



CANADA
BASKETBALL



BACK TO BASKETBALL

RETURN TO OFFICIATING GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in almost all sport activities around the world being stopped or shuttered for a significant period. Terms like “physical distancing” have become part of our daily lexicon.

Athletes, coaches, and referees are all anxious to return to the sporting environment that many of us had come to take for granted. We have known only one view of what “basketball” looked like.

Sports organizations throughout the world have been studying and continue to consider how society can safely return to sport. Canadian sport organizations have been very engaged in the development of return to sport plans that allow for the safe resumption of physical activity. Local, provincial, national and international basketball organizations have been equally engaged in establishing protocols and procedures that will allow us all to return to the game we love.

Canada Basketball, in collaboration with Wheelchair Basketball Canada, has published ‘Back to Basketball’, a multi-phased guide to the safe resumption of basketball in Canada. This document is the first in a multi-versioned set of documents, intended for use by our Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSO) members, sport partners and the broader basketball community. [Click here](#) to access the latest version.

Early efforts have focused on ensuring that athletes can return safely to training. As we continue to progress through the phases of basketball resumption towards “Phase 5 - Return to Competition”, this Return to Officiating document will address the safe return of and requirements for referees participation in basketball games.

PTSOs have also published their own protocols for returning to the basketball court, which take into account the unique aspects and regulations currently in place in each province or region. Provinces, and perhaps regions, will all return to sport at different paces and at different times.

We encourage all referees to become familiar with the aforementioned guidelines, as well as those provided by provincial/territorial Public Health officials.

Requirements regarding the safe integration of referees must be in place prior to returning to basketball competition and physical distancing restrictions must be eased by provincial health authorities to allow for some body contact.

Upon returning to competition, featuring games between teams from different clubs or organizations, officials / referees can expect to find special protocols in place and a different environment.

This document provides guidance around how referees should educate themselves in preparation for a return to competition in a changed environment.



PREPARING FOR OFFICIATING

- Referees can expect to be asked to go through a “screening” process before entering a gym to ensure they have no symptoms of illness or pose a health risk to others by their participation.
- Referees must be prepared to complete and sign a daily COVID-19 attestation and agreement in which they will attest to their current and recent health conditions as these relate to COVID-19 and commit to respecting COVID-19 protocols put in place.
- Referees may be asked to provide personal information to allow for the completion of a contact tracing log. This may occur every time an official enters a new facility.
- Referees may be asked to complete and sign one or more “waivers” which waive their rights to make liability claims in relation to their participation in the event / game and which releases various parties from liability. These waivers may include event, facility, and other assumption of risk waivers.
- Referees are recommended to read each document carefully and ensure that they understand it before signing. As such, provincial and local officials’ associations and boards should seek to provide referees with all documentation that they will be asked to execute, in advance of arriving at a gym / facility. See below for additional information on waivers, releases, and liability.
- Bring your own towel, water bottle (filled at home), or other food/refreshments, in a clean, closed and marked container. Anticipate amenities, such as concessions, will not be initially open and that “no food in the gym” rules will be strictly enforced.
- Carry your own sanitization equipment, including hand sanitizer and wipes.
- Referees should not carpool or rideshare, but rather travel alone to games.
- Ensure you coordinate where you will meet your partner at the site.

At Home

- Do not leave home or agree to officiate if you are feeling unwell or have any signs of COVID-19 symptoms. Your assignor should be informed as soon as possible if you are experiencing any health issues.
- Ensure all your game equipment is clean and sanitized and that your complete uniform is freshly laundered. Never use equipment or wear a uniform that has not been sanitized or freshly laundered.
- Anticipate that many of the amenities that have normally been available, may not be. Prepare to dress at home, and arrive in your uniform, except the ability to change shoes.
- Shower at home before getting dressed for the game.
- Avoid wearing referee shoes, except on the court, and they need to be cleaned before and after each game.



