





ONTARIO
FENCING
ASSOCIATION

OFA COVID-19 RETURN TO COMPETITION PROTOCOL



PREAMBLE

The purpose of this protocol is to support the competition committee when preparing for OFA-sanctioned fencing events by establishing safety measures to protect the health of all participants to the greatest extent practical. This protocol is to be used by the competition committee, or program coordinators, in conjunction with the [R-CAT](#) checklist tool ([OTP Resource Link](#)) in order to help prepare for the event; however, it is the organizer's responsibility to ensure they are in compliance with both the local public health authorities and the law at the location of the event. This is not a legal document.

The protocol is approved by the OFA board of directors, and must be strictly adhered to by all participants and attendees taking part in the event. Furthermore, the protocol must be implemented in conjunction with all sanitary requirements as prescribed by the Ontario public health authorities. This protocol was created with consideration of the [FIE outline of risk-mitigation requirements for national fencing federations and competition organizers in the context of COVID-19](#) that was published in February, 2021. This protocol is a live document and [the OFA reserves the right to update this guideline at its discretion.](#)

Fencing is a combat (non-contact) sport *where participants are intermittently within 1m (or closer) distance of each other.* In addition, fencers and other participants interact in close proximity with officials, trainers and coaches. Thus, rigorous implementation of all measures included in this protocol is required as a condition to safely participate in any OFA sanctioned events.

Own The Podium Resource Link: <https://www.ownthepodium.org/en-CA/Resources/COVID-19-Resources>

FIE outline of risk-mitigation requirements for national fencing federations and competition organizers in the context of COVID-19:
https://static.fie.org/uploads/25/125088-FIE_outline_risk-mitig_Covid-19%20ang%20-upd%2026%20feb%202021.pdf



ALL PARTICIPANTS & ATTENDEES

All participants and attendees taking part in this event (competition/clinic/camp), including but not limited to athletes, parents, coaches, officials, medical staff, must undertake and recognize the following procedures prior to entry:

- Read and respect the OFA COVID-19 Return to Competition Protocol
- Sign the COVID-19 Statement of [Informed Consent and Liability Waiver](#) (Appendix A)
- Complete and submit the [Screening Questionnaire](#) (Appendix B) every day prior to entry into the venue.
- Event host organizers must keep a record of participants and attendee at the event for contact tracing purposes, and should share the full list with the OFA immediately at the conclusion of the event.
- Participants who fail the screening questionnaire, and/or are experiencing and displaying any COVID-19 symptoms may not enter the venue.
- **All participants and attendees must, upon arrival at the event venue, present proof of having received the full series of an accepted COVID-19 Vaccine or a combination of Government of Canada-approved vaccines.**
 - The last dose of vaccine must have been received at least 14 days prior to the event.
 - Acceptable forms of proof of vaccination include: electronic or printed government issued receipts for a full series of vaccines or a government issued “vaccine passport” which indicates that the bearer is fully vaccinated.
 - Individuals who cannot receive the vaccine due to medical exemptions will be permitted entry with a doctor’s note.
 - To access your vaccination status in Ontario, visit the [Ontario COVID-19 vaccination service page](#), and enter your information.
- Youth events should refer to the [Youth Event section](#) for additional guidelines
- Failure to provide either documentation will result in a denial of entry into the venue and participation in the event.

General Sanitary Measures for All Participants & Attendees

- All participants and attendees (athlete, volunteer, official, food handler etc.) should proactively and regularly check their health status (including taking their own temperature and/or watching for any symptoms). It is strongly recommended to consult your healthcare practitioner/family physician if you notice any of the following symptoms as they may be a sign of infection:
 - abnormal fatigue
 - loss of taste and smell
 - chest pain
 - rash
 - sore throat



- headache
 - runny nose
 - diarrhea
 - fleeting fever
 - dry cough
 - muscle pain
- If you feel ill while at the venue, notify the event organizer and/or head official immediately; you will be asked to leave the venue immediately. **If you feel ill before coming to the venue, do not come to the venue.**
 - All participants and attendees must notify the event organizer in the event they test positive for COVID-19 during or within 14 days following the event.
 - Participants and attendees must comply with any additional measure put forward by local regulations (e.g. gathering size limits, travel restrictions and quarantine protocols).
 - Non-compliant participants will be escorted out of the venue immediately and barred from re-entry for the duration of the event.
 - Participants who are removed from the facility due to medical concerns will be instructed to contact their local Public Health Unit and/or their personal Healthcare Provider.

