

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a yellow life preserver vest, is seen from behind, sitting in a swimming pool. In the background, there is a blue banner with the Lifesaving Society logo and the website address 'lifesaving.bc.ca'. The scene is outdoors with greenery and a wooden chair visible.

# Restart Step 3 - Guidelines for BC & Yukon Pools & Waterfronts

June 24, 2021

LIFESAVING SOCIETY  
BC & Yukon Branch



## Lifesaving Society Canada is

The national, not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization that has been training swimmers to be Lifesavers, Lifeguards and Instructors in Canada since 1908 and in BC since 1911.

Dedicated to the prevention of drowning and aquatic-related injury across Canada.

A member of the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) Commonwealth organization and the Canadian representative in the International Life Saving Federation (ILS).

## Lifesaving Society Canada's Aims are to

- Promote public awareness and understanding of the responsibility every Canadian assumes when working or playing in an aquatic environment.
- Provide educational opportunities for preparing swimmers to be lifesavers and for training highly skilled lifeguards.
- Pursue research to enhance and support the continuing development of its programs and to maintain technical excellence.
- Provide consultation services for educational, recreational and health agencies in communities throughout the country.

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# Restart Step 3 - Guidelines for BC & Yukon Swimming Pools & Waterfronts

These Guidelines follow up on those released by the Lifesaving Society in [June 2020](#) and several subsequent Updates which can be found on the [Society website](#). They are based on [BC's Restart Plan](#), "A careful, four-step plan to bring us back together and focused on protecting people and safety getting life back to normal."

With very few changes related to Step 2 of the Restart Plan and with the short time between Steps 2 & 3, these guidelines are based on the best knowledge to date to guide aquatic management and staff for Step 3.

## [BC's Restart Plan](#) (as of June 15, 2021)

### Step 3: Earliest start date July 1

The criteria for moving to Step 3 is at least 70% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with low case counts and declining COVID-19 hospitalizations.

The earliest date we move to Step 3 is July 1.

### PHO guidance

- Masks are recommended in public indoor settings
- Engage in careful social contact
- If you or anyone in your family feels sick stay home and get tested immediately

Activities	New things you can do
<b>Personal gatherings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to usual for indoor and outdoor personal gatherings</li> <li>• Sleepovers</li> </ul>
<b>Organized gatherings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased capacity at both indoor and outdoor organized gatherings with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place</li> <li>• Fairs and festivals can operate with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place</li> </ul>
<b>Travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada-wide recreational travel</li> </ul>
<b>Businesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No group limit for indoor and outdoor dining</li> <li>• Liquor service restrictions lifted</li> <li>• Bingo halls, casinos and nightclubs can operate with a limited capacity</li> </ul> <p>Businesses must operate based on a new sector COVID-19 Safety Plan.</p>
<b>Offices and workplaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued return to the workplace</li> <li>• Seminars and bigger meetings allowed</li> </ul> <p>Workplaces must operate based on a new sector COVID-19 Safety Plan.</p>
<b>Sports and exercise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All indoor fitness classes allowed, usual capacity</li> <li>• Limited indoor spectators allowed</li> </ul>

## BC's Restart Plan (cont'd)

### Step 4: Earliest start date September 7

The criteria for moving to Step 4 is more than 70% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with low case counts and low COVID-19 hospitalizations.

The earliest date we move to Step 4 is September 7.

### PHO guidance

- Masks in public indoor settings a personal choice
- Normal social contact
- If you or anyone in your family feels sick stay home and [get tested immediately](#)

Activities	New things you can do
Personal gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Return to normal personal gatherings and social contact</li></ul>
Organized gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased capacity at large organized gatherings, like a concert</li></ul>
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Canada-wide recreational travel</li></ul>
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Businesses will continue to operate based on the new COVID-19 safety guidelines and their updated COVID-19 Safety Plan</li></ul>
Offices and workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workplaces fully reopened</li></ul>
Sports and exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Return to normal sport competitions with an updated COVID-19 Safety Plan in place</li><li>• Increased outdoor and indoor spectators</li></ul>

Experience, queries and feedback from those working in the aquatics field have contributed much to this document. The Lifesaving Society will continue to monitor the status of the pandemic and its effect on aquatic recreation and instruction to support pool and waterfront owner/operators in their efforts to return to normal operation.

### Disclaimer

The following Lifesaving Society guidelines have been developed to assist owners and operators to adapt their facility's operation to mitigate the risk to staff and public health posed by COVID-19.

