



Return to Play For Cheerleading

LAST UPDATED
November 30, 2020
*Updates to be made in RED.

This document was approved on November 30, 2020, by the OCF Executive. It was correct at the time of publication and any updates will be communicated and indicated by date. It is the responsibility of each sanctioned member to follow the most recent version of this document. This document is intended to be used in its entirety. Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Disclaimer	3
Introduction	5
Who to Contact?	6
Acknowledgements	6
Revision Dates	7
Requirements of Return To Play (RTP)	8
COVID -19 Officer	9
COVID-19	10
Signs and Symptoms	11
What can you do to stay safe?	12
Risks within Cheerleading	14
Sanctioned Member Considerations	16
Return to Play Guidelines	17
Risk Levels	17
Ontario's Framework for re-opening	17
OCFs Return to Play for Cheerleading Pathway	18
Facility and Operation Requirements	20
Communication	20
Arrival and Departure	21
Booking, Payment and Communication	22
Facility Safety	22
Room Guidelines	24
Personal Items	25
Spectators	25
Coaches and Staff	25
Programming (Practices, classes, space rental/use)	26
First Aid	30
Response Plan	31
Virtual Training	32
Guidance for Return to Play for Cheer Abilities	32
Guidance for Return to Competition	35
Guidance for Return to High-Performance Training	35

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Footnotes:	37
Program Risk Assessment and Mitigation Tool	38
Government of Ontario Covid-19 Self-Assessment Tool	38
Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces	38
Approved Cleaning products for use against SARS and Cov-2	38
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Awareness resources	38
Appendix 1: Cheer Canada Letter of Support for OCF	39
Appendix 2: Provincial Covid Cases vs Current RTP allowance	40
Appendix 3: Cheerleading & the Safety of Wearing Masks During Practice (from a Pulse Oxygen Saturation Perspective)	41

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Disclaimer

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date from third-party sources, including the Government of Canada, Government of Ontario and Cheer Canada. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF sanctioned member and indicated by date.

It is the responsibility of each OCF sanctioned member to follow the most recent version of this document, which will be updated periodically as the situation evolves and more information becomes available.

The Return to Play for cheerleading provides important information and guidance. It outlines best practices for our sport based on the current information available. It also specifies sanctioning terms for all members of our organization.

This document is neither intended to provide legal advice nor to establish a contractual obligation on the part of the OCF. We urge all members to review this Return to Play with their own legal and insurance advisors. This information is accepted on the condition that error or omissions will not be made the basis of any claim, demand, or cause of action.

Where anything in this document 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.

The OCF and its members are responsible for assessing risks in their respective environment. They are also responsible for establishing appropriate safety procedures to minimize said risks. These should be clearly communicated to their staff, participants, families, and anyone who might be impacted as an addendum to this Return to Play.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

We also advise them to follow the advice and instructions of public health, regional authorities, provincial/federal government authorities, facility operators, and any other stakeholder who may influence or impact their operations during the pandemic.

It is the responsibility of each individual to assess their personal risk(s) in connection with participation in cheerleading. The OCF recommends participants seek the advice of a physician or other qualified healthcare provider to identify any potential risks that might impact individual Return to Play. Should an “individual” be a minor as defined by Ontario law, this risk assessment should be undertaken by a parent or legal guardian.

Failure to comply, circumvent public health, municipal bylaws, provincial/federal law, facility rules, Cheer Canada, or OCF guidelines by any individual or member will result in the suspension of their cheerleading activities, programming or services. Furthermore, disciplinary action will ensue.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Introduction

Cheerleading is one of the fastest growing sports in Canada. It is recognized by the Canadian and International Olympic Committees, along with the Global Association of International Sports Federations (*formerly Sport Accord*).

In Canada, cheerleading is governed by Cheer Canada, who has recognized the OCF as the provincial governing body for the sport of cheerleading in our province. (see [Appendix 1](#))

Cheerleading is a sport for life. With participants as young as age 3, to adults who take part on our open teams, it is a high-energy, team-based performance sport that is athletic, artistic and acrobatic. Cheerleading can be done at the recreational, competitive and elite level. In Ontario we have recreational, scholastic, collegiate, all-star and professional teams participating in our sport.

Cheerleading includes a variety of skills including: tumbling, jumps, partner stunts, pyramids, tosses and dance¹. While some skills are individually developed (tumbling, jumps, dance), other skills (partner stunts, pyramids, and tosses) require a great deal of teamwork and coordination. Modern cheerleading² routines demand physical fitness, athleticism, strength, synchronization and team-wide uniformity. Dated stereotypes associated with cheerleading no longer accurately reflect the olympic-recognized sport we have become and that many Ontarians practice today.

The OCF is eager for our teams to return to full training as soon as possible, and we are prepared to make modifications to our sport to ensure the health and safety of our athletes and coaches. This is both our highest priority and our greatest objective.

Our Return to Play document is designed to help athletes, coaches, parents and gym owners navigate the government guidelines and safely prepare for our Return to Sport in a manner that complies with government guidelines.

Please note that this document is based on the latest information and research available at the time of writing. The COVID-19 pandemic and the responses of the public health community and Ontario Government remains fluid; data and recommendations will change. As they do, this

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

document will be updated to reflect this. Please check the date of the last update on the front cover to ensure you are viewing the most current document.

Who to Contact?

The OCF is here to support members as they prepare for the implementation of the Return to Play for cheerleading.

Specific questions can be directed to the appropriate OCF board member based on topic:

- **Safety guidelines, risk management and general:**

Lindsay Groves: president@ocfcheer.com

- **Registration and Sanctioning:**

Suzanne McLay: membership@ocfcheer.com

Acknowledgements

OCF would like to thank and acknowledge the following organizations for their work in the development of return-to-sport guidelines that we have referred to in the development of this pathway for a return to cheerleading:

Cheer Canada	Cheer Manitoba
SportCheer England	Ontario Artistic Swimming
Saskatchewan Cheerleading Association	

OCF would also like to thank our clubs, coaches, officials, athletes and the cheerleading community for their support in adhering to the protocols for return to sport in Ontario.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Revision Dates

This pathway is based on the latest public information available related to COVID-19 and will be updated periodically as circumstances evolve and more information becomes available.