ARRIVAL AT THE FACILITY

- Follow all on-site and facility protocols.
- Arrival time prior to the game may be shortened by provincial or local regulations. Please check with your local association in advance, however, anticipate that you will not be admitted to the facility until shortly before the game.
- We encourage all organizers to ensure referees are admitted at least 15 minutes before game time and team warm-ups should not start before referees are allowed into the facility.
- Prepare to complete the on-site screening that may include a series of questions about how you are feeling, whether you are experiencing any symptoms related to COVID-19, and potentially a temperature check.
- Come prepared with your own pen to complete or submit the waivers and daily attestation form.
- As dressing rooms may not be initially available, organizers must provide a safe, secure location where referees non-game equipment can be stored securely (shoes, jackets, phones, keys, etc.);
- However, if dressing rooms become available, ensure that physical distancing practices are followed or use them one official at a time. No visitors should enter the dressing room.
- Referees should reduce to a bare minimum, the amount of extra gear (beyond their uniform and whistle) that they take into a game;
- Respect all entry and physical distancing guidelines in place. These may vary on a facility to facility basis.
- No post-game evaluations should occur in the facility. Arrange for this to be done outside or elsewhere where the health risk can be controlled.
- Avoid unnecessary contact with other referees who may be in the same facility officiating. Avoid cross-contamination between courts.
- Greet your partner and others with smiles, nods, words of encouragement, but avoid handshakes, hugs, and any physical contact.



OFFICIATING THE GAME

- PTSOs or other organizations may wish to make modifications to the game for safety reasons. Any modifications (such as eliminating the jump ball) should be temporary and must be pre-cleared through the provincial or local officiating body. Please be prepared in advance for any updates.
- Elimination of the jump ball is recommended by the Canadian Basketball Officials Commission (CBOC). For example: One team (home/visitor) will be given the ball for a backcourt throw-in at the throw-in line to start the game. This will start the alternating possession sequence.
- Referees should not be asked to take on or agree to any condition, obligation or duty that is not reasonable or consistent with the referees role in the game or directly in the referees' control under the rules.
- Referees should not take on the responsibility of enforcing COVID-19 related protocols, or any circumstance that may expose the official to additional risk.
- Organizers should supply a minimum of two (2) balls that have been cleaned and sanitized before the game. The balls are not to be used in the players warm-up or in intervals of play. The balls are to be available at the score table 10 minutes prior to game time and clearly marked 1 and 2.
- In addition, hydroalcoholic gel / hand sanitizer should be made available at the score table for use by referees and table officials, as required.
- Organizers are responsible to ensure table officials, who are both trained for basketball and COVID-19 matters, are available and at the table 10 minutes prior to game time. They should be properly spaced and have designated roles.
- At each time-out or interval of play (quarter time and halftime), the ball in-play should be exchanged for the other ball. A designated table official should clean and sanitize the ball to have it ready to be switched back in at the next time-out or interval of play. The game organizer should supply the cleaning and sanitizing tools for the balls.
- Referees can make small adjustments to mechanics and procedures in an effort to reduce the number of whistles in the game, that would typically be blown in close proximity to players such as:
 - » eliminate the whistle at the bench to activate teams out of a time-out
 - » no whistle to start the game, after quarter breaks or a time-out;
 - » no whistle before a frontcourt end line throw-in;
 - » eliminate extraneous whistles; and
 - » use the bounce pass mechanic, from 1-3 metres, for all throw-ins
- In addition, referees are encouraged to use their voices instead of the whistle to communicate in a dead ball period.
- However, should you need to use your whistle, keep it sharp, clear, and crisp but not long.
Note: CBOC will test electronic whistles for future use and will provide additional guidance after the testing is complete.
- Refrain from shaking hands, fist bumps and high-fives with players, coaches, table officials and others.
- When appropriate, practice physical distancing (i.e. dead balls, pre-game, timeouts, and intervals of play.)
- Refrain from unnecessary touching of the face, eyes, nose, and mouth with the hands. Practice moving the whistle into your mouth and not touching your face.
- Avoid unnecessary contact with others not directly involved in the game, including spectators and other referees leaving the court before you or arriving after you.
- Referees must clean their hands with hydroalcoholic gel / hand sanitizer prior to the beginning of the game, at halftime and after the game, before exiting the facility. Alternatively, if locker room facilities are available, they can wash their hands for at least 20-30 seconds with warm water and soap.
- Referees should strongly consider bringing their own hydroalcoholic gel / hand sanitizer and having it available at the bench for breaks in the game, including quarter time.
- Ensure you know who will be responsible to address infractions of health and safety protocols by players, coaches, fans and event organizers during the game and use that person when necessary.
- Have fun! We should all be excited to get out on the floor and referee.

