

COVID-19 Provincial Re-launch and Return to Play Update

Date: June 2, 2020

From: Lisa Hardy, Executive Director Skate Canada: Alberta-NWT/Nunavut

To our clubs, skating schools, coaches, officials, volunteers and our skaters, I want you to know that we miss you and are thankful for your continued engagement, resilience, resourcefulness and ability to adapt as we manage our way through these unprecedented times.

As we approach the beginning of the fourth month away from sport, we are all beginning to see more media attention on Return to Play. I want to assure you that our section is highly involved in these discussions and we have been advocating for *Return to Skating* in consultation with insurance providers, health and government authorities, our National Sports Organization (Skate Canada) as well as all other Alberta Provincial Sports Organizations and Skate Canada sections.

As all sports organizations progress on Return to Play across the country, we do so by working closely with different health authorities. Each province's approach may vary in timing, in sense of urgency and based on a (potentially different) variety of factors. Please know, we are passionate at wanting to facilitate *Return to Skating* as soon as possible and are doing everything we can to make that happen.

The following factors have been highly communicated, both in writing and in personal meetings, as we advocate on behalf of our skaters:

- Figure Skating is naturally physically distanced. That's an advantage as it's low-risk for contagion spread
- The extended break is taking a toll on the physical and mental well-being of our athletes
- The financial health of the clubs, skating schools and coaches, the backbone of our delivery of skating programs, is at risk
- We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of our participants, the skating community and society in general remains the utmost priority. This means trusting in the Chief Medical Officer and resulting provincial decisions on where and when activities and the opening of facilities can safely occur.

The Skate Canada: Alberta-NWT/Nunavut section has been actively been working on, and advocating for, an earlier relaunch of skating and the opening of low-risk facilities in the Province. In addition to this ongoing advocacy work, we submitted an **Early Re-launch** proposal to Alberta Health and the Province in anticipation of this week's assessment of recreation, sport and fitness activities.

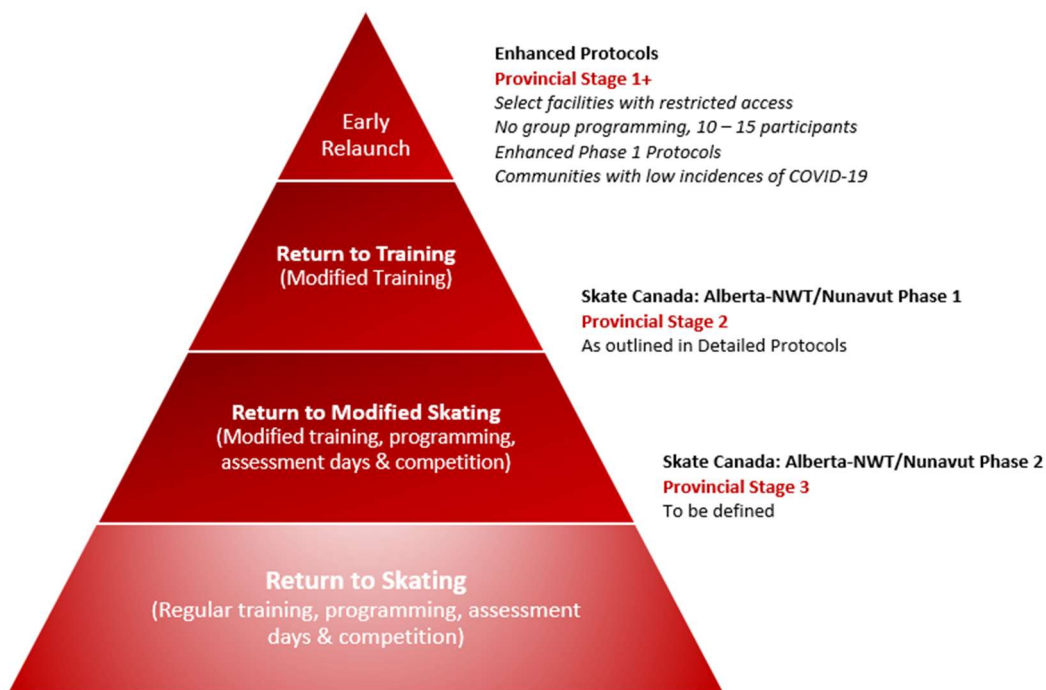
Return to Play:

I want to provide an update on the status of Return to Play for both indoor and outdoor skating-related activities.

As mentioned in our last update, when Alberta announced their [relaunch strategy](#) for the Province **all indoor sports were categorized in Stage 3 of the relaunch plan. Figure skating’s reliance on recreation centres and indoor arenas resulted in a broad-brush inclusion of our sport among others in Stage 3.** The province also stated, and has since demonstrated, that the timing of phases may vary by location or community depending on the level of risk and number of cases in an area, as opposed to a province wide re-opening. This means we may see facilities and clubs eligible to open in some municipalities, at a different rate than others, solely based on the decisions of the Alberta Health Authorities or by the municipality. Currently, Stage 2 of the Provincial Relaunch Strategy is scheduled for June 19, 2020.

With this in mind, we developed a 4-phased approach to Return to Skating based on mitigation of the perceived risks to allow movement through phases as needed. Below is an overview of the 4 phases and the [full proposal can be found on our website](#).

Skate Canada: Alberta / NWT-Nunavut Early Relaunch Overview



Included in the Early Relaunch Proposal were Club and Skating School Protocols for review and feedback from Alberta Health. Once their feedback is received and the final protocols are approved by the Board, we will then distribute a Toolkit to the membership that includes resources and templates to make implementation as easy as possible and to ensure clubs and skating schools are prepared and have their individual plans in place.