Revisions will be listed here:

Version 1: November 5, 2020

Version 2: November 30, 2020

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Requirements of Return To Play (RTP)

The following measures must be followed by all members while any federal or provincial COVID-19-related public health requirements or emergency orders are in place:

- **Sanction:** All members must complete the member sanctioning process with the OCF prior to the resumption of any cheerleading programming.
- **Declaration of Compliance:** All sanctioned members will be required to sign the OCF-sanctioned member Declaration of Compliance form and submit via email prior to any training activities
- **Risk Assessment:** All members should complete the [Program Risk Assessment and Mitigation Tool](#) for each facility as part of their return to cheerleading planning process. Members must retain a copy of their completed Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist for their records. Only programming that has a VERY LOW RISK, LOW RISK or MODERATE RISK should resume.
- **Point of Contact:** All members delivering sanctioned, in-person cheerleading programming or activity must appoint a designated [COVID-19 Response Officer](#) and submit their name to OCF via email. This appointment must take place prior to the resumption of any cheerleading programming or activity and be in place until Ontario achieves and maintains Phase 3 for three consecutive months.
- **Registered:** All individuals participating as sanctioned members (virtual or in-person) should be registered with up-to-date contact information, including phone number and email address, entered in the Cheer-Reg online registration system.
- **Waivers and Attestation of All Participants:** All members delivering cheerleading programming must facilitate the completion and storing of the following documents prior to the resumption of any in-person cheerleading:
 - Waiver or Assumption of Risk (minors) Agreements by coaches, officials, athletes and other participants should include specific information regarding additional risks associated with participation in sport with regard to COVID-19.
 - Medical history for athletes (to ensure any underlying health concerns can be addressed)
 - Individual Participant screening questions.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Suggested: Code of Conduct for Athletes: COVID-19.
 - *Samples of these forms can be found in our [resources section](#)
- **Emergency Action Plans:** All members must update their Emergency Action Plan for each facility.
- **Attendance:** All members delivering in-person cheerleading programming must record the attendance of all participants at every practice and ensure the records are available to be accessed quickly to ensure efficient contact tracing.
- **Reporting:** All members delivering in-person cheerleading programming must report any confirmed case of COVID-19 to the OCF via email.
- **No Social Activities:** Until further notice, any in-person social activities should be avoided. Members assume all risk and liability should they facilitate any social activities involving their participants.
- **Violations:** The primary aim of the Return to Play is the health and safety of all athletes, coaches, staff and volunteers involved in the sport of cheerleading. As such, all individuals involved with cheerleading have the responsibility to keep the sport free from COVID-19 and to adhere to the RTP guidance. If an individual believes that there has been a breach of the guidance putting the health and safety of other athletes, coaches, staff and volunteers at risk, they are able to report this by emailing president@ocfcheer.com. We are approaching RTP breaches from a position of education and support. However, if repeated breaches occur a formal complaint may be raised using our existing complaints procedure. The OCF would like to remind the members that non-compliance will reflect poorly on our sport in Ontario.

COVID -19 Officer

The key roles and responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring the member is compliant with OCF COVID-19 RTP guidance and current government laws/guidance
- Responsible for completing appropriate COVID-19 risk assessments and other forms noted above

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Keeping up-to-date with developments within Ontario and cheerleading itself to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection and communicate to all athletes and families in the club. Some sources of information can be found [here](#).
- Ensure screening of all athletes and staff for each training session, event or competition in accordance with the guidelines contained in this document.
- Train other staff and/or coaches to be able to conduct the screening
- Responsible for the collection and appropriate storage of screening forms and attendance forms.
- Responsible for directing an individual who has been infected by COVID-19 to report this to their local public health unit and to get a test in order to commence public health-led contact tracing.

COVID-19

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an ongoing worldwide pandemic caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This virus appears to be highly infectious and at present, there is not an effective treatment for it. Most people (80%) who are infected have mild symptoms; some do not have any symptoms at all. Like other viral infections, however, many individuals who are infected are infectious for up to 2 days (48 hrs) before they have symptoms. This means it is easy to spread the disease before you are aware you have it.

While the majority of those who become symptomatic can be managed at home, 15 - 20% who contract the virus become unwell and may require hospitalization. A small number (5%) require intensive care, some of whom require breathing support through ventilation. These patients are more likely to be male, older (>60) and have underlying conditions such as cardiovascular disease, raised blood pressure, chronic lung disease, or diabetes.

The exact mortality rate associated with COVID-19 infection is unknown, but it may be as high as 1- 2% overall. COVID-19 will likely remain a potentially deadly virus until an effective vaccine is created, but vaccination is unlikely to be available for several months to years.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Younger, healthy people appear to be less likely to develop severe symptoms based on current knowledge. Anyone, however, can spread the disease infecting those they love, their friends, colleagues, and teammates.

Governments and health authorities around the world have instigated social distancing requirements, restrictions on public gatherings, quarantine measures and limited travel to and from other countries to slow the spread of the disease and to enable health care systems to cope with the potential increased demands associated with managing the disease. The cheerleading community has a responsibility to support these efforts.

Signs and Symptoms

Public Health Ontario describes the most common symptoms of COVID-19:

- fever (feeling hot to the touch, a temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher)
- chills
- cough that's new or worsening (continuous, more than usual)
- barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing (croup)
- shortness of breath (out of breath, unable to breathe deeply)
- sore throat
- difficulty swallowing
- runny, stuffy or congested nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- lost sense of taste or smell
- pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- headache that's unusual or long lasting
- digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain)
- muscle aches
- extreme tiredness that is unusual (fatigue, lack of energy)
- falling down often

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Though these are common symptoms of other illnesses, they may be signs an individual has been infected by COVID-19, and it is vital that you do not infect teammates, colleagues, your friends and family or the general public.

What can you do to stay safe?

Everyday actions

Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home and self-isolate if you are sick

Physical distancing

COVID-19 is spread mainly from person to person through close physical contact.

Close physical contact means:

- being less than 2 metres away in the same room, workspace, or area
- living in the same home

Everyone in Ontario should practice physical distancing to reduce their exposure to other people.

To minimize close physical contact in cheerleading, the Ontario Cheerleading Federation has made modifications to our sport for safety and protection. These modifications, along with mandatory mask wearing and limited building allowances, will help protect our participants.

Face coverings (non-medical masks)

When you go out, you must use a face covering (non-medical mask such as a cloth mask) in public indoor spaces, with some [exceptions](#). This includes:

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- public spaces (e.g, inside stores, event spaces, entertainment facilities and common areas in hotels)
- workplaces, even those that are not open to the public, vehicles that operate as part of a business or organization, including taxis and rideshares

The Ontario Cheerleading Federation has made masks mandatory during building, and any time athletes are unable to maintain physical distancing.

The OCF understands some athletes or staff may have a medical exemption to mask laws/rules within Ontario. Masks are a critical preventive measure and are most essential in times when social distancing is difficult.

