

Powerchair Sports Victoria Guidance and Return to Play Plan

Return to Play Guidance for Community Sport and Recreation Organisations

This guidance and template have been developed to assist State Sporting Associations (SSAs), National Sporting Organisations (NSO's) and peak sport and recreation bodies prepare a Return to Play plan. Return to Play plans can be adopted and implemented by leagues, associations and clubs.

The Return to Play plan is intended to help organisations return safely to sport and recreation activities under the latest Stay at Home and [Restricted Activity Directions issued by the](#) Victorian Chief Health Officer. The plan allows each organisation to consider their activities and the environment in which activities take place.

State Sporting Associations will be supported in preparing Return to Play plans consistent with the Stay at Home and Chief Health Officer's directions and this Community Sport and Recreation Guidance.

Sporting organisations will be responsible for developing and enforcing these Return to Play plans. Sport and Recreation Victoria can provide advice and support to organisations in the development of these, noting that those organisations are ultimately responsible for them.

Responses must:

- Align with the current Stay at Home and Restricted Activity Directions issued by the [Victorian Chief Health Officer](#)
- Provide complete responses and required supporting documentation
- Account for the current permitted level of sport or recreation activity in your plan, and identify how your plan will respond to changes in permitted levels of activity, whether that is community, competitive, non-competitive or recreation activities
- Ensure that activity resumption does not compromise the health of individuals or the community

In instances where you are unable to find your sport or recreation activity listed in the Resumption of Community Sport and Recreation activities list [[hyperlink](#)], you should refer to the Stay at Home and Restricted Activity Directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. Note: recreation includes all outdoor recreation activities including outdoor education and adventure and the resumption of these activities will need to consider current Stay at Home and Restricted Activity Directions.

If you are an State Sporting Association, National Sporting Organisation or a peak sport and recreation body and have any additional questions about preparing your Return to Play plan you can email info@sport.vic.gov.au

All community sporting clubs, associations and leagues are encouraged to contact their SSAs or DHHS Infoline direct on 1800 675 398 for advice on compliance with the Restricted Activity Directions.

Important note: Return to Play plans should be updated in line with any updates to the Victorian Chief Health Officer Restricted Activity Directions.

From 13 May 2020, the Victorian Chief Health Officer has approved community sport and recreation activities can resume according to the following rules:

- Groups of up to 10 people outdoors (or people from the same household), plus a coach or the minimum number of support staff reasonably required to manage the activity
- Parents and guardians taking children to and from training activities are required to follow the Chief Health Officers' Directions for public gatherings and maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres.

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- If they remain with their children during participation in sport, will be considered part of the group up to 10 people, unless they are formally coaching or instructing the activity.
- No indoor activity – indoor physical recreation facilities must remain closed
- Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres wherever reasonably possible
- All activity and training must be non-contact, and no competitions are to take place. Contact sports must be modified so that you can maintain 1.5m distance.
- No outside communal gym, playgrounds or skateparks can be used
- No outdoor or indoor swimming pools can be used
- No use of communal facilities, except for toilets
- If the activity is run by an operator of an indoor physical recreation facility (such as a gym, health club or fitness centre), a personal training facility (indoors or outdoors) or an arena or stadium, then the operator must keep a record of attendees including first name, phone number, date and time of attendance
- Shared equipment that touches the head of face or cannot be effectively cleaned should not be used i.e. soft materials, helmets or clothing
- Hand hygiene, frequent environmental cleaning & disinfection, use of own equipment where possible and minimise sharing of equipment

Return to Play Plan

Powerchair Sports Victoria understands the risks posed by COVID-19 and has developed this action plan to enable a swift recommencement of programs as things return to normal.

No programs will be commencing until appropriate measures are implemented to ensure the safety of participants.

This framework has been developed and is based upon the Australian Institute of Sport's Resumption of Sport and Recreation Activities National principles, these principles are outlined below.

Disability sport and recreation groups were some of the first to shut-down due to higher susceptibility to respiratory infections and co-morbid conditions.

As majority of the programs run by Powerchair Sports Victoria are indoor, responsibility of cleaning and maintenance and hygiene may be shared with the leisure facility delivering the program.

Responsibilities under this plan

Powerchair Sports Victoria retains the overall responsibility for the effective management of implementation of the return to sport activities and operations outlined in this plan. However, responsibilities of maintaining hygiene and cleanliness of facilities will be administered by the operators of indoor leisure centre and facilities which are delivering the program.

Powerchair Sports Victoria is responsible for:

- Approving the Return to Play plan (**Plan**) and overseeing the implementation of the arrangements in the Plan; and
- Revising the Plan as required, ensuring it reflects up to date information from government and public health officials.

