will not be able to kick the game off as we have done in the past.

Our collective focus, during the Return to Play Three-Phase Plan must be centred on the health and safety of our participants.

Our multiple phase approach, with varying degrees of time in between phases, will ensure the highest level of safety for everyone involved in the game.

Ontario Soccer thanks all members, affiliated Clubs and Academies, and individuals across Ontario for their patience and for the work you are doing to support soccer and more importantly for your understanding as we navigate through this challenging time.

Of importance, if your organization does look to offer soccer activity in the short term, we ask that you are respectful and responsible in doing so. Organizations that do offer soccer activity and do not comply with these recommendations and guidelines may be subject to sanctioning.

On the following pages are appendices with more detailed information and sample technical sessions designed to work within the guidelines of this document. We encourage our soccer organizations to tailor to your needs as appropriate and share with each other to support soccer activity for your organizations.

Lastly, the choice to participate in soccer rests with the individual participant and/or their guardian. This is a very personal decision and must be made based on the trust and comfort they will have with your organization and the recommended safety protocols that are set in place and followed.

Best of Success.

Pitch in. Play ON!

Return to play Information Webinar.

In order to provide further support for membership, Ontario Soccer in collaboration with Canada Soccer will run Return to Play webinars to be conducted with Clubs and Academies. Participation is recommended and not mandatory.

The content will be a high-level review of the Stages and Phases of Return to Play, allotting 30 minutes for presentation and 30 minutes for follow up questions and discussion.

Further details when confirmed, will be