Please see a case study in [Appendix 3](#) for further information on the Safety of wearing masks during cheerleading practice

For more information on COVID-19 please visit
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread>

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Risks within Cheerleading

COVID-19 is an infectious disease spread primarily via respiratory droplets in saliva or nasal discharge upon normal respiration, coughing or sneezing. COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health and the world economy.

Since March 14, 2020, recreational facilities and sport training venues, including cheerleading gyms, have been affected due to forced closures and then from strict operating restrictions once permitted to re-open.

The OCF has taken many considerations while developing this Return to Play. Paramount of concern is the deterioration of physical fitness and mental well-being of thousands of Ontario's youth who thrive in the cheerleading environment. Cheerleading gyms are small businesses. In fact, many are owned by female entrepreneurs. The Ontario cheerleading commercial industry has developed over the last 20 years and further supports other large corporations along the supply chain. Thus, the economic impact on the sport is immense and vast.

The key principle underlying the OCF's Return to Play (RTP) for cheerleading is that the resumption of cheerleading should not compromise the health of individuals while enabling participation in all aspects of the sport. The OCF's pathway is based on the latest data and recommendations published by the provincial government, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture industries (MHSTCI), as well as medical advice and expert knowledge of cheerleading.

Here are the key risks we have identified and our modification to eliminate or minimize:

USE OF MUSIC

The use of music in training sessions, during performances and at competitions is part of the sport of cheerleading. The OCF will require its membership to put measures in place to avoid unduly raising of voices or shouting. This includes refraining from playing loud music that may

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

encourage louder voices/shouting if played at a volume that makes normal conversation or giving coaching instructions difficult.

Athletes should be encouraged not to shout additional instructions or count along to the music, and other common practices associated with cheerleading that involve raised voices, unless a mask is being worn. This modification will limit the potential for increased risk of transmission.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Cheerleading involves direct physical contact between athletes during the building elements of training and competitive routines. It also involves a high moisture level where there is potential for sweat, saliva and moisture-rich breath to be present during contact between athletes and coaches during training sessions, performances and competitions. As cheerleading training sessions and competitions most usually take place inside, the risk of high moisture levels is increased versus if these activities were to take place outdoors.

The OCF has developed a Return to Play that allows for a gradual return of all aspects of our sport. Higher risk elements will be implemented slowly and with very strict restrictions. The OCF advises that each member undertakes a full risk assessment as per government documentation and adheres to the Return to Play when returning to training. If cases are identified, or regional cases rise, it is critical to re-evaluate the risk of the level you are operating at and move back up the levels as deemed appropriate. This may involve a period of closure. The OCF reserves the right to modify and restrict permissions within this Return to Play at any time.

NEED FOR COMMUNICATION

Enhanced communication between the clubs' athletes and families are fundamental to ensure safety. Any changes in individual athlete risk should be continually evaluated (e.g. if new medical conditions are diagnosed or they have new contacts with vulnerable individuals). It is essential that members continually risk assess to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

The **OCF STRONGLY RECOMMENDS** that members engage fully with the **COVID Alert App** and contact tracing efforts. This includes the accurate record keeping of all athlete and staff

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

attendance including name, phone number and time of arriving/leaving. If an outbreak is identified within the club or facility, the OCF advises liaising with the local Public Health team regarding further instructions. Any outbreaks will be reported to the OCF immediately.

COVID-19 can range from asymptomatic, to mild, to severe illness with an incubation period of 5 - 14 days. It is critical that however mild or common, the symptom is reported and isolation guidelines are followed. If a [symptom](#) is reported during a training session, the individual must be isolated in a designated area and collected by a household member as soon as possible with advice to isolate and test the household as per current government advice. The most common symptoms include: fever (37.8 or above), cough and shortness of breath.

Sanctioned Member Considerations

The OCF recognizes variances between our sanctioned member clubs. Each facility/ sanctioned member operates differently and may offer a range of programming inclusive and exclusive of cheer. It is important that adherence to this Return to Play take priority over any other activity, policy or regulations that our members may be subject to save or regional, provincial or federal law. These variables should be considered carefully by members and form the basis of any decisions on which level on the RTP they should operate within and other important factors surrounding their return to cheerleading.

Variables that members may want to consider include, but are not limited to, are: OCF-capped level listing, government phase/stage restrictions, regional case increases/decreases, any localized lockdowns or outbreaks, population density in your area of operation, the demographic makeup of your participants, local public transport links, training space and facility provision (e.g number of washrooms, entry/exits, walkways, fire safety policies, floor space, ventilation, ability to social distance), and coaching capacity. Above all, the paramount responsibility of each member must be the safety of their athletes.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Return to Play Guidelines

The OCF's Return to Play is a pathway designed to help guide members through the process of a safe reopening and has been created based on government guidance, medical advice and expert knowledge of cheerleading. However, it is important to note that your club or members' unique circumstances and the government risk levels are subject to change at any time.

The levels described in the OCFs Return to Play pathway allows for maximum flexibility for each member. When deciding your club's level within the RTP pathway, it is important to use the chart and capped pathway level. Members should also be aware of any variations specific to your club that could influence your actions/decisions.

Once you have selected your level and completed a full risk assessment (see link to a template: [Program Risk Assessment and Mitigation Tool](#)), the OCF advises that members communicate with their legal team to review their plans and their insurance company to check that they will be covered for the activity level proposed. Whenever you plan to move up or down a level on the Return to Play, you should review and adjust your risk assessment.

Members and individuals must remember that there can never be risk-free cheerleading and that any cheerleading activity will come with inherent COVID-19 risks until there is a medical solution.

Risk Levels

To ensure proper education of our members, there is a simplified outline of the Government of Ontario's framework for re-opening below.

Ontario's Framework for re-opening

Phase 1: Protect and support The government's primary focus is on protecting the health and well-being of individuals and families, supporting frontline health care workers, essential workers, businesses, and providing immediate support to protect people and jobs. Emergency

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

orders put in place to protect people include: the closure of non-essential workplaces, outdoor amenities in parks, recreational areas and public places, as well as bars and restaurants; restrictions on social gatherings; and limiting staff from working in more than one retirement home, long-term care home or congregate care setting.

Phase 2: Restart The government will take a careful, stage-by-stage approach to loosening emergency measures and reopening Ontario’s economy. Public health and workplace safety will remain the top priority, while balancing the needs of people and businesses. There are 5 tiered categories - **Lockdown**, **Control**, **Restrict**, **Protect**, and **Prevent** - within this Phase.

Phase 3: Recover Ensuring the health and safety of the public and workers will continue to be a top priority as Ontario transitions to a “new normal.”

