



Recommended Return to Play Framework for the Sport of Lawn Bowling in Alberta

with appreciation to Bowls Canada Boulingrin
for preparing the protocols



PHASE 1

Introduction

During this time of return to play from complete shutdown, Bowls Canada recommends a phased in approach to Return to Play and Bowls Alberta has adopted this approach for all their members clubs. This approach ensures that clubs can assess their readiness to fully implement local health authority requirements.

Lawn Bowl Return to Play Phases

Phase 1 – training and practice only

Phase 2 – modified local games

Phase 3 – intra club games

Phase 4 -- regional/provincial competition

Disclaimer

Bowls Canada and Bowls Alberta are not experts on pandemics and therefore all Federal, Provincial, and local Government and Public Health Authority information, guidelines and directives supersede this information. We have created this set of guidelines to inform the bowls community as to how Bowls Canada and Bowls Alberta are responding to Covid-19 and to provide recommendations as to what we believe is the best course of action for our Alberta lawn bowls clubs.

Phase 1 Readiness

This document contains a series of recommendations for how we might 'reboot' lawn bowling activity during the first phase of returning to play in conjunction with phase one of reopening our province. It is essential that any and all decisions regarding the timing and protocol for a resumption of Bowls activity *must* adhere to Federal, Provincial and Local Public Health Authorities. To determine readiness for Phase 1 return to play implementation, the following steps are recommended.

1. Clubs **MUST** first contact their Provincial Bowls Associations before implementing Phase 1 of the Return to Play protocols or before moving on to the next phase of Return to Play. Failure to do so may result in clubs unknowingly implementing protocols that are

in breach of provincial government directives. Provincial Associations are working closely with their Government representatives on what standards are required for sport and recreation facilities.

2. Clubs must also confirm with their insurance providers that they are covered for this phase of Return to Play protocols.
3. Identify the stage of physical distancing relaxation approved by local public health authorities and confirm that the club is able to implement the required standards.

Only once a club has confirmed their readiness to implement Phase 1, should they proceed with development of a specific Return to Play protocol for their club based on the number of greens at their club and based on the uniqueness of their clubhouses. The following are recommendations on how bowls clubs may consider operations once their local authorities have given them permission to access their facilities. This is not definitive and it cannot be emphasized enough that clubs must work with the Provincial Associations and their local Public Health Authorities to create a tailored Return to Play protocol.

This Framework

This Return to Play Framework recommends that the following six areas be considered for any return to play implementation plans.

1. Pre-Screening
2. Recommended Operations Protocols
 - a. Clubhouse
 - b. Common Storage and Equipment Use
 - c. Phase Appropriate Bowls Activity
3. Bowler Expectations
4. Turf Maintenance
5. General Safety Protocols
6. Tracing Protocols

Pre-Screening

- Clubs should ensure that all participants are aware of signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Consider encouraging participants to use the Government of Canada or Government of Alberta Screening applications to monitor symptoms before coming out to play. Use of the [Alberta Trace Together](#) application would also help with the implementation of a tracing protocol.
- It is recommended that clubs consider appointing a safety officer or safety committee that will be responsible for overseeing and monitoring the return to play protocol.

Recommended Protocols for Operations

Clubhouse

It is strongly recommended that in Phase 1 of Return to Play the clubhouse remain closed to further reduce the potential of infection spread *unless* clubs are able to meet the following recommendations in addition to the requirements of local Public Health Authorities.

If the following safety measures cannot be implemented, then the club should consider whether or not the clubhouse can be safely opened. At all times, the guidelines and legislations of Provincial and Local Health Authorities must be respected and will take precedence over these recommendations. Clubs are directed to: www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx for some further specific details in regards to readiness to open.