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Powerchair Sports Victoria expects all members, participants, coaches, officials, committee members and volunteers to:

- Comply with the health directions of government and public health authorities as issued from time to time;
- Understand and act in accordance with the Plan as amended from time to time;
- Comply with any testing and precautionary measures implemented by Powerchair Sports Victoria;
- Act with honesty and integrity in regard to the state of their personal health and any potential symptoms; and
- Monitor their health and take a cautious approach to self-isolation and reporting of potential symptoms.

Vulnerable groups such as para-athletes and others with medical conditions may be at increased risk. Those with concomitant medical conditions need individualised management in consultation with their regular treating doctor(s) prior to return to training environments.

Considerations include increased susceptibility to respiratory infections, unique equipment (e.g. wheelchairs) that requires cleaning, accessibility of medical resources, risk of medical sequelae from COVID-19, and access to alternate training options.

Athletes/other personnel with concurrent medical conditions including; respiratory or cardiac disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity and immunosuppression due to disease or medication may be at increased risk.

Other groups that require special consideration include; individuals with neuromuscular disorders, individuals over 70 years of age, carers or support persons for or a household contact of a vulnerable person, athletes with suboptimal access to medical care.

Potential interventions for vulnerable athletes/other personnel include:

- Delaying a return to sport
- Training scheduled at designated 'lower risk' times (i.e. with no one else around)
- Maintaining social distancing measures
- Exclusion of 'high risk' athletes/other personnel from the training environment

Community sport members and individuals should not return to sport if in the last 14 days they have been unwell or had close contact with a known or suspected case of COVID-19,

In an environment of community transmission of COVID-19, any individual with respiratory symptoms (cough, sore throat, fever or shortness of breath), even if mild, should be considered a possible case of COVID-19.

All community sport members must be made aware not to attend sport environments if they are unwell and should use a cautious approach. Anyone who is unwell should be referred to a doctor in accordance with local Public Health Authority guidelines.

An athlete with a possible case of COVID-19 should refrain from training (even at home) until they have been cleared to do so by a doctor, given the potential for worsening illness.

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It should also be considered that anyone returning to sport and exercise after a period of social isolation and not exercising regularly may be at an increased risk of injury. Powerchair Sports Victoria will apply a graded return to mitigate injury risk, understanding that sudden increase in training load will increase the likelihood of an injury occurring.

General principles for Powerchair Sports Victoria athletes, participants, volunteers and committee members as restrictions lift and the program returns:

1. When practical, athletes and other personnel should maintain social distancing of at least 1.5m (e.g. between training drills/ efforts).
2. There should be no unnecessary body contact (e.g. hand shaking, high fives).
3. All powerchairs and equipment should be cleaned in-between breaks, during matches and within matches.
4. All support persons who are involved (including volunteers) should be wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which will be provided at all times.
5. Any tasks that should be done at home (e.g. team meetings, recovery sessions, online sessions) should be completed at home.
6. Hand hygiene stations should be placed in high traffic areas and entry/exit points during programs.
7. The majority of volunteers who support Powerchair Sports Victoria programs may also be from the most at-risk category so additional hygiene measures must also be followed by them.

Organisation details

Provide organisation name, contact person, phone number, type of organisation, ABN, address.

Organisation name: Powerchair Sports Victoria

Contact Person: Luke David

Phone number: 0424 160 170

Type of organisation: Community sports association

ABN: 54 171 697 981

Address: 7 Iluka Court, Bundoora, VIC 3083

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Return to Play Plan

1. Hygiene

A pre-emptive low-cost intervention such as enhanced hygiene measures of participants is key to reducing the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Examples of personal hygiene measures that should be promoted include handwashing and covering mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve during coughing/sneezing. Advice on cleaning is available from the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) and the [Commonwealth Department of Health](#).

What infection control measures will you introduce to ensure all participants and spectators are maintaining **personal** hygiene?

When indoor restrictions are lifted to allow numbers of up to 20 people indoors, and participants are able to partake in training or play competitively indoors we will:

1. Set up hand sanitizer station at the facilities entrance for all programs and athletes and support persons encouraged to wash hands when entering and exiting.
2. Instruct athletes, officials and support persons to cough into their elbow and to stay at home if unwell.
3. Encourage participants to always wear a mask off the court and to socially distance when not participating in matches/training.

How will personal hygiene and cleaning of **facilities and equipment be maintained** to minimise transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)?

All powerchairs and equipment should be cleaned in-between sessions and matches.

1.2 Have you increased regular cleaning schedules for common use areas?

N/A (Cleaning schedules are coordinated by council and local facility operators, we will be cleaning equipment in between sessions, matches as stated above)

2. Physical contact activities

Physical distancing decreases the risk of transmission by reducing incidence of contact with other persons. The Social Distancing Directions require that participants take reasonable steps to maintain 1.5m distance from all other people.

For activities that contain physical contact, or close interaction with other people, what protocols or modifications to activities can be implemented to ensure physical distancing is maintained?