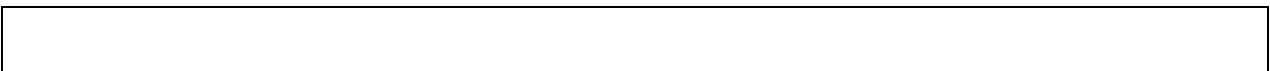
OCFs Return to Play for Cheerleading Pathway

Outlined below is the simplified version of our Return to Play pathway for cheerleading in Ontario. It should be used as a reference. Full details for each level are outlined in subsequent sections of this document.

Critical Level Community spread of COVID-19 is not contained and/or there are significant strains on our health care system.

Restrictive Level (1, 2, 3, 4) Community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring. Four levels will be outlined in the [Programming Section](#).

Limited Risk Level The spread of COVID-19 is broadly contained. Vaccine and/or effective treatment for COVID-19 are available.



Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety. Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Ontario Phases and Categories and the OCF RTP							
Ontario Government	Phase 1	Phase 2, Lockdown	Phase 2, Control	Phase 2, Restrict	Phase 2, Protect	Phase 2, Prevent	Phase 3
Ontario Cheerleading Federation	Critical Level	Critical Level	Restrictive Level 1	Restrictive Level 2	Restrictive Level 2	Restrictive Level 2	Limited Risk Level

Important Notes:

* The OCFs RTP pathway should be submitted and/or reviewed with your local public health unit and regional by-law office

* As regional levels are subject to change at any time and it is the responsibility of our members to stay up to date and informed. It is the responsibility of our members to communicate these changes to their staff, athletes, parents and any other stakeholders.

* When the OCF is ready to support members by moving into Restrictive Level 3, 4 and the Limited Risk Levels, we will further expand upon the restrictions and any removal of restrictions associated with those specific phases in the [Programming Section](#) of the RTP.

* It is our objective to use only the most factual and up-to-date information as the basis for all decisions as we continue to monitor the situations in the province.

Based on our sector, the following response plan is required to be followed by all OCF sanctioned members. This Return to Play does not replace or supersede any government regulations and is subject to change at any time. Gym owners, directors, coaches and any other assigned organizers have the assumed responsibility, accountability and assurance that all requirements outlined are being followed by the facility, its members and everyone under their banner/club/team.

The OCF reserves the right to request proof of adherence to any requirements from any member at any time for any reason. Failure to adhere to the OCF's Return to Play may result in issued warnings, provincial fines or suspended or terminated membership. The OCF will update

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety. Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

its website and email all members when changes occur to the Return to Play and when the province/regions phases change.

It must be emphasized that each member is responsible to make decisions not only in the best interest of their employees and clients but also in the best interest of our sport as a whole. This is a phenomenal responsibility that should not be taken lightly.

Facility and Operation Requirements

These Facility and Operations Requirements are general practices that are required at each level in the Return to Play.

Communication

- Communication at all times must be clear, accurate, transparent and as positive as possible
- Inform coaches, administrators, members, parents/guardians and participants of new protocols through email, member website, social media channels, in-house telephone communications
- Have detailed records of everyone's (including any non-participants') attendance at your club on a daily basis. (N.B. Contact tracing is required in order to determine who might have been exposed to the virus.)
- Use waivers for people over the age of majority and assumption of risk agreements for those under the age of majority, and include specific wording relating to insurance coverage for COVID-19 claims exclusion and their assumption of the related risks with COVID-19
- Use a "Declaration of Understanding" form for all people attending your facility to ensure they understand COVID-19 and their responsibility to self-regulate
- Post Government of Ontario-approved hand washing, hand rubbing and physical distancing protocols in high traffic areas (e.g main entrance door, bathrooms)
- Include COVID-19 related matters in your refund policy

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Ensure participants and their families are aware (through signs, email and/or verbal communication) that they may not enter the facility if either they or a household member has had onset of illness with symptoms associated with suspected or lab-confirmed COVID-19 in the previous 14 days
- Maintain confidentiality of any person confirmed to have been COVID-19 infected
- Clubs/coaches should acknowledge and support decisions made by youth, parents or adult leaders who are uncomfortable participating for any reason

Arrival and Departure

- Limit carpooling among participants. Only members of the same family should be in a vehicle together
- Place distancing lines (2 metres apart) outside facility for those entering the facility to line up before entering
- Anyone feeling unwell MUST STAY HOME
- Prior to entering all staff, athletes, etc., will be required to be screened via self-assessment tool to determine if either they or a household member has had onset of illness with symptoms compatible with suspected or lab-confirmed COVID-19 in the prior 14 days; a log to record the self assessments should be kept
- Ensure physical distancing requirements are met
- All persons must properly wash with soap and water or sanitize hands upon entering and exiting facility
- Encourage parents to drop off and pick up as opposed to entering facility to watch the class
- No spectators will be allowed in the facility at this time
- When possible, have parents/guardians pick up their child outside. If the child needs supervision while waiting to be picked up, adults should be practising physical distancing
- There should be an access point dedicated to entering the facility/room and a separate access point for exiting, if possible.
- Athletes and parents should be **advised** to leave the gym as soon as their class is over

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Booking, Payment and Communication

It is recommended to our members that all bookings, payments or communications with their members are done with an online platform or via email. During transactions, if possible, limit the exchange of papers such as receipts. Where possible, payments should be accepted through a contactless method (e.g. Interact-tap or e-transfer). It is recommended that members do not accept any cash. If onsite payments are required, the debit/credit machine will need to be disinfected between each use.

Facility Safety

- Ensure physical distancing requirements are met within the gym when necessary
- Heightened cleaning of the entire facility, especially high traffic areas (e.g. entrance, washrooms, etc.)
- Equipment must be cleaned/sanitized between classes and at the end of the day
- Provide a copy of the handwashing and hand rubbing guidelines to display in areas to show people how to properly wash/sanitize hands. This should be placed at entrances and in bathrooms.
- Cleaning between each use of the washrooms (high traffic area)
- Identify how the club will provide disinfection of spaces and regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces
- Ensure respiratory etiquette is followed by advising individuals to cough or sneeze into one's arm or a tissue
- Consider how to limit the number of participants to allow physical distancing and prevent crowding
- Develop procedures that allow for uncongested entry and exit (e.g., dedicated one-way entry and exit pathway for each activity area)"
- It is recommended that change rooms are closed. If they must remain open, limit the number of people permitted in the changing room/washroom at one time to ensure physical distancing requirements are followed
- Provide hand sanitizing stations throughout facility

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Provide additional hand washing stations (e.g. kitchen sink, if accessible) or hand sanitizing beyond current washroom stations/sinks (best placed at the entrance to the facility and entrance to the equipment/gym area)
- Once classes are over for the day and all athletes have left, all additional surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected (floors, counters, bathrooms)
- Refrain from use of any public water fountains in the gym that athletes can drink directly from. Have athletes bring their own water and ensure there is no sharing *Water filling stations are allowed, but individuals must wash or sanitize their hands before and after use
- Remove self-serve vending machines and/or food sales. Café areas should be closed.
- Remove or cover any equipment (cloth-like) that cannot be cleaned
- Play structures should be closed
- Athletes are not permitted to share personal training equipment (e.g. wrist supports, ankle braces, tape, etc.)
- It is mandatory that staff ~~should~~ complete screening via self-assessment prior to coming to work (daily), report to their designated supervisor to determine if either they or a household member has had onset of illness with symptoms compatible with suspected or lab-confirmed COVID-19 in the prior 14 days; a log to record the self-assessment should be kept
- If ceiling fans are present, the location of the fans should take into consideration the air blowing from the fans to prevent droplets blowing from one person to another within or between the partitioned sections. (if applicable)
- Ceiling fans high up in the room (e.g., 25 feet up) are less of a concern than ceiling fans on low ceilings
- Pedestal fans or high-powered fans on or near the floor should not be used as they generate strong air currents across people at head level (breathing zones) or across surfaces (possible resuspension of particles)
- Ensure that all cleaning products are authorized disinfectants against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19
- Safe disposal of any gloves and/or masks

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Once classes are over for the day and all athletes have left, all surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected (mats, floors, counters, bathrooms); this needs to be done over and above cleaning the equipment between uses
- Develop [Response Plans](#) that prepare for a potential requirement of a temporary closure of the facility to properly disinfect and ensure others are not infected

Room Guidelines

The MHSTCI has provided the following guidance on the usage of partitions and room separation within facilities.

- Use, to the extent possible, existing rooms to support operations.
- If additional space is created to offer specific activities (e.g. workout classes, separated exercise machine areas), a partition can be placed to divide a large room into more than one distinct space:
 - Ensuring the height and width of the partition reflects the room dimensions and ability to effectively physically separate groups (i.e. floor to ceiling). The height of the partition should ideally be above the breathing zone of individuals to prevent the spread of droplets expired by patrons.
 - Ensuring that the partition does not interfere with ventilation and airflow and meets fire code regulations.
 - Installing a partition that is made of materials that are of a hard, non-porous surface that can be easily and routinely cleaned and disinfected (i.e. between use). For optimal infection protection and control, there should be no physical contact with the partition.
 - Ensuring that partitions are secured appropriately, following fire and building code requirements to allow for evacuation of all individuals from a building in case of an emergency.
- Consider placing employees at these points to prevent patrons from crossing into other areas.

Further guidance on sports facilities can be found [here](#)

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Personal Items

- Athletes will be asked to arrive changed
- Athletes should be discouraged from bringing unnecessary items into the facility. Any athletes bringing in additional items (like bags, jackets, boots, etc.) will be sure to keep them separate from others. Ensure the training area remains free from hazards
- Athletes should bring a labelled water bottle; drinking fountains will be closed. Water bottles will be safely spaced and kept with the any athletes belongings to avoid accidental sharing
- Athletes should not be permitted to consume food in facilities. Individuals must not share personal items (i.e. equipment or beverage containers). Members may make exceptions for medical conditions. (e.g diabetics)

Spectators

Parents, guardians, family members, siblings, and friends will not be permitted to enter the training facilities. Viewing should be closed until further notice.

Coaches and Staff

- Coaches and staff/advisors will be provided with education about COVID-19 prevention strategies. Prior to resuming coaching, each person must demonstrate an understanding of the Return to Play
- Coaches and staff/advisors **are required** to complete an online self-assessment prior to arriving for coaching. Coaches/staff experiencing symptoms of the illness (fever, cough or difficulty breathing) must be sent home. Members should have an employee illness policy to encourage staff who are sick to stay home
- Only coaches, staff or advisors who are working should be in the facility
- Coaches **MUST** wear a mask and maintain physical distance from all participants as much as possible
- Coaches and staff/advisors will practice proper health hygiene including:
 - Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Use hand sanitizer (approved by Health Canada) if hands are not visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes.
- Sneeze/cough etiquette – into the elbow and wash or sanitize hands immediately after.

Programming (Practices, classes, space rental/use)

The OCF will outline guidelines required at each level of the Return to Sport pathway. Activity levels will be based on the risk level using the Provincial guidelines in conjunction with this levelled Return to Play.

Critical Level

Facilities may not be able to operate depending on government guidelines. If closure is not required:

- Adhere to maximum number of people in the facility and training area as dictated by [provincial guidance](#) and [regulations](#) (check this regularly for changes)
- Reduce the number of classes/activities in the gym at the same time
- Have all participants wash hands or use hand sanitizer before allowing participation, directly after participation, and frequently during class (before getting water, eating, and after touching shared surfaces)
- A hand washing/sanitizing schedule may need to be used
- Athletes should not sit together during rest time between turns and, if possible, should try to have a designated area for rest that is marked off for safe distancing
- Add time between class changeover or stagger start and end times to ensure there is adequate time to clean and disinfect equipment
- Rearrange, remove, or spread out equipment for better physical distancing
- Create pathways (e.g. Velcro, tape, paint, floor stickers) within the training area for better flow
- Eliminate the use of equipment that cannot be properly sanitized between uses (e.g. Resi or foam pit or similar type mats)

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Individual lessons may be offered as long as physical distancing and disinfecting procedures are followed
- Group lessons and camps may be offered in compliance with provincial guidelines
- Non-medical grade masks are required when physical distancing cannot be followed
- No Contact – no building skills/pyramids/baskets, or hugs, high-fives, or handshakes
- Consider expanding services online, where possible factoring in safety, responsibility and liability

Restrictive : Level 1

- Adhere to maximum number of people in the facility and training area as dictated by [provincial guidance](#) and [regulations](#) (check this regularly for changes)
- In order to ensure safe distancing, the OCF has put in place the following guideline along with the Government guidelines outlined above
 - Limit capacity to 1 athlete per 75 sq. Feet of Training Space. Do Not exceed 30 athletes/9 mat competition size floor (42x54=2268, 2268/30=75.6)
- Be aware of the number of classes/activities in the gym at the same time
- Have all participants wash hands or use hand sanitizer before allowing participation, directly after participation, and frequently during class (before getting water, eating, and after touching shared surfaces)
- A hand washing/sanitizing schedule may need to be used
- Masks are required where physical distancing may be difficult (e.g. routine choreography)
- Athletes should not sit together during rest time between turns, and if possible, should try to have a designated area for rest that is marked off for safe distancing
- Add time between class changeover or stagger start and end times to ensure there is adequate time to clean and disinfect equipment
- Rearrange, remove, or spread out equipment for better physical distancing
- Create pathways (e.g. Velcro, tape, paint, floor stickers) within the training area for better flow
- Eliminate the use of equipment that cannot be properly sanitized between uses (e.g. Resi or foam pit or similar type mats)

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Cheers/chants **may not occur as per Ontario Regulation 364/20 which discourages loud talking, singing, or shouting.**
- Only use limited spotting with some guidelines (outlined below). Limited would mean where absolutely necessary. In most instances progressions, basics, and verbal correction are still only required. Some athletes may need a spot to get over a mental hurdle for a skill due to time off, so please use your best judgement to determine if a spot is absolutely necessary at this time.
 - The club/coach should seek consent from a parent/guardian or the athlete if of the age of majority, prior to using hands on spotting or correction.
 - The coach and the athlete should both ensure their hands have been properly washed and/or sanitized before and after a skill is spotted as a preventative measure. Coaches should not spot more than 1 athlete without proper hand sanitization. Coaches must properly hand sanitize between spotting athletes.
 - A face covering must be worn by the coach. Exceptions will be if the face covering might hinder the coach's ability to see or speak clearly. That being said, it is strongly suggested that you acquire a mask that fits correctly and is snug to your face to ensure that a mask can be worn when spotting. A mask must be worn when a coach is manipulating an athlete's body alignment and/or positions when the athlete is in a stationary, or relatively stationary position. (e.g. during a handstand or body position hold.) However, at this time verbal cues should be your first option to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.

Restrictive : Level 2 (in addition to Level 1)

- Building Skills limited to timed guidelines of 15 minutes (cumulative per day) threshold
- During all periods of building athletes are required to wear a mask that fully covers the nose, mouth and chin. They are also required for any point where physical distancing may be difficult (e.g. routine choreography)
- All contact points are to be disinfected between use, including:
 - Base/Backspot hands (before and after building skills with the same group)

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Flyers' shoes (before and after building skill with the same group)
- Poms/Props/Signs (before, after and between different participants if sharing)
- All basket tosses are temporarily prohibited
- All pyramids are temporarily prohibited
- Cradle dismounts are temporarily prohibited
- Dismounts should be modified to limit unintentional contact when possible
- Temporary restriction of Hand in Hand Contact stunts
- Once the athletes are assigned a "building group" modifications should not be made unless absolutely necessary. If a change is made at least 7 days should pass before contact with a new group
- A record of each group will be kept by the member to allow for contract tracing, should the need arise
- Coaches must wear masks at all times when unable to physically distance
- Cheers/chants can occur while wearing masks
- Crossovers athletes should only practice with one team per day to minimize risks
- Space rental/use capacity is based on government mandated occupancy limits

Restrictive : Level 3 (Loosened restrictions to Level 2)

*All prior requirements are in place with specific additions or removal of restrictions

* Further guidance to be provided prior to moving to this level

- Building skills, limited to timed guideline thresholds, may be increased
- Basket tosses and cradle dismounts may be reintroduced at the member's discretion
- Hand in Hand Contact stunts may be reintroduced at the members discretion

Restrictive : Level 4 (Loosened restrictions to Level 3)

* All prior level 3 requirements in place with specific additions or removal of restrictions

* Further guidance to be provided prior to moving to this level

- Building skills, limited to timed guideline thresholds, may be increased

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- Pyramids to be reintroduced at the member's discretion

Limited Risk Level

- No restrictions on practices, classes, space rental/use
- Resume regular operations (e.g. Possible for parent viewing areas to re-open)

It is important to remember that athletes will be wearing masks for the majority of practices. We need to take into account many different factors, including but not limited to:

- Number and speed of repetitions. Consider different training methods that allow for more rest than "normal"
- Practice outlines that allow for "mask breaks" or a period of non-vigorous activity
- Athletes that may have asthma or underlying health concerns
- Possible reduction in performance due to high intensity activity while wearing masks due to decreased VO₂. Refer to [Appendix 3](#) for further information on this

First Aid

Ensure to review and adjust/amend any First Aid protocols to include the following:

- Limited number of people to be in contact with the person requiring first aid
- If possible, have the person requiring first aid and the first aid responder both wear masks.
- Ensure the first aid responder performs hand hygiene (wash hands or use sanitizer) or uses gloves before administering aid to the person or touching first aid supplies. Also ensure they have PPE prior to assessment
- Have only one person touch first aid supplies and dispose of any PPE used as soon and as safely as possible
- If CPR is needed, use a mouth guard rescue product (mask designed to cover mouth and nose) for any required mouth-to-mouth contact. If this is not available, then conduct hands only CPR (unless 9-1-1 directs you otherwise)

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Response Plan

- Create a situational plan for facility response to a symptomatic person in the facility (isolation, communication, cleaning, etc.)
- Anyone with symptoms is not to enter the facility and should be directed to call their regional public health unit for direction
- Anyone who is tested for COVID-19 should stay home and self-isolate until they receive their results
- If the person receives negative results, they should not return to the facility until they are fully symptom free **for 24 hours**
- If the facility becomes aware that someone has tested positive for COVID-19, the following steps should be taken:
 - Follow any and all directions by Public Health. Their directives supersede any directives in this document.
 - If the person was in the facility during this identified possible exposure period, your local public health unit will contact the appropriate people based on information provided to them. Your COVID-19 Officer should ensure:
 - OCF is notified
 - All members identified as possible exposures are to be notified
 - Anyone who may have had contact (direct or indirect) should be notified, directed to call local public health unit and will directed on next steps
 - The facility is to close immediately to conduct proper cleaning/ disinfecting of the entire facility
 - The facility is to provide any required information (attendance sheets, group/cohort lists, etc.) to Public Health

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Virtual Training

- Check with your insurance company to ensure this type of instruction is included in your coverage
- Implement dress code and remove anyone violating the dress code from training sessions
- Obtain parental consent when training a minor
- Obtain consent from all participants/guardians for screen captures, electronic recordings
- For video private lessons, another adult coach, a parent or volunteer must be present
- Ensure observance of Rule of TWO. Avoid one-on-one sessions
- Ensure coaches and staff are in appropriate location while conducting classes and they are aware of what is in their background
- Record the instructions when possible
- Focus on maintenance and technique, not new skills acquisition
- Establish parameters for electronic coach/parent/athlete communication (e.g. No one-on-one texting, appropriate times of day, use group chats rather than private messaging)

Guidance for Return to Play for Cheer Abilities

The OCF would like to ensure that athletes in the Cheer Abilities division are not left out of the considerations when planning the Return to Play.