Physical Distancing

- All attendees and participants must maintain a physical distance of at least 2 meters from others whenever possible.
- Exceptions for physical distancing are made for athletes during a bout, during warm-up, and for those individuals who must approach an athlete within a 2 metre distance as required by the nature of the fencing rules and/or their official duties at the event.
 - In such cases, officials, trainers, medical staff, coaches as well as others must wear a facemask.

Hand Washing

- Hand washing frequently and [properly](#) reduces the transmission of virus between individuals and their surrounding environment.
- Sanitizing or washing stations must be placed at all entrances to the venue to allow every individual entering or reentering the venue to wash and/or sanitize their hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains a minimum of 70% alcohol.



- Do not touch your eyes, mouth or nose without first washing/sanitizing your hands. Always wash or sanitize your hands after touching your face or your mask.

Face Masks

- Face masks must be worn at all times indoors
 - Athletes/participants/spectators are responsible for supplying their own masks. It is the responsibility of participants to make sure that they have an adequate supply of masks to last the entire day.
 - Only athletes who are actively competing, or athletes and coaches who are warming up, may be exempt from wearing masks
 - All other participants, as well as athletes and coaches not actively warming up/competing, must wear masks at all times indoors.
- Masks must be changed when wet/soiled
- Refer to the [Government of Canada page for more information on proper donning and doffing of masks](#).
- Face masks must be worn at all times by official personnel and attendees. Physical distancing between individuals must be increased (more than 2m) when eating or drinking, or during any other activity that requires the removal of the face mask.
- Only appropriate multi-layer masks meant to prevent the spread of COVID-19 will be accepted (e.g., no masks with a one-way valve, no scarves, bandanas, or gaiters)
 - For more information and guidelines on non-medical face masks, refer to the [Government of Canada About COVID-19 non-medical face coverings](#) page, or the [CDC Guidance for Wearing Masks](#).

Food/Drinks/Personal Equipment

- Commercially packaged items are permissible for sale.
- No sharing of food is permissible outside of the family unit.
- Sanitize hands before and after eating. Immediately dispose of personal garbage from food, food containers, napkins, beverage bottles, etc. in designated garbage containers.
- Participants must bring their own bottle of water and must not share it with anyone.



Contact Tracing

- It is required that contact tracing information (i.e., email address/phone numbers, etc) will be collected by the event host(s) for all attendees and participants.
- Should an individual in the venue be diagnosed with a COVID-19 infection within 14 days following the event, the above information will be shared as needed with local public health units for contact tracing purposes.
- This information will not be disclosed to any other third-parties, with the sole exception of public health authorities.
- It is considered a moral obligation for any participant who tests positive within 14 days following the event to notify the event organisers.
- No personal information will be shared with other participants if a positive COVID-19 test result is reported to the OFA.

Specific Rules and Practices Impacted For All Attendees

Curated from the [FIE outline of risk mitigation requirements](#)

- Rushing a fencer on the piste or after the fencer leaves the piste is suspended.
- Congratulatory hugging, kissing or handshakes are suspended until further notice.

The following documents provide further guidelines specific to each participant group and for event organizers. Please follow those guidelines specific to your role and position/location, in addition to all guidelines provided above.

<u>Participant Groups</u>	<u>Planning and Organizing</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Athletes and Coaches</u> <u>Spectators</u> <u>Referees</u> <u>Medical Staff</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Host Organizers</u> <u>Weapon Control Area</u> <u>DT Area</u> <u>Event Layout</u> <u>Award Ceremonies</u> <u>Accommodation and Local Transportation</u> <u>Youth Events</u>



PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Athletes and Coaches

- **Face masks must be worn at all times indoors**
 - Only athletes who are actively competing, or athletes and coaches who are warming up, may be exempt from wearing masks
 - Athletes and coaches not actively warming up/competing must wear masks at all times indoors.
- Athletes should bring enough clean face towels (multiples if required) to wipe off excess sweat . Do not use bare hands, gloves, or sleeves to wipe sweat away.
- Personal equipment, including towels, should be kept within equipment bags, and not left out on shared furniture such as chairs and tables.