These guidelines reflect the best available data at the time they were prepared and may require revision as new information becomes available. Examples used within the document do not guarantee the prevention of aquatic-related incidents or disease transmission and do not replace other strategies for promoting health & aquatic safety.

The Guidelines for Reopening BC & Yukon Swimming Pools and Waterfronts (June 2021) do not replace or supersede local, provincial/territorial or federal legislation or regulations or directives from the Ministry of Health and Provincial Health Officer.



## Step 3 Implications for Aquatic Operations

With the prospect of a continued decrease in COVID-19 cases and a continued increase in vaccinations, some practices and procedures within aquatic facilities may be revised.

Revised guidelines are based on the understanding that:	Relevant Research/Plan
a) Research shows that appropriately treated swimming pool water (1.5 ppm or mg/litre with a pH of 7.2) reduces the infectivity of the virus by more than 1,000-fold within 30 seconds.	<a href="#">Inactivation of COVID-19 in chlorinated swimming pool water</a>
b) Research shows that common touch surfaces are not known to be a common source of virus transmission. According to the BC Centre for Disease Control, <i>“Even though COVID-19 can survive for hours or days on different surfaces, infection from contact with contaminated surfaces appears to be rare. The most common type of spread is through contact with the respiratory droplets of an infected person.”</i>	<a href="#">CDC: COVID-19 and Surface Transmission for Indoor Community Environments</a>
c) Appropriate Safety Plans are in place and revised as required. COVID-19 Safety Plans are now to be modified to act as more broad Communicable Disease Plans.	<a href="#">WorkSafeBC COVID-19 Safety Plan Template</a> <a href="#">PHO Statement on Communicable Disease Plans</a>
d) Appropriate <a href="#">Pool Safety Plans</a> are in place and revised as per Section 13 of the <a href="#">BC Pool Regulation</a>	<a href="#">Pool Safety Plan Template</a> <a href="#">BC Pool Regulation</a>
e) Staff and public are made fully aware of components of the Safety Plans that affect their work and recreation.	n/a
f) For the ongoing prevention of all transmissible diseases, it will be prudent to maintain some practices established due to COVID-19 such as regular and thorough cleaning procedures and schedules, provision of hand sanitizer, employee sickness practice, etc.	n/a
g) Conditions, practices and guidelines are subject to change. The most current orders from Provincial Health Office shall prevail.	<a href="#">Provincial Gathering &amp; Events Order, June 22, 2021</a>

With these principles in mind, implications for specific aquatic facility amenities and activities include:

	<b>Step 3 Implications for Aquatic Operations</b>
<b>Recreational Swim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bather loads to increase; PHO to provide for some change in this at Step 3 date</li> <li>• Indoor spectators allowed to a maximum of 50 persons; PHO to provide for some change in this at Step 3 date</li> </ul>
<b>Facility Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations for patron and employee health checks to be revised by PHO</li> </ul>
<b>Changerooms, showers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be open currently using guideline of 5m<sup>2</sup> floor space per person; PHO will increase capacity at Step 3 date</li> </ul>
<b>Lifeguard Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of masks on deck is recommended as per public indoor settings guidance; PHO to provide for some change in this at Step 3 date</li> <li>• Maintain the practice of using bag-valve-mask (BVM) for resuscitation</li> <li>• Equipment such as PPE still not to be shared among staff members</li> <li>• Continue disinfection of rescue equipment after each use</li> <li>• Reduced frequency of cleaning regimes</li> </ul>
<b>Lap Swimming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lap swimmer numbers may increase; PHO to provide for some change in this at Step 3 date</li> </ul>
<b>Diving Boards, Slides, Spray Features, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be fully open for regular use</li> </ul>
<b>Hot tubs, Saunas, Steam Rooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have a Safety Plan in place that includes maximum occupancy limit taking distancing into consideration (COVID Safety Plans to be replaced by Communicable Disease Plans as per WorkSafeBC</li> </ul>
<b>Aquatic Sports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport is now defined as “an individual or group sporting activity and includes training and practice.”</li> <li>• Inter-club activities (training or competition) are permitted but must be limited to 50 persons. PHO to provide for some change in this at Step 3 date.</li> </ul>
<b>Spectator Seating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 50 spectators are allowed at outdoor sport activities. Spectators are not allowed at any indoor sport activities except those that provide care to a participant or player. For example, providing personal care or first aid to a player.</li> </ul>
<b>Aquatic Fitness Classes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All indoor fitness classes allowed at usual capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Swim Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to Red Cross guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>Lifesaving Society Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See table on next 2 pages</li> </ul>
<b>Cleaning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common touch points thoroughly disinfected at least once per day</li> </ul>

Note: At this time, new health authority directives appear to be less prescriptive, causing the local facility operator to make an assessment and decisions for their own facility based on certain principles and precedents.