Recent statistics from StatCan show Canadians with disabilities may be disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 as they may be more likely to have underlying health conditions or to rely on outside caregivers or support to help support their daily lives. We recommend that coaches of these teams take significant extra precautions in planning and managing the return to training for those athletes.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

The OCF has detailed that members returning to sport with athletes with disabilities, ensure additional considerations are made in order to ensure that more vulnerable athletes are kept safe:

- We advise that athletes with disabilities, especially those who are on the government's vulnerable populations list, contact their doctor regarding their Return to Sport and request they provide the club with a note to confirm the doctor is clearing them to return. (Doctors' notes can sometimes incur a cost to the athlete, so please bear this in mind when requiring that as part of your athlete's ability to return)
- At the start and end of training sessions, and in breaks during longer sessions, we advise that mobility and other disability support equipment is disinfected as a part of the member's sanitation routines.
- For athletes who use separate mobility equipment for sport and day-to-day, the OCF advises that where possible, athletes transfer to their sports device outside of the training environment and leave their day-to-day mobility device in a separate area.
- Where possible, we highly advise that athletes and staff working in a disability-inclusive environment wear masks and other appropriate PPE (e.g. face shields to prevent transmission from saliva droplets) when working in close contact with each other.
- Ensure that the club's accessible routes, which may not be the usual routes in and out of the facility or onto the floor, are also disinfected and cleared between sessions so they are safe for the athletes to use.
- If an athlete needs a support worker in order to participate in the sport (or to manage day-to-day activities while participating, for instance, as an interpreter, when consuming water, washing their hands, etc.) that person should be included in your considerations when calculating the maximum number of people in the facility at one time.
- If an athlete has a support worker they are in regular contact with but who is not required to assist them during sporting activity, OCF advises that the support worker is enabled to stay at a reasonable and close distance so that they are available to support the disabled athlete, if needed, without being present during the sporting activities. For instance, they may be in another room of the facility, waiting just outside, or in a vehicle closeby.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- When masks are worn, make sure to take extra consideration that athletes with hearing impairments may struggle to understand you. There are masks available that have clear screens in the front, otherwise known as “lipreading masks,” which can be used when working with athletes with hearing impairment. If using such a mask, please ensure that the design and build ensures it protects against droplet transmission.
- When members enter Restrictive Level 2 and above in the Return to Play, they should ensure that they place added emphasis on maintaining physical distance as much as possible while utilizing building groups by having athletes step away from each other as soon as it is safe to do so when a stunt comes down or contact activity has stopped.
- When working with athletes with visual impairment, the OCF recommends the following additional considerations:
 - If athletes usually need guiding to find their way around, members should try to implement verbal guiding rather than contact guidance.
 - members should ensure that visually impaired athletes are made aware of sanitisation stations and any new installations like protective screens and contactless payment terminals.
 - Tactile floor markers may be helpful to support visually impaired athletes to maintain social distancing

Some athletes with disabilities may not feel comfortable returning to play at this stage or may not get an agreement from their doctor to do so. The OCF advises that members ensure an opt-in ethos is supported and that athletes with disabilities are not indirectly discriminated against by putting undue pressure on those athletes to return immediately on reopening of the facility. Instead, members should ensure there is still a place on the team for these athletes when they feel it is personally safe for them to return and/or they have an agreement from their doctor to do so. Members should also consider virtual options for those unable to participate in person.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Guidance for Return to Competition

Cheerleading competitions usually take place in large sporting arenas and event spaces. In Ontario, most competitions are run by independent, private event producers (EPs).

The OCF aims for EPs to recognize our RTP and place a premium on athlete safety while creating best practices that uphold the spirit of policies listed.

At this time, in-person events will be unable to proceed based on current government rules. Virtual events may take place, providing that they are operated in a fashion that respects all municipal, provincial and federal guidelines. We encourage EPs to take all steps necessary to ensure athletes' protection and safety in the virtual sphere.

The OCF and EPs will be led by government advice through risk assessments and the timelines set out by venues as to the return date for live in-person competitions.

Guidance for Return to High-Performance Training

Cheerleading in Ontario consists of recreation, scholastic, collegiate, all-star and professional league athletes. Within the scholastic, collegiate and all-star categories, **our** high performance athletes are considered to be any athletes competing at the World Championship level³. **It must be noted that the government's current definition in the "Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020" that allows exceptions for high-performance and parasports does differ from the OCFs definition. The government definition must be used until further notice and is outlined below.**

- **Persons who are athletes, coaches and officials training or competing to be a part of Team Canada at the next summer or winter Olympic Games or Paralympic Games if the persons are,**
 - i. **identified by a national sport organization that is either funded by Sport Canada or recognized by the Canadian Olympic Committee or the Canadian Paralympic Committee, and**

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

- ii. permitted to train, compete, coach or officiate under the safety protocols put in place by a national sport organization mentioned in subparagraph i.

Any further clarification will be communicated as it is received.

The OCF is waiting for Cheer Canada to determine its training plans for Team Canada athletes for the current season (2021 World Championships). Once these are announced, there will be a review and recommendations will be provided.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Footnotes:

1 - The following definitions may be of use to you: A building skill or stunt is defined as any skill in which an athlete is supported above the performance surface by one or more persons.

Tumbling is defined as any hip-over-head skill that is self-supported on the training surface.

2 - Cheerleading stereotypes frequently contribute to misconceptions about our sport. We urge readers to familiarize themselves with modern cheerleading to best understand and comprehend this Return to Play.

3 - High Performance definition derived from Sport Canada below.

“High Performance: defined in this document as a sport system that supports athletes that have stepped onto the Podium Pathway **(or equivalent)**. It includes the resources and support personnel in place to support them that culminates in performance at the Olympic / Paralympic Games and/or **single sport Senior World Championships.**”

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/sport-policies-acts-regulations/high-performance-strategy.html>

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Useful Resources

Covid Toolkit for OCF Members

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/3/folders/1N03UeRJp8fJff_H9vLIJdVgd-eCdgoHY

Items included in the toolkit include items like: Athlete Code of Conduct, Return to Play for cheerleading, Sample forms (e.g. Waivers, Assumptions of Risk, Cleaning checklists)

*Resources will be made available as they are created or requested by the membership

OCF Website

<http://www.ocfcheer.com>

Cheer Canada and OCF's COVID-19 Resources

<https://cheercanada.ca/covid-19-resources/>

Program Risk Assessment and Mitigation Tool

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z7a3DAoWu4l00quRL0swJy-lhKwEh8GO/view?usp=sharing>

Government of Ontario Covid-19 Self-Assessment Tool

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces-eng.pdf>

Approved Cleaning products for use against SARS and Cov-2

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Awareness resources

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources.html>

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Appendix 1: Cheer Canada Letter of Support for OCF



PO Box 47055 Creekside
Calgary, AB T3P 0B9
CheerCanada.ca

October 3, 2020

To: Hon. Lisa Macleod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

Please accept this letter from Cheer Canada in support of the Ontario Cheerleading Federation's ability to govern the sport of Cheerleading in Ontario.