AFTER THE GAME

- Referees should clean their hands with hydroalcoholic gel / hand sanitizer or wash their hands for at least 20-30 seconds with warm water and soap.
- Leave the facility promptly, take any possessions and garbage you create with you.
- Respect physical distancing guidelines after the game.
- Thank your partner and exit from the parking lot as soon as possible.
- Shower at home immediately after the game. Even if a locker room is available, avoid using public facilities and go home and shower
- Carry a separate 'laundry bag' to put any clothing or other equipment in that you used while on site.
- Ensure your whistle is cleaned and sanitized as soon as possible after the game and avoid carrying it in a manner that it may cross-infect or be cross-infected by other possessions. Following the completion of the game, the whistle should be placed in a clean container and washed at home.
- Ensure your officiating gear is cleaned, sanitized, laundered and ready for your next assignment. Do this soon after your arrival home to prevent any germs from festering in your gear.



ROLE OF PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATIONS / BOARDS

- Ensure members understand all requirements, directions, conditions, obligations, and risks related to national and provincial Return to Play protocols.
- Provide samples of waivers and attestations that referees can be expected to sign, prior to beginning the assigning process, so that referees have time to review and seek advice, if necessary.
- Have your educator or an official with the appropriate skills and training develop a graduated training / fitness plan for referees to engage in for at least two weeks before returning to the court.
- Ensure the assignor understands and can communicate to referees any special site conditions related to a game assignment, including (but not limited to): rule adjustments, access to dressing rooms, arrival timing, conditions etc.
- Be prepared to speak to and advocate on behalf of the referees regarding waivers, releases, and indemnities.
- Track all assignments carefully, keeping a complete and accurate log of all assignments.
- No referees should be penalized, sanctioned or down-graded for choosing not to officiate in the COVID-19 environment, or for restricting when and where they are willing to officiate.
- Work with game hosts and organizers to ensure releases are reasonable and seek to ensure that referees are either released from liability related to COVID-19 or indemnified for their participation.
- Work with your PTSO or insurer to have a complete understanding of the insurance conditions that referees will be officiating under.



WAIVERS, RELEASES AND LIABILITY

As noted above, referees may be asked to sign one or more waivers before officiating. Referees should seek guidance from their provincial and local associations / boards and consider independent legal advice before signing any document if the provincial or local association / board has not sought and provided that advice.

Referees should understand that all participants in the game will be asked to complete the same regime of daily attestations, contact tracing logs and waivers. Referees should not expect to be treated differently in this regard and will need to agree to certain conditions before officiating. Read all documents carefully before signing.

Referees also need to know clearly what the status is of their insurance coverage. Often provided by the PTSO or the Provincial Officials Association, this insurance may or may not be in place and even if in place will likely have exceptions for COVID-19 related matters.

Many of the waivers have been prepared as boilerplate documents to be used by sport organizations nationally. They should have been modified to fit the circumstance, but may not have been.

Referees should work with their provincial and locals officials associations / boards to ensure the waivers and releases are appropriate for the circumstances.

The Canadian Basketball Officials Commission is available to work with provincial and local officials associations / boards to ensure that officials / referees (along with other groups) are released from liability, or in the alternative that the organizer provides a release or indemnity for referees.



LEGAL DISCLAIMER

The information included in this guide is current for the time of publishing and is aligned with the current recommendations from national and international bodies, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and Public Health Canada. However, recommendations may change depending on local, provincial, national and global COVID-19 situation reports; local resources should also be consulted for up to date information. Where anything in this guide conflicts with applicable law and recommendations from local public health authorities, members must comply with applicable law and that public health advice and adapt their approach.

As new information is made available, efforts will be made to update and revise this document, and to circulate revisions to members. The information and recommendations outlined within this guide should be used to develop individual plans that evaluate the unique risks that each officiating environment presents. This document is to supplement and not replace the information outlined by public health authorities.

Individuals, in consultation with a medical professional, are also required to assess and evaluate their own personal risks.



APPENDIX A: FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COVID-19 HEALTH LINKS

[CANADA](#)

[ALBERTA](#)

[BRITISH COLUMBIA](#)

[MANITOBA](#)

[NEW BRUNSWICK](#)

[NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR](#)

[NORTHWEST TERRITORIES](#)

[NOVA SCOTIA](#)

[NUNAVUT](#)

[ONTARIO](#)

[PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND](#)

[QUEBEC](#)

[SASKATCHEWAN](#)

[YUKON](#)

APPENDIX B: PROVINCIAL/ TERRITORIAL SPORT ORGANIZATION (PTSO) RETURN TO SPORT GUIDELINES

[ALBERTA BASKETBALL](#)

[BASKETBALL BC](#)

[BASKETBALL MANITOBA](#)

[BASKETBALL NEW BRUNSWICK](#)

[NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION](#)

[BASKETBALL NORTHWEST TERRITORIES](#)

[BASKETBALL NOVA SCOTIA](#)

[ONTARIO BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION](#)

[BASKETBALL PEI](#)

[BASKETBALL QUEBEC](#)

[BASKETBALL SASKATCHEWAN](#)

[BASKETBALL YUKON](#)

APPENDIX C: ABOUT CORONAVIRUSES AND COVID-19

If you need information on COVID-19, specific to your province, refer to these [resources pages](#).