- Place signage by all entrances and storage facilities outlining the physical distancing guidelines in place, as well as hand-washing recommendations/protocols.
- Dedicate resources to clean and sanitize the club house on a daily basis. Create a cleaning log to identify when items are cleaned/sanitized throughout the day. Follow [Government of Canada disinfecting guidelines](#) for cleaning common areas.
- Disinfect all surfaces and materials before and after use.
- Water fountains should be closed. Bowlers should bring their own water.
- Keep the kitchen closed and do not allow food or beverages in the club house.
- Washrooms should only be used if local authorities allow. If your club washroom is able to open, consider limiting usage to one person at a time. Post a cleaning and disinfectant protocol for each occupant to follow before exiting. Establish a clear recognition tool so others are aware of when a washroom is “in use” and do not enter.
- If the clubhouse is opened, everyone inside must still maintain physical distancing. Do not congregate inside.
- Provide hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant wipes in common places
- Work with local health authorities on how to manage waste. While it is encouraged for bowlers to take their own waste home with them, this may not be a plausible solution for items such as used disinfectant wipes.

Recommended Protocol for Common Storage and Equipment Use

It is recommended that bowlers will bring and use their personal bowls. In those cases, where participants do not have access to their own bowls, consider the following recommendations for Phase 1 of Return to Play. At all times, the guidelines and legislations of Provincial and Local Health Authorities must be respected and will take precedence over these recommendations.

- Appoint a safety volunteer who will ensure that used bowls are appropriately cleaned are ready for use;

- Post signage outlining the Protocol for Club Bowls Storage and Use
- Designate a “sanitized” area and “un-sanitized area” for bowls and jacks;
- Only one person at a time may enter the bowls storage area to remove a set of sanitized bowls and two sanitized jacks for play;
- Bowls and jacks to be used only once before being sanitized by the appointed safety personnel
- Have safety personnel wear appropriate PPE when sanitizing bowls
- Consider assigning a specific set of bowls to a specific person for their use during this Phase of RTP

Recommended Protocol for Phase 1 Bowls Activity -- Training and Practice

The following recommendations are for consideration for Phase 1 by Bowls Alberta’s member lawn bowling clubs. At all times, the guidelines and legislations of Provincial and Local Health Authorities must be respected and will take precedence over these recommendations.

- Have bowlers pre-schedule the use of a rink. Bowlers without a pre-scheduled time should not to be permitted access.
- Consider using an online tool such as SignUpGenius or Google Calendar. For those bowlers that don’t have internet access, clubs could appoint a volunteer who can be telephoned to help manage the scheduling process.
- Include as part of the sign-up process a commitment from participants that they have completed the pre-screening and will adhere to club protocols during their session.
- Remind bowlers to complete whatever screening tools the club has provided prior to arriving at the club for their pre-scheduled time to bowl.
- Leave some time between playing time slots to minimize contact between the participants of different slots. Consider playing time slots of not more than an hour during phase 1 to provide more opportunity for people to get out on the green over the day.
- Designate separate entrance and exit points to the grounds. If this is not possible, consider extending the time between playing time slots.
- Bowlers should arrive no more than 5 minutes before their scheduled time slot to discourage loitering.
- Designate a “waiting area” in case bowlers do arrive early for their pre-scheduled time slot and marked appropriately with physical distancing cues. This waiting area must be away from the playing areas so that participants in the earlier time slot do not cross paths unnecessarily.

- Keep a record of each person who arrives at the club and identify their arrival and departure times. This record should be virtual/digital if possible, to avoid multiple people using the same book/log. The online scheduling tool can help with this process.
- Do not permit bowlers to congregate in the parking lot either before or after they have finished bowling. Post a sign to remind bowlers of this protocol.
- Restrict the number of people on a rink to a maximum of **two** during Phase 1. Follow local physical distancing legislation at all times.
- There should be at least one empty rink between rinks being used.
- At this stage, mats are not recommended as they can be difficult to sanitize completely between uses. It is recommended that bowlers bring a personal item such as a towel to use as a delivery area.
- Consider using two jacks, one for each end. Designate one person to be in charge of setting the jack. The jacks should be cleaned and sanitized before and after use.
- It is recommended that no games, tournaments or competitions take place during Phase 1 of Return to Play. As restrictions are relaxed to later phases, modified games or tournaments will be recommended.
- If coaches are available, they should maintain physical distancing practices, and should not share equipment with participants (including bowls, jacks, and mats). Coaches must adhere to all return to play protocols.
- Do not use scoreboards. Do not use pushers/rakes. Do not kick the bowls in or pick up your own bowls. Do not touch someone else's bowls or equipment.
- Close access to benches.
- Ensure appropriate signage is posted throughout the playing area to advise participants of the safety protocols in place.