Across the country, other Cheerleading Provincial Sport Organizations have been able to navigate the return to sport safely and efficiently. While each province is slightly different, member clubs are following their provincial governing body and provincial health guidelines very closely. Many safety measures have been implemented, such as minimizing and/or eliminating physical contact, masking, and increasing sanitization of gyms. Currently, we are pleased with the education and awareness of the members in Ontario, along with their willingness to adapt to safety guidelines and protocols established by the Ontario Government to ensure athletes and coaches can safely return to play.

We know that COVID-19 has been very challenging for our entire country from not only an economical perspective, but also in regard to the mental health and well-being of Canadians. Cheer Canada believes that the health and safety of our athletes and coaches is paramount, and we support the Ontario Cheerleading Federation's ability to navigate this appropriately. We recognize that, for many, cheer practice is the mental health break they need from a world of fear and isolation. With proper physical distancing, wellness screening, reduced numbers of athletes in the gym, and enhanced sanitization, cheerleading provides a much needed opportunity for socially distant physical fitness, and to develop mental fortitude. Programs provide a lifeline to many athletes who feel lost in this 'new' and somewhat terrifying world and we respectfully request that you keep that lifeline open. Cheer provides an essential part of the social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of many Ontario youth. We know that during the covid pandemic, only 0.8% of youth are meeting 24-hour movement guidelines and a return to sport for Cheer provides an essential part of helping improve that important and health preserving statistic.

Thank you for providing resources to your stakeholders that help Ontarians better understand how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while training, practicing, and competing in our sport. We appreciate your partnership as we attempt to keep our nation mentally and physically healthy.

Thank you for taking the time to review this letter. Please reach out if you have any further questions.

Tara Savoie

President, Cheer Canada
president@cheercanada.ca
www.cheercanada.ca
519.741.4761

cc: Steve Harlow | Assistant Deputy Minister
Derek Rowland | Deputy Chief of Staff
Kayla Fernet | Director of Stakeholder Relations
Office of the Minister, Hon. Lisa MacLeod Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

<https://www.participation.com/en-ca/resources/children-and-youth-report-card>

*Cheer Canada is the national governing body for cheerleading in Canada and is a member of the International Cheer Union.
Cheer Canada est l'organisme national directeur du sport du cheerleading au Canada et est membre de l'International Cheer Union*

 Info@cheercanada.ca  [@CheerCanada](https://twitter.com/CheerCanada)  [@Cheerleading Canada](https://www.facebook.com/CheerleadingCanada)

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Appendix 2: Provincial Covid Cases vs Current RTP allowance

Provinces	Population	Total Cases Nov 23	% of Population affected	# of Cases per capita	Per 100,000 people	Limited and modified Contact permitted in PSO Return to Play
Prince Edward Island	160,000	69	0.04%	0.000431	44	Yes
New Brunswick	781,000	445	0.06%	0.000570	57	Yes
Newfoundland and Labrador	522,000	321	0.06%	0.000615	62	Yes
Nova Scotia	979,000	1190	0.12%	0.001216	123	Yes
Saskatchewan	1,178,681	6708	0.57%	0.005691	571	Yes
British Columbia	5,148,000	27,407	0.53%	0.005324	540	Yes
Manitoba	1,377,000	14,087	1.02%	0.010230	1029	Yes
Ontario	14,734,000	105,501	0.72%	0.007160	724	Yes
Alberta	4,422,000	48,421	1.10%	0.010950	1108	Yes
Quebec	8,575,000	133,206	1.55%	0.015534	1570	Yes

*Population # rounded to the nearest thousand. Case numbers as of **November 23, 2020**
Stats from [Canada.ca](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/26-38773-2020001/article/00001-eng.htm)

PSO Return to Play for other Provinces

New Brunswick [Return to Play](#)

Nova Scotia [Return to Play](#)

Saskatchewan [Return to Play](#)

Manitoba [Return to Play](#)

Alberta [Return to Play](#)

Quebec [Return to Play](#)

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Appendix 3: Cheerleading & the Safety of Wearing Masks During Practice

(from a Pulse Oxygen Saturation Perspective)

For more details with regard to this unpublished study please visit:

<https://www.cheerdistrict.com/post/is-training-in-a-mask-safe-a-cheer-specific-study> or contact Dr. W. Scott Christie at drscott@backinaction.ca.

In this study, two identical testing sessions were completed, one with masks, one without. Both testing sessions included a series of cheerleading skills and exercises (jumps, tumbling and a two and a half minute cheerleading routine simulation) where the goal was to moderately fatigue the athlete. Pulse Oxygen saturation levels were measured at rest and after fatigue. The study also included the 'Scale of Measuring Subjective Perceptions Questionnaire' to better understand the psychological effects of wearing a mask.

NOTE: Blood Oxygen above 88 is considered normal. Further investigation is warranted when blood oxygen levels are below 88 as these are abnormal levels.

Results:

When comparing the testing session with athletes not wearing a mask and the testing session with athletes wearing a mask, the Pulse Oxygen saturation levels stayed within a normal healthy range.

Utilizing the 'Scale of Measuring Subjective Perceptions Questionnaire' the athletes reported that training with a mask was “harder” despite the results that Pulse Oxygen saturation levels were normal.

Conclusion:

There is no evidence to suggest that wearing a mask during a cheerleading practice is detrimental to a cheerleaders health.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety. Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.

Although official conclusions will be drawn once the appropriate statistical analysis has been completed, it can be assumed that wearing a mask is more psychological than harmful to the athletes.

A recently published study demonstrated lowered ventilation and VO_2 max in adults while performing in a mask at **maximal intensity exercise**¹. Although this study tested adults at maximal intensity and is different from the study presented, it is important to understand the athletes' fitness levels, mitigate large amounts of fatigue, and give athletes sufficient rests and water breaks while in practice.

*Please note, the results of this test may vary based on: specific health conditions of the athletes, athlete's age, or with the type of mask being worn.

Disclaimer:

Ontario Cheerleading Federation (OCF) has prepared this document based on the latest information available to date. It was approved on November 30, 2020 by the OCF executive and any updates will be communicated to the OCF member and indicated by date. The Ontario Cheerleading Federation Return to Play for cheerleading is intended to be used in its entirety.

Individual sections should not be used alone without consideration of the document as a whole.