When indoor restrictions are lifted to allow numbers of up to 20 people indoors, and participants are able to partake in training or play competitively indoors we will:

1. Encourage all participants to maintain social distancing of 1.5 meters when setting up their powerchairs and preparing for a match or training.
2. Modify training drills to avoid contact and encourage all athletes to maintain at least 1.5m distance (e.g. between training drills/ efforts).

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3. Allocate one volunteer who will assist if for any reason an athlete is needing support during a match or training activity, they will wear Personal Protective Equipment and also change their gloves after each occurrence of assisting an athlete.

3. Arrival and departure of participants, officials, parents or carers

Physical distancing decreases the risk of transmission by reducing incidence of contact between people. The Stay at Home Directions currently limit gatherings of groups of people to reduce the risk of people spreading coronavirus (COVID-19). The control of facilities and management of areas where people might gather will reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission.

What measures have you put in place for managing entry and exit points, separating assembly areas, adjustments to activity timings and maintaining physical distancing of people?

When indoor restrictions are lifted to allow numbers of up to 20 people indoors, and participants are able to partake in training or play competitively indoors we will:

1. Work closely with our venues to organise exclusive use of facility or staggered start times to other booking so that large groups will not be arriving at the same time.
2. Participants will be encouraged to not gather in groups before or after activities and to "Get in, Train, and Get out". There will be no participants allowed to linger within venues without clear purpose.
3. There will be clearly allocated athlete only zones.

4. Spectators/gatherings

The Stay at Home Directions currently limit gatherings to groups of 10 people to reduce the risk of people spreading coronavirus (COVID-19). Spectators, and other non-participants watching activities should not attend activities unless they have an essential role or they are parents and/or guardians. Public gathering limitations apply. Organisations should plan for activities without crowds to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

What protocols will be in place to restrict access to athletes and maintain recommended physical distancing?

When indoor restrictions are lifted to allow participants to train indoors we will:

1. Advise all athletes to attend all programs with a maximum of 1 support person unless it is essential to bring 2 with them for self-care needs.
2. Support persons will be exempt from social distancing requirements with their assigned athlete they are supporting.
3. Athletes attending training sessions will be required to register their attendance in advance and if they are bringing a support worker/parent with them. This will

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ensure that we remain within the group gathering limits.

4. Non-essential personnel should be discouraged from attending matches and training sessions.

When indoor restrictions are lifted to allow numbers of up to 20 people indoors, and participants are able to partake in competition we will:

1. Ensure all spectators maintain a minimum of 1.5m social distancing from each other (or every second seat).
2. Powerchair Sports Victoria will keep a record of attendees including first name, phone number, date and time of attendance and this will be provided to the operator of the facility after each session.

5. Sharing equipment

In combination with good hygiene practices, a similar pre-emptive measure is to promote behaviours such as not sharing drink bottles, food, and limiting the shared use of equipment. Equipment that touches the head of face or cannot be effectively cleaned (for example, if made from soft materials or clothing) should not be shared. Where sharing equipment cannot be avoided, equipment with smooth surfaces should be cleaned between sessions.

What modifications can be made to ensure there is no transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) through the sharing of equipment, contact with equipment and/or contact with any surfaces where participants may be at risk of infection?

When indoor restrictions are lifted to allow participants to train indoors we will advise the following:

1. No sharing of drink bottles and food or other equipment.
2. Athletes will be required to bring their own powerchairs and equipment and to take them home with them at the end of the activity.
3. Athletes will be required to bring their own uniform and equipment with no sharing of gloves, strapping tape, training bibs etc.
4. Club powerchairs which are used by participants who do not own their own will be cleaned before and after use and cannot be shared amongst participants.
5. All balls and equipment that is used will be cleaned thoroughly between sessions.

5.1 Do you have protocols in place for sports medicine staff who share medical equipment?

N/A. We do not utilise multiple sports medicine staff, so there is no sharing of equipment.

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6. Group/team activity

Restricted Activity Directions and Stay at Home Directions currently limit gatherings to up to 10 people outdoors (plus a coach or the minimum number of support staff reasonably required to manage the activity) which impacts team or group activities.

For team activities, what protocols are in place to enable a staged return to activities of small groups (up to 10) in non-contact formats?

1. Pre-registration of attendees will be required and numbers will be capped at current gathering limits.
2. No attendee will be permitted to attend without prior notification to the Association President.

6.1 Are changes required to participant behaviour during sport activities in addition to no shaking hands and high fives?

No unnecessary contact to be permitted until restrictions have lifted.

This includes:

- hand shaking
- hugging
- high fives etc.

Modified training drills that comply with social distancing rules only.

7. Indoor facilities

PLEASE NOTE THAT INDOOR ACTIVITY IS CURRENTLY PROHIBITED

The Restricted Activities Direction prohibits the use of indoor facilities such as club rooms, change rooms, and showers. Only toilets can remain open.

How will you ensure that indoor facilities, other than toilets, remains closed?

Our indoor programs will only recommence once this restriction is lifted, due to the high medical needs and chronic risