



OFA COVID-19 RETURN TO COMPETITION PROTOCOL

Version 6 - May 2022



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, [and their latest info letter in April 2022](#). 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>



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](#)
- Complete and submit the [Screening Questionnaire](#) every day prior to entry into the venue.
- Participants who fail the screening questionnaire, and/or are experiencing and displaying any COVID-19 symptoms, or of any other infectious illness, may not enter the venue.

General Sanitary Measures for All Participants & Attendees

- It is everyone's responsibility to adhere to organizer, venue, local and provincial health mandates, and follow the recommendations in this protocol to ensure that events proceed in a safe and effective manner.
- 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](#):
 - muscle pain
 - new or worsening cough
 - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - temperature equal to or more than 38°C
 - feeling feverish
 - chills
 - fatigue or weakness
 - muscle or body aches
 - new loss of smell or taste
 - headache
 - abdominal pain, diarrhea and vomiting
 - feeling very unwell



- 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.**
- 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 personal Healthcare Provider as required.

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 in the venue, 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.
 - Clubs reserve the right to implement stricter measures such as the wearing of face masks during active fencing.
- When eating, drinking, or during other activities that require removal of the face mask, physical distancing of more than 2m must be practiced.
- 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.
- 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

- Participants must bring their own bottle of water and must not share it with anyone.

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>
Athletes and Coaches Spectators Referees Medical Staff	Host Organizers Weapon Control Area DT Area Event Layout Award Ceremonies Accommodation and Local Transportation

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.



- Personal equipment, including towels, should be kept within equipment bags, and not left out on shared furniture such as chairs and tables.

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.
- 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.

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.
- All spectators must wear facemasks at all times in the venue

Referees

- 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

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 a facemask, and any other PPE appropriate to the situation.



- 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

- 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.
 - 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.
- Equipment vendors, where permitted, may present their products.

Weapon Control Area

- 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).