New Fencing Rules

(Curated from the [FIE outline of risk mitigation requirements](#))

- Fencers' handshake at the end of bouts is replaced with a salute or blade touch.
- Video consulting procedure is adapted to maintain physical distance, where feasible.
- Sharing of equipment between individuals is not allowed.
- Screaming after a fencing hit is scored is suspended
- During rest periods, all individuals in the fencing piste area must maintain a distance of at least two meters from each other.
 - Coaches are allowed to come within 2 meters of the athlete if necessary. However, coaches must wear a facemask at all times.
- Team events: The two team captains will step on the strip and "salute" each other with their weapons from each side of their on-guard line on the strip, before and after the match.
- No rushing: The practice of rushing the victorious fencer on the strip or after the fencer leaves the strip is suspended until further notice.

Spectators

- Spectators may be permitted in accordance with local public health regulations, in addition to facility rules. Event host organizers should defer to their local public health/government regulations. The number of people in the venue including spectators may not exceed the maximum number of people allowed in the facility.



- Parents of minors, guardians, or other athletes that require assistance are permitted in the venue within compliance to local public health/government regulations, however a limit of one parent/guardian/assistant per athlete is suggested.
- All spectators must wear facemasks at all times in the venue and maintain a physical distance of 2 metres, as well as any other regulations set out by the venue and local health authorities.

Referees

- Referees must use hand-disinfectant before and after each bout.
- Referees should, where possible/feasible, restrict or minimize involvement in multiple events throughout the tournament to minimize any mixing or cross-contamination between athlete cohorts.
- Where possible/feasible, each referee should be assigned an individual set of equipment - clipboards, pen/pencil, weight/shim, that will be used by the assigned referee.
- Referees will check and test weapons at the start of the bout, as well as any time an athlete requests a weapon test to annul a touch during the bout.
- Referees may opt to wear a face shield in addition to face masks at other times as well, as they are more likely to interact with other individuals (athletes, coaches, etc.) within 2 meters.
- Referees must inform all athletes about relevant limitations/restrictions, including but not limited to the following suspended actions:
 - shaking hands
 - fist bumps
 - Hugging
 - shouting after touch
 - exchange of equipment, including masks and gloves

Medical Staff

- In case of injury only medical staff of the event and their team members can approach the injured fencer and they must wear the appropriate PPE, including the following at a minimum:
 - facemasks
 - face shields/visor/goggles
- Any participants reporting or displaying symptoms or signs consistent with COVID-19 must notify the host organizer and/or head official, and immediately leave the vicinity along with any members of their household who are present at the venue.



PLANNING & ORGANIZATION

Host Organizers

- When possible and feasible, host organizers should endeavour to restrict tournament scheduling to avoid cross-over between event participants:
 - Single-weapon event within a single venue in a single day, as much as feasibly possible.
 - Spread out events across multiple venues, each with exclusive staff and officials, as much as feasibly possible.
 - Restrict athlete entry to single events to minimize cross-contamination between event participation cohorts, as much as feasibly possible.
 - Restrict officials to one single event per day/tournament, as much as feasibly possible.
- Sufficient approved alcohol-based gel/liquid dispensers and/or tissues for sanitizing must be provided.
 - dispensers/tissues must be placed in all areas throughout the venue to be provided for all participants during the event for hand sanitization, including but not limited to:
 - Entrance areas
 - Referees room
 - DT area
 - Weapon control area
 - Each piste
 - Changing rooms
 - Washrooms
 - approved disinfectant cleaner for disinfection of, as well as hand sanitizer for all individuals working in high-traffic venue areas, including but not limited to the following, in sufficient quantities to regularly sanitize high-contact equipment and surfaces:
 - DT area
 - Armoury and/or weapon control station
 - Medical booth
 - Officials room
 - Scoring machine table
- The host organizers must take steps to avoid the creation of bottlenecks in the venue.
 - At all areas of gatherings (screening, registration, weapon check, etc.), clear markings must be placed on the floor to indicate proper physical distance maintenance.



