



Lifesaving Society Update

November 20, 2020

In light of the [new COVID-19 orders released yesterday](#) by the Provincial Health Officer, and effective to December 8, 2020 at the earliest, the Lifesaving Society provides the following guidelines for aquatic facilities and programs:

1. Mask Requirements: The November 19, 2020 Province-wide Restrictions state:

“Masks are now required for everyone in all public indoor settings and workplaces. People who cannot put on or remove a mask on their own are exempt.”

- *Employers are expected to enforce the mandatory mask policy with both employees and customers*
- *A customer can be refused entry or service if they do not wear a mask.”*

On page 34 in our [Reopening Guidelines](#) we state that aquatic staff should:

- *“Practice physical distancing and wear protective facemasks/face-covering.*
- *Ensure facemasks/face-covering for lifeguards roaming at deck level, on the beach or dock.”*

And on pg. 41, Appendix C, #2 under Protocols for Safety Education and Rule Enforcement:

“Practice physical distancing which may include wearing protective facemask/face-covering while providing safety education and rule enforcement.”

While the Lifesaving Society previously recommended the use of masks for lifeguards and other aquatic staff, it is now mandatory throughout BC. In addition, [Health Canada](#) has recommended the use of a “non-medical mask or face covering” and stated that:

*“A mask or face covering can be [homemade](#) or purchased, and **should**:*

- *be made of at least 3 layers*
 - *2 layers should be tightly woven material fabric, such as cotton or linen*
 - *the third (middle) layer should be a filter-type fabric, such as non-woven polypropylene fabric*
- *be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaping*
- *allow for easy breathing*
- *fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops*
- *be comfortable and not require frequent adjustments*
- *be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty*
- *maintain its shape after washing and drying”*

Due to the humid environment common at indoor pools, it may be necessary to have additional masks/face coverings available to allow for change when they become damp and thereby less effective.

- 2. Public Use of Masks:** Based on the above excerpt from the most recent order, it is mandatory that your patrons wear masks anywhere in your facility except while swimming or moving from one pool to another (assuming they maintain appropriate physical distancing from others).

Masks are not required in hot tubs, saunas and/or steam rooms, however physical distancing must continue to be maintained. If deemed feasible and safe by the operator, the use of masks in these areas is an optional additional safeguard.

- 3. Courses and Recertifications:** The November 19, 2020 Province-wide Restrictions state:
“At this time, all non-essential travel should be avoided. This includes travel into and out of B.C. and between regions of the province. For example:
- Do not travel for a vacation
 - Do not travel to visit friends or family outside of your household or core bubble

What is essential travel?

Individual circumstances may affect whether a particular trip is considered essential or non-essential. Essential travel within B.C. includes:

- Regular travel for work within your region
- Travel for things like medical appointment and hospital visits

For example, if you live in Vancouver and work in Surrey you can continue to commute.”

The Lifesaving Society suggests that training courses and recertifications for First Aid, Lifesaving and National Lifeguard within BC can continue as long as:

- a. All candidates reside in the same health region and are not travelling from one health region to another to attend the course/recertification. In regard to instructor and trainer leadership, communication with the host Affiliate will be important to determine if the course/recertification is deemed ‘essential’.
- b. The skills adaptations for all Lifesaving Society courses are maintained as outlined in the *Skills Adaptation Evaluation Chart During COVID-19*.
 - i. The bubble buddy system and social circles (excluding household members) are no longer permitted while the current order is in effect.
 - ii. Note regarding ‘Contact Level’ --- a training or lifesaving sport rescue manikin cannot be used as a substitute for a full-body manikin or a household member.
 - iii. For skill adaptations listing bubble buddies as the only permissible contact level (i.e. Team Approach and BVM), a household member may be used while the order is in effect. An exception to this can be made if all candidates in the course are already in a work cohort, referring to a group of fellow workers who work exclusively together on a regular basis.
- c. All other COVID-19 protocols are followed as outlined in the *Guidelines for Delivering Training During COVID-19*.

For Affiliates, both the *Skills Adaptation Evaluation Chart During COVID-19* and the *Guidelines for Delivering Training During COVID-19* can be accessed when you login to Affiliate Resources. For Instructors/Trainers, they are accessed through the [Mandatory COVID-19 Instructor Update](#).

The Lifesaving Society’s purpose in interpreting the PHO orders as stated here is to help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 and keep us all safe. We will be pursuing further interpretations of the new orders with the Provincial Health Officer and provide you with any updates as we receive them.

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