Bowler Expectations

The following recommendations are for consideration in Phase 1 of Return to Play by Bowls Alberta member clubs. At all times, the guidelines and legislations of Provincial and Local Health Authorities must be respected and will take precedence over these recommendations.

- Pre-schedule when you would like to play; do not just show up and expect to play.
- Arrive no more than 5 minutes before your scheduled time, and leave promptly when you are finished.
- Practice physical distancing by staying a minimum of two metres away from each other at all times.
- Use your own bowls. If you do not own your own bowls, make sure you follow the posted safety protocols for using club bowls if they are available.

- Bring a towel to use in place of a mat.
- Designate one person to set the jack.
- Do not share equipment.
- Do not shake hands or high five.
- Do not visit with other people; stick to your assigned rink and maintain physical distancing.
- Do not bring visitors with you to your scheduled bowling time slot.
- Do not access closed spaces or equipment. This includes benches.
- Do not loiter in the parking lot before or after you have finished bowling
- Do not enter the washroom if there is already someone else inside or if the washroom has been closed.
- Bring your own water
- Take home your own waste material.
- If you are feeling unwell, regardless of the symptoms, stay home.

Turf Maintenance

The following recommendations are for consideration by Bowls Alberta's member clubs. At all times, the guidelines and legislations of Provincial and Local Health Authorities must be respected and will take precedence over these recommendations.

- For Phase 1, continue following safety standards for minimum requirements on the Bowls Canada Boulingrin's website.
- Post COVID-19 symptom signage regarding physical distancing requirements
- Post protocols for operations and safety

General Safety Protocols

The following recommendations are for consideration by the Alberta Lawn Bowling Clubs. At all times, the guidelines and legislations of Provincial and Local Health Authorities must be respected and will take precedence over these recommendations.

- Educate volunteers and participants to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19. A list of symptoms is available from the [Government of Canada](#) or Alberta's website: [Alberta Biz Connect](#).
- Establish a communication plan to keep volunteers and participants informed and updated on issues affecting the club.

- Establish a policy that requires volunteers, staff, and participants to inform you when they've been exposed to any highly communicable illness. Direct them to the local health agency for testing. Implement a screening program to ensure all staff/ volunteers/participants are healthy and have not travelled outside of Canada. Consider using the Government of Canada [tracking application](#) for this purpose.
- Conduct meetings by phone or online where possible. If in-person meetings are required, maintain physical distancing.
- Ensure appropriate signage is throughout the facility. For example:
 - COVID-19 symptom signage at entrance points,
 - handwashing techniques and waste removal in the washrooms,
 - rules and safety protocols in all common areas including clubhouse, green, storage area, parking area, waiting areas, etc.
- Educate volunteers and participants on [proper handwashing and hygiene techniques](#).
 - Provide necessary sanitation supplies such as wipes and hand sanitizers.
 - Ensure hand washing signage is present at all hand washing stations.
 - It is recommended that bowlers wash their hands frequently rather than wear gloves
 - Provide hand sanitizer stations for volunteers, staff, and participants in multiple locations.
- It is recommended that bowlers and volunteers wear masks if it is deemed to be a requirement from the local health authorities.

It will be up to clubs and their local authorities for how to deal with individuals who do not follow safety precautions or other guidelines that the club had adopted.

Tracing Protocol

- Follow the tracing protocols established by your local health authorities. Recommend your members use the [AB Tracetgether app](#).
- Ensure you have a process to notify your members and those directly impacted should a participant test positive.
- Consider the consequences and ability to implement tracing protocols before allowing participants to return to play at your facility.