- Volunteer staff must enforce this distance to all participants entering the venue as well as in areas of gathering
 - Chairs are to be situated and maintained at appropriate physical distance.
- Where possible, only allow fencers, parents, coaches, officials, and staff relevant to their respective events inside the venue space, within compliance with local health unit and venue regulations.
 - Check-ins should be located outside of the venue to ensure that all health information is collected and recorded, and health checks passed prior to venue entry
 - Upon check-in, organizers should record athletes as well as supporter(s) (coach/parent) for each athlete as paired individuals for crowd management and contact tracing purposes
 - If athletes, parents, coaches, officials, and other staff are not participating in an event for that day, they should refrain from entering the venue.
 - Participants in each event are to arrive no more than **90 minutes** prior to the close of registration for their event.
 - Participants in each event are also to leave the venue no longer than **60 minutes** after elimination, or the completion of the event, whichever comes first.
- Water fountains should **not** be used for drinking directly from, but only used for filling up personal water bottles.
- Catered food provided for officials is permissible, provided that:
 - Food items are individually wrapped/package
 - There is a space large enough to accommodate officials and staff to eat/drink seated at least 2 meters apart, and that all officials and staff be able to eat/break within a reasonable time frame
- Equipment vendors, where permitted, may present their products.
- When possible, physical barriers (i.e. plexiglass) should be erected between staff in DT, armoury, medical, and official areas.

Weapon Control Area

- Area for the weapon and equipment control must be large enough to allow fencers to keep 2 meter physical distance.
 - These distances must be clearly marked on the floor in the waiting area.
- It is recommended to install a light plexiglass shield between the controllers and athletes. Alternatively, barriers must be applied to keep a 2 meter physical distance wherever athletes interact with controllers.



- It is recommended to reduce bottlenecks in the weapon control area and minimize the number of fencers in the area (e.g. providing specific weapon control times by event/check-in time/alphabet/club).
- Controllers must sanitize their hands and workstation before and after handling each individual athlete's equipment, using disinfectant or sanitizer provided by the host organizer.

DT Area

- Each member of the DT must have an allocated chair at the physical distance of 2 meters.
- All consultations in the DT area must be at the physical distance of 2 meters and, where possible, separated by a plexiglass shield.
- It is recommended to, at a minimum, install a light plexiglass shield on the front side of the DT desk. Alternatively, a barrier must be applied to keep 2 meter physical distance wherever an individual interacts with the DT

Event Layout

- Distance between strips and their position, as well as the position of the scoring tables and apparatus must always accommodate the required physical distance of 2 metres between all participants.
- The referee's areas must be wide enough and positioned so that the referees can always maintain the required physical distance of 2 meters, as much as feasibly possible.
- Participants in pool fencing should be seated, unless fencing or warming up. The distance between the seats must be 2 meters
- During the bouts, fencers should be allowed contact only with their coaches/parents/guardians.
- In team events, the team area must be large enough to maintain a 2 meter distance between each team member and coach
- In team events, fencers must keep a recommended 2 meter distance at all stages of the event (presentation, support, celebration etc.).

Awards Ceremonies

- During the presentation of the fencers on the piste, a minimum 2 meter physical distance must be kept.
- Medal ceremonies must be organized so the minimum 2 meter physical distance is maintained at all times.



- Medals are to be presented to the fencers on a cushion or tray (fencers to take medals by themselves), or in a way that would completely limit physical touch between individuals (e.g. placing medals on podiums prior to the ceremony).
- No handshaking is allowed
- For taking photos, a minimum 2 meter physical distance must be kept between all individuals.
- Individuals not directly involved in the medal ceremony should not congregate in this area

Accommodation & Local Transportation

- Accommodation: When possible, use hotels within a walking distance from the venue in order to avoid transportation. Liaise with the selected hotels to ensure that proper sanitization of the rooms and other premises has been conducted.
- Internal transport: Plan and organize enough transport vehicles (cars and busses) to ensure the physical distance. All transport means must be regularly sanitized and equipped with hand sanitizing sprays.

YOUTH EVENTS

Rules and protocol

- All events (competitions, clinics, camps) that include participants who have no access to vaccinations (currently youths <12 years of age) will not require proof of vaccination or negative COVID test
 - However, all athletes must wear masks **at all times** except when eating or drinking.
 - This includes during physical training and bouts
- All [vaccine protocol requirements](#) apply to non-athletes (parents/guardians/coaches/staff/volunteers).
 - All non-athletes must wear masks except during physical training, bouts, eating and drinking.
- All sanitary measures, physical distancing, hand washing, eating etiquette, contact tracing, and new fencing rules apply.
- All competition planning and organization protocols also apply should a camp/clinic include a competition component