- If you have additional questions that are not answered on the [Government of Canada website](#):
 - » Call: 1-833-784-4397 (interpretation services are available in multiple languages)
 - » Email: phac.covid19.aspc@canada.ca
 - » App: [Canada COVID-19 Support \(Health Canada\)](#)

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. COVID-19 is now a pandemic affecting many countries globally.

How Is It Spread?

Coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs and are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets when you cough or sneeze
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands

These viruses are not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water. Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread is efficient when there is close contact.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Those who are infected with COVID-19 may vary from very mild to more serious and have little to no symptoms. You may not know you have symptoms of COVID-19 because they are similar to a cold or flu.

Symptoms have included:

- cough
- fever
- difficulty breathing
- pneumonia in both lungs

Experienced any of these symptoms? Use the [COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool](#).

In severe cases, infection can lead to death.

Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. This is the longest known incubation period for this disease.

Recent evidence indicates that the virus can be transmitted to others from someone who is infected but not showing symptoms. This includes people who:

- have not yet developed symptoms (pre-symptomatic)
- never develop symptoms (asymptomatic)

While experts know that these kinds of transmissions are happening among those in close contact or in close physical settings, it is not known to what extent. This means it is extremely important to follow the proven [preventative measures](#).

If You Have Symptoms of COVID-19:

- stay home (isolate) to avoid spreading it to others
- if you live with others, stay in a separate room or keep a 2-metre distance
- call ahead before you visit a health care professional or call your local public health authority
- tell them your symptoms and follow their instructions
- seek a COVID-19 test safely
- if you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and tell them your symptoms

Difference Between Quarantine (self-isolate) and Isolate

There is a difference between advice to [quarantine](#) (self-isolate) and advice to [isolate](#). These measures are in place to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

Quarantine (self-isolate)

Quarantine for 14 days if you have no symptoms and any of the following apply:

- you are returning from travel outside of Canada (mandatory quarantine)
- you had close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19
- you have been told by the public health authority that you may have been exposed and need to quarantine

Isolate

You must isolate if any of the following apply:

- you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or are waiting to hear the results of a lab test for COVID-19
- you have symptoms of COVID-19, even if mild
- you have been in contact with a suspected, probable or confirmed case of COVID-19
- you have been told by public health that you may have been exposed to COVID-19
- you have returned from travel outside Canada within the last 14 days; and/or
- you have returned from another province within Canada (i.e. interprovincial travel) with symptoms of COVID-19.

Diagnosing Coronavirus

Coronavirus infections are diagnosed by a health care provider based on symptoms and are confirmed through laboratory tests.

Preventive Measures for COVID-19 Disease

Canadians should continue to think ahead about the actions that they can take to stay healthy and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Canada. This includes staying at home as much as possible and [being prepared](#) in case you or a family member becomes ill. Everyone should be practicing physical (social) distancing. Even if you do not have symptoms of COVID-19, you could become infected by others.

As we continue to see transmission of the virus within different communities, we know that everyone must take precautions, even those who have not travelled outside of Canada.

In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within communities and across the country, all Canadians are advised to:

- practice physical (social) distancing at all times

- » avoiding crowded places and non-essential gatherings
- » avoiding common greetings, such as handshakes
- » limiting contact with people at higher risk like older adults and those in poor health
- » keeping a distance of at least 2 arms-length (approximately 2 metres) from others
- stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others
- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are sick
- when coughing or sneezing:
 - » cover your mouth and nose with your arm or tissues to reduce the spread of germs
 - » immediately dispose of any tissues you have used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as toys, electronic devices and doorknobs
- wear a non-medical mask or face covering (i.e. constructed to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops) to protect the people and surfaces around you

Personal Hygiene

Proper hygiene can help reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection to others:

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the washroom and when preparing food
- use alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) if soap and water are not available
- when coughing or sneezing:
 - » cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand
 - » dispose of any tissues you have used as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash your hands afterwards
 - » avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands



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