



FENB Return to Play Protocol - September 2020

Under the guidance of national sport organizations such as the Canadian Fencing Federation, [Sport Canada](#) (SC), and [Own The Podium](#) (OTP), Fencing-Esgrime NB (FENB) is working on return-to-play protocol that is considerate of the health circumstances we are currently facing in order to protect our members, families and communities. The concept is designed to gradually re-start our sport, all while respecting the rules issued by the federal and provincial Public Health authorities.

All member clubs must follow these protocols, although the restriction and required practices of national, provincial, and municipal public health directives always take precedence. As fencing is an indoor contact sport, it falls under the phase 2 yellow, and any time a jurisdiction reverts to a phase higher than this, fencing clubs in that jurisdiction must cease their operations.

This is a working document and these protocols are subject to change as understanding of best practices evolves and the situation in the province changes.

Effective Date: September 1, 2020

Reference Documents:

GNB: [Coronavirus Information Page](#)

WorkSafe NB: [Embracing the New Normal](#)

Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (Public Health): [Prevention Recommendations](#)

CFF: [Return to Play Protocol](#)

Own the Podium: [Risk Assessment and Mitigating Checklist Tool](#)

September 2020 Update to Guidelines

Clubs that have been opened over the summer can proceed to Phase 5. Any club opening in September is asked to start at Phase 1 and work through the different phases through the first four weeks (one phase per week) within designated training groups for athletes and coaches to understand what can and can't be done within those phases.

Note while Phase 5 allows intraclub/interclub interaction, other protocols must still be adhered to, especially the following:

- Classes must be separated by a 30-minute window and the practice space must be cleaned and disinfected between classes.
- A maximum of 1 fencer per 15 square metres must be adhered to in classes.
- Fencers must always maintain physical distancing when not actively fencing/doing drills.
- Coaches and fencers must always take steps to minimize duration and intensity of contact.
- Clubs and athletes must not share fencing masks, gloves, jackets, breeches, or any other equipment.
- Coaches and fencers must either machine wash or clean and disinfect all equipment after each practice.
- Everyone must be prescreened before entering the practice space.
- A daily log of all people who enter the club (along with their contact information) must be kept by the club for at least eight weeks.

Club Expectations

Before Opening

- Clubs must complete an operational plan and have a copy of it in the club.
- Clubs must complete the Own the Podium Club Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist tool.
- Clubs must score “very low” or “low” in the COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool for Sports.
- Clubs should consider updating their waivers / assumption of risk forms to include COVID-19.
- Clubs must ensure proper handwashing posters are posted in washrooms; where possible (private facilities), physical distancing, hand sanitizing, and self-isolating posters should also be posted.
- Where possible, clubs should clearly display floor marking to demarcate proper physical distancing in hallways and other traffic areas.
- Clubs should demarcate an area within the training space designated to keep individual bags/equipment to facilitate physical distancing.
- Install hand-sanitizing stations at every club entry and exit.
- Clubs should communicate to their members their new protocols, along with the reminder that the mode of infection for COVID-19 happens via droplet transmission through the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clubs and athletes must not share fencing masks, gloves, jackets, breeches, or any other equipment. In the absence of personal equipment, clubs should assign club equipment to a specific fencer for individual use. Every fencer should bring their own equipment to and from training rather than leaving it at the club.
- There should be a person designated as responsible for recording all relevant information for tracking, including recording first name, last name, email address, and phone number of each person at each training session, as well as date/time/duration of the training session, and declarations of NO responses to the self-assessment.
- There should be a person designated as responsible for handling all COVID-19 correspondence for the club, including those to fencers, parents, club members, Public Health, FENB, other governmental bodies, and the media at large.
- Coaches, parents, fencers, and family members over 65 years old or those with chronic health issues (including but not limited to immunosuppression, lung disease, hypertension, heart disease, asthma, diabetes) should consider staying at home until further guidance by public health officials.

Designated Training Groups

- Fencers must be separated into Designated Training Groups prior to classes recommencing.
- Fencers must be allotted to one specific group, and should remain in that group until Phase 5. The coach also needs to remain the same for each group.
- The number of athletes per class is determined by space considerations:
 - For Phases 1 and 2 of the Return-to-Play Protocol, a minimum of a 5-metre bubble must be able to be maintained for each fencer, with a maximum of 1 fencer per 25 square metres.
 - For Phases 3+ of the Return-to-Play Protocol, a maximum of 1 fencer per 15 square metres is required.
 - The number of athletes per class must never exceed provincial guidelines for indoor gatherings.
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Class Schedule

- The maximum number of classes to be held per day is determined by phases.
 - In Phases 1 and 2, a maximum of two classes may be held per day, with Designated Training Groups.
 - In Phase 3, a maximum of three classes may be held per day, with Designated Training Groups.
 - In Phase 4, a maximum of four classes may be held per day, with Designated Training Groups.
 - In Phase 5+, there is no limit on the number of classes, but classes must be separated by 30 minutes in order to air out the space.
- The practice space must be cleaned and disinfected after every class. The entire space must be empty of people for a minimum of 30 minutes to allow droplets to clear the air and the space to be thoroughly disinfected.
- Private lessons cannot be run during 30-minute airing-out/cleaning time.
- In Phases 1–3, the coach and fencer participating in a private lesson should be part of the class immediately before or immediate after the private lesson; or the entire practice area needs to be cleaned and disinfected before and after use. In Phases 4+, up to 6 consecutive/concurrent private lessons can be given before needing to clean and disinfect the practice space.

Day-to-Day Operations

- A daily log of all people who enter the club (along with their contact information) must be kept by the club for at least eight weeks.
- If possible, open doors/windows of the facility to allow fresh air to enter the training area. Consider doing training outdoors if possible. If using fans, they should be pointed out of the training space, rather into it, to avoid spreading droplets in the training area.
- Clean and disinfect floors, door handles, light switches, doors, doorways, and bathrooms (including faucets, soap dispensers, and toilet handles) before and after every class. (See notes below about cleaning and disinfecting.) Scoring machines and reel boxes should also be cleaned and disinfected after class use.
- No food or meals are to be eaten during regular practices or in practice spaces. Communal water fountains/sinks should not be used to fill water bottles.
- Individuals should sanitize their hands prior to using club exercise equipment, such as exercise mats, medicine balls, balance boards and weights. Equipment must be cleaned and sanitized after every use, and should be disinfected on a regular basis.
- Reel clips and the last part of the cable should be sanitized after each match. Push the buttons on the fencing machine with your glove-hand or sword tip. Consider using personal phones with scoring apps instead of a communal remote for matches; otherwise sanitize the remote after each use.

Cleaning Terminology

- **Cleaning:** Refers to the removal of visible soil, dirt or debris. Cleaning does not kill germs but is effective at removing them from a surface.
- **Sanitizing:** Refers to reducing the number of germs on a surface to a safe level, as determined by public health standards, usually in about 30 seconds. Sanitizing efforts are primarily focused on personal hygiene.
- **Disinfecting:** Disinfecting refers to using a chemical/product to kill germs on a surface. Disinfecting is only effective after surfaces have been cleaned. Disinfecting times vary by product, so be sure to review product instructions.
- Hard surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers details can be found on the Health Canada website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>.

Coach Expectations

- Will wash their equipment in hot water after every day, including jacket, arm/leg protector, and pants. Will clean and disinfect their fencing mask, glove, and weapon after each class/private lesson.
- Should bring their own equipment, along with a face towel and full water bottle to practice. Water bottles that don't require touching the mouthpiece (i.e., those without a cap) are recommended. Water bottles are not to be shared.
- Will monitor themselves for symptoms and complete the self-assessment prior to entering the club every time. Coaches also will check in/out of the club every time.
- It is recommended that the coaches wear a face mask any time they are instructing only (i.e., not wearing a fencing mask).

Athlete Expectations

- Will bring their own hand sanitizer/wipes with them.
- Will monitor themselves for symptoms and complete the self-assessment prior to entering the club every time. Athletes will sign in/out of the club every time..
- Will only train with one designated group and only at one club in Phases 1–4.
- Fencers should bring their own equipment, along with a face towel and full water bottle to practice. Water bottles that don't require touching the mouthpiece (i.e., those without a cap) are recommended. Water bottles are not to be shared.
- All washable equipment should be machine-washed in hot water after every single use. Equipment such as weapons and masks, which cannot be machine-washed, should be cleaned and disinfected after each session.
- Maintain physical distance when possible during training.
- Do not shake hands, fist bump, or high-five. Saluting is now sufficient.
- Wearing a face-mask during training, where frequent adjustments are inevitable between water breaks and fencing mask usage, is at the discretion of the individual, and depends on the ability to maintain physical distance at all times.
- Proper [hand hygiene](#) must be performed immediately before putting on a face mask, as well as immediately after removing the face mask. Any face-mask adjustments must be followed immediately by proper hand hygiene without cross-contamination to another surface (e.g., do *not* use the same hand to adjust the mask and open the bathroom door).