## Programming Lifesaving Society Programs

For all aquatic facilities, the operator/programmer needs to take into consideration the individual and combined activities held and amenities available within their specific facility.

These recommendations do not replace the evaluation criteria or policies for Lifesaving Society programs as outlined in the most recent [Program Guide \(revised March 2021\)](#). The purpose of these guidelines and strategies is to adapt programming to the current provincial health office directives.

BC's Restart Steps	Lifesaving Society Program Guidelines
<p><b>Step 2</b> (June 15)</p> <p><i>At least 65% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with declining case counts and COVID-19 hospitalizations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance education is still recommended (see <i>COVID-19 Guidelines for Delivering Distance Education</i>)</li> <li>• Physical distancing measures remain in place for all Lifesaving Society programs taking place within indoor settings.</li> <li>• Physical distancing measures are no longer in place for all Lifesaving Society programs taking place outdoors (e.g., outdoor pool or waterfront setting).</li> <li>• Masks continue to be required for all Lifesaving Society programs when in a classroom setting or on a pool deck. Masks should not be worn in the water as it can cause a breathing hazard.</li> <li>• Masks are no longer required when Lifesaving Society programs take place outdoors (e.g., outdoor pool or waterfront setting).</li> <li>• All indoor ground-patrol lifeguards should wear masks while on duty. Lifeguards working at an outdoor setting do not need to wear a mask.</li> <li>• Anyone who feels sick may not attend or teach a Lifesaving Society program and should get tested immediately.</li> <li>• “Bubble groups” or “Bubble buddies” are now permitted (see <i>COVID-19 Skills Adaptation Chart</i>).</li> <li>• All provincial travel restrictions are lifted. Course participants may travel outside of their travel region to attend a Lifesaving Society program.</li> <li>• Employers/Affiliates must continue to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan and daily health check in place.</li> <li>• Outdoor practices for Lifesaving Sport teams are allowed (maximum 50 spectators).</li> <li>• Indoor practices for Lifesaving Sport teams are allowed (no spectators).</li> </ul>

<p><b>BC's Restart Steps</b></p>	<p><b>Lifesaving Society Program Guidelines</b></p>
<p><b>Step 3</b> (earliest start July 1)</p> <p><i>At least 70% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with low case counts and declining COVID-19 hospitalizations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance education is still recommended (see <i>COVID-19 Guidelines for Delivering Distance Education</i>).</li> <li>• Physical distancing measures in indoor settings (classroom settings and on a pool deck) are recommended.</li> <li>• Masks are recommended in indoor settings (classroom settings or on a pool deck) for Lifesaving Society programs. Masks should not be worn in the water as it can cause a breathing hazard.</li> <li>• All indoor ground-patrol lifeguards are recommended to wear a mask while on duty. Lifeguards working at an outdoor setting do not need to wear a mask.</li> <li>• Course participants and Instructors should engage in careful social contact (i.e., bubble groups).</li> <li>• Anyone who feels sick may not attend or teach a Lifesaving Society program and should get tested immediately.</li> <li>• Limited indoor spectators for Lifesaving Sport programs.</li> <li>• Employers/Affiliates must continue to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan and daily health check in place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 4</b> (earliest start September 7)</p> <p><i>More than 70% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with low case counts and low COVID-19 hospitalizations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wearing masks in indoor settings is a personal choice. Masks should not be worn in the water as it can cause a breathing hazard.</li> <li>• Normal social contact is permitted in all Lifesaving Society programs.</li> <li>• Anyone who feels sick may not attend or teach a Lifesaving Society program and should get tested immediately.</li> <li>• Employers/Affiliates must continue to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan and daily health check in place.</li> <li>• Workplaces fully re-opened</li> <li>• Return to normal sport competitions with an updated COVID-19 Safety Plan in place</li> <li>• Increased outdoor and indoor spectators for Lifesaving Sport programs.</li> <li>• <i>COVID-19 Skills Adaptation Chart</i> is no longer required when teaching Lifesaving Society programs.</li> <li>• <i>Online COVID-19 Instructor Update</i> is no longer required prior to teaching Lifesaving Society programs.</li> </ul>

*The Lifesaving Society extends compliments and much appreciation to pool operators, managers, supervisors, lifeguards and other aquatic staff who have implemented extensive safety measures to ensure public and staff safety as well as preventing COVID-19 outbreaks at aquatic facilities. Along with you, we look forward to emerging from these challenging times.*

## Aquatic Staffing Levels

Results from our April/May 2021 survey of BC pools (table below) showed a wide variation in experience related to the number of staff returning to their aquatic jobs as pools continue to reopen and provide a broader scope of programs and activities.