The process:

In creating these documents, several resources and experts were accessed. Including (but not limited to) an in-depth review of all Provincial Health guidelines, Alberta Return to Work protocols, Alberta Return to Outdoor Sport guidelines and other Alberta Provincial Sport Organizations documentation.



In addition, I have personally, been involved in numerous meetings that have included Alberta Health, the Province, other Ice-related organizations and other Provincial Sports Organizations and have gained much insight from these meetings and their output.

The Request for early relaunch was created under the guidance of a section advisory group however the content comes from a variety of sources and discussions with experts in the field of not-for-profit sport and aligned to fit within the Alberta Health Guidelines and Public Orders. I have participated in weekly meetings with other Alberta Provincial Sports Organization, in addition to Skate Canada Sections meeting and sharing information with each other, to align our protocols where possible. While all sections are working on their return to play strategy's, each is at various levels of approval dependent on the process their health authority and Province has determined.

I would like to thank the advisory group who provided invaluable expertise and input to these documents. The participants were Travis Hillier, Ravi Walia, Doug Schmierer, Catherine Co-Grant, Robyn Forsyth, Jennifer Boone, as well as staff members Holly Henderson, Kelly Havixbeck and myself.

Outdoor Activities:

We have also been receiving questions regarding what is permissible for outdoor training and activities. In our last update on May 11th we referenced the opening of greenspaces in Stage 1 of the Provincial Relaunch and the "lifting of the suspension of Skate Canada activities with limitations". Since then, the Province has released two Guidance documents.

[Guidance for Outdoor Recreation](#) released May 18th applies to spontaneous play, individual or non-organized recreation. As this document provides some very broad guidelines, we have seen individual municipalities interpret the information differently, which has created some confusion for sport organizations (local and provincial) as to what is allowed or not allowed. Open fields, playgrounds and courts were allowed to open; however, league play was not permitted. These complexities have since been clarified by the province.

[Guidance for Organized Outdoor Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation](#), was released on May 30th, and **is the guidance document that should be followed for any organized outdoor activities and training**. Clubs, Skating Schools, Coaches, and Participants should review and be familiar with these documents.

Attached is a checklist that the section is strongly recommending as minimum standards for coaches, clubs and skating schools to operate by for any outdoor activity. This has been developed to ensure compliance with the Provincial Guidelines and Public Health Orders as well as to align with the Section protocols currently under review.

Skate Canada: Alberta-NWT/Nunavut will continue to work on behalf of our membership to resume skating as soon as possible in the section and will continue to provide updates to the membership. We feel the work, meetings, and collaboration done by the section to date is being heard and we are seeing results. Dr Hinshaw's recent public comments regarding the assessment of individual sports and facilities and her openness to promote their scheduled relaunch has been very encouraging. We look forward to a decision at the Emergency Management Cabinet soon.

I will be hosting a town hall to answer questions once we have more definitive answers from Alberta Health or the Province regarding our Early Re-launch proposal, draft protocols or indoor facilities opening.

Sincerely,

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Skating Organized Outdoor Training and Activity Requirements

This checklist contains the minimum standards for skating outdoor activities. Please see [The Guidance for Outdoor Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation](#) for additional information and recommendations provided by the Province

- 1. A responsible person over 18 oversees the activity to ensure public health guidelines are adhered to
- 2. Training and Activities may not violate a public health order and may not violate any municipal guidelines or further restrictions they may have. Contact or check your local municipality for any additional restrictions that may be in place
- 3. Daily records of anyone running or participating in the program must be maintained that includes the names, and contact information for all coaches, participants, volunteers, and spectators. These records should be stored in a safe, secure location for six weeks and then disposed of in a manner that maintains the confidentiality of participants (shredding). A template has been provided.
- 4. Acknowledgment, Release, Indemnity and Assumption of Risk regarding COVID-19 form (waiver) is completed by each participant (including staff, skaters, coaches, choreographers, volunteers and spectators **Skate Canada is currently developing a waiver that can be used by clubs and skating schools**)
- 5. Minimum of 2-meter distance must be maintained at all times between all coaches, participants, and spectators
- 6. No shared equipment or aids are permitted
- 7. All participants must be verbally screened for symptoms of COVID-19 by the person overseeing the activity. A participant exhibiting any signs are not permitted to participate
- 8. Any participants with compromised immune systems are not permitted to participate at this time
- 9. Outdoor groups are limited to a maximum of 50 people, including coaches, participants and spectators. 2 meters of distancing between all individuals is required unless the participants are from the same household.
- 10. Transportation to and from the activity should be arranged so only members of the same household or cohort family share rides
- 11. Only guardians and/or families of a participant can spectate in a designated area. No public spectators are allowed
- 12. Ensure availability to handwashing, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer at the site or that participants carry their own
- 13. Participants must bring their own water from home; shared water bottles/jugs are not permitted
- 14. Only online or outdoor training or conditioning activities are permitted at this time
- 15. Outdoor training sessions should be scheduled with enough time between users to allow for any needed cleaning and disinfecting of the space and for one user group to vacate the premises before the next group arrives
- 16. Skating outdoor activities are permitted for training or conditioning only to align with the Provincial order that competition and league play is not permitted at this time.

Screening Checklist

If an individual answer **yes** to any of the questions, they **must not** be allowed to participate in the activity. Children and youth will need a parent to assist them to complete this screening tool.

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

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