- Face-masks should be changed if they become soiled or wet to maintain proper function. Reusable masks must be placed immediately in a sealable container to launder at home. Disposable masks must be immediately discarded directly into a covered receptacle after removal.
- **No food or meals** to be eaten inside the fencing facility.
- **Cough, and sneeze into your elbow!** Remember transmission occurs via droplet which means through sneezing, coughing or spitting while talking.
- **Change into your sports attire at home**, prior to coming to the club.
- Do not breathe heavily next to someone, even if they are 2 metres away in proximity.
- **Disinfect your phones** frequently. Consider keeping your phone inside a sealable bag while at practice to keep it clean.
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol-based sanitizers, regularly.
- Keep your belongings close by your bag. Only bring the equipment you require for practice/competition into the facility. Leave other belongings at home or in your car.
- Keep your bag/equipment in designated club areas only to maintain physical distancing.
- If you start to feel unwell while you are fencing, you should stop training immediately and leave the facility. Let your coach know that you are feeling unwell.

Parent Expectations

- Should drop off/pick their athlete outside the club facility.
- Will sign in/out if it is necessary to enter the club.
- Remind your kids about good hygiene etiquette.
- Encourage and remind your kids to clean and disinfect their fencing equipment after each use.
- Refrain from entering the club unless absolutely necessary, or unless your child is a minor and/or needs assistance. Parents should not expect to stay in the club unless their presence is necessary for the Rule of Two (during a private lesson, for instance). Adhere to proper PPE wear and physical distancing measures at all times.

Self-Assessment: Before going to their club, all athletes and coaches must complete a health self-assessment by answering the following questions:

1. Have I been tested positive for COVID-19 or have been tested and are awaiting results?
2. Has Public Health informed me that I may have been exposed to COVID-19?
3. Have I travelled outside of the Atlantic provinces in the last 14 days?
4. Do I have any **two or more** of the following symptoms:
 - Fever over 38 degrees Celsius
 - A new cough, or worsening chronic cough
 - Runny nose
 - Sore throat
 - Headache (unexplained)
 - Diarrhea
 - Trouble breathing
 - New onset of fatigue
 - New onset of muscle pain (unexplained)
 - Loss of sense of taste
 - Loss of sense of smell
 - Purple markings on fingers or toes

If you are experiencing any two of the above-mentioned symptoms, contact your primary health care provider or call 811.

Please consult Public Health resources for [more information on the symptoms of COVID-19](#) and for [further self-assessment tools](#).

All athletes must inform their coach/club leader if they answer YES to any of the above questions. Clubs are responsible for documenting this information, and informing all other individuals who were present at the same time as this person of the situation and reminding them to self-monitor, and take any other actions as directed by Public Health.

An athlete may not go to training if they answer YES to the above questions.

Athletes who have answered YES to any of questions 1-3 need to self-monitor for symptoms and refrain from going to practice for at least 14 days or as directed by Public Health. They also must symptom-free for 48 hours prior to attending practice.

If, at any point, an individual in a training group is diagnosed with COVID-19, that entire group, along with any other individual the coach has been in contact with, must be informed, proper authorities must be contacted to begin contact tracing, and the full group must self-isolate for 14 days, and others must self-monitor for symptoms and respect Public Health guidance. All communication about possible cases should respect the privacy of all individuals involved. Those without symptoms within those 14 days may, following authorization from their doctor, nurse practitioner, or Public Health, return to training.

Phases of Return to Play

While the CFF proposes longer timeframes for phases, New Brunswick is in the fortunate situation of having few cases and minimal active cases and fairly stringent provincial health policies. As such, we are comfortable modifying phases for New Brunswick at this time.

Timeframe for Reopening/Phases: Provincial Phase 2 Yellow

Phase	Duration/Groups	Allowed	Risk
Phase 1	2 weeks Designated training groups	-Group footwork -Target training -Light strength training -Stretching	Groups in indoor space
Phase 2	2-4 weeks / 4 classes Designated training groups	-Direct interaction with coach -Private technical lessons -Line drills -Moderate strength training, conditioning	-Close contact with coach -Increased breathing with physical distancing
Phase 3	2-4 weeks (4 weeks for beginner programs) Designated training groups	-Partner drills -"Combat" private lessons -Group beginner lessons	-Close contact with other fencers -Increased breathing with close contact with coach -Introduction of new population
Phase 4	4-6 weeks Designated training groups	Bouting	-Increased breathing with close contact with other fencers
Phase 5	Interclub interaction can start after both clubs are 2 weeks into Phase 5	Intraclub and interclub interaction (fencers can go to multiple clubs)	Interaction with people outside designated groups
Phase 6		Return to competition	