<b>% of Staff Returning</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
Less than 60%	14	18
60 – 80%	24	31
Over 80%	25	33
100%	14	18

Survey respondent comments included:

- A portion of newly-hired staff decided not to come back to work since they could stay on CERB when we reopened
- Some stayed in their home city as most post secondary learning turned to online
- Training (recerts) availability
- This has been the first time this has not been an issue. Staff have all returned and are keen to work and get hours. As well as much less staff calling in sick
- Several staff moved onto other career jobs after completing school
- Not enough shifts to make it worthwhile, let awards go, some choosing not to return
- Anyone who hadn't worked in 12 months was terminated as per collective agreement
- Have had approx. 20 staff resign since August 2020
- Mental wellness for staff heightened anxiousness
- We had several students who were living here to attend school. Now that school can be done remotely, many have opted to return home. Several staff have moved onto other jobs after completing school.
- All who wanted to return have returned, we will be hiring for a few more staff
- Getting them COVID trained and new COVID Lifeguarding standards
- They couldn't wait to get back at it!
- More interest than ever for staff
- We've had positive successful of staff accepting employment when they have been recalled. However, we have only been able to recall a small number of staff back due to these changes: shorter facility hours, reduction to the # of swim lessons we can offer, quantity of children in classes, less staff overlap
- We have brought back about 60% of our staff and still have more that would like to come back, but we are cautious not to bring too many back due to our limited hours available.
- We have had a couple go on a medical leave due to covid concerns. All others returned.
- Retraining and recertifying has been difficult. Some staff have decreased availability and have taken on other jobs.

## Aquatic Staff Recruitment Plan

Having seen a severe decrease over the past 16 months in training to ensure adequate staffing levels for pools and waterfronts, the Lifesaving Society has been implementing several initiatives to help mitigate the impact as outlined in the Branch’s 2021-2023 Business Plan. The table below outlines those initiatives and their current status. Please contact the Branch office at [info@lifesaving.bc.ca](mailto:info@lifesaving.bc.ca) or call 604-299-5450 if you require more information or have feedback.

<p>Being the provider of Lifesaving Society programs to the public, ongoing strong support to our Affiliates, both organizational and individual, is critical. We must continue to engage with them at all levels to continue to provide the services needed to allow them to enhance and grow program offerings to their customers. Although the Society provided significant leadership throughout the pandemic, with the anticipated shortage of aquatic staff as we emerge from full and partial closure of facilities, the provision of training resources and personnel will be of the highest priority going forward.</p>		
Strategy/Goal	Tactic	Status
Promotion to engage and inspire youth to pursue lifeguard/instructor as a job	<p>Provide virtual booth at Education &amp; Career Fairs that draw over 9,000 students</p> <p>Promote new website <a href="http://NationalLifeguard.ca">NationalLifeguard.ca</a></p>	<p>Completed May 6, 2021; plan to participate in late 2021 &amp; 2022</p> <p>Website complete, actively promoting</p>
Promote the establishment and growth of Jr. Lifeguard Clubs and TeleGames	<p>Develop promotional messaging for Junior Lifeguard Clubs and TeleGames</p> <p>Profile successful JLCs as testimonial to the benefits of having a club</p> <p>Provide funding for equipment purchase for new and existing JLCs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Funding secured; 16 grants of \$1500 approved June 15, 2021</p>
Ensure adequate number of trainers and instructors in all regions of the Branch	<p>Track the number of trainers at all levels and in all streams to determine needs going forward</p> <p>Provide increased number of training courses to ensure adequate levels and succession</p>	<p>Ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 35 new National Lifeguard Instructors trained to June 24, 2021</li> <li>- 55 new Trainers trained to June 24, 2021</li> </ul>
Promote increased programming of Society courses	To ensure adequate staffing levels for Affiliates, their capacity to program additional Society courses will be reviewed.	Member Services staff increasing contact points with Affiliates in regard to programs being offered
Increase access to Lifesaving Society programs leading to lifeguard certification	<p>Revise Bronze Cross program to become Assistant Lifeguard designation</p> <p>Reduce National Lifeguard training age from 16 to 15 years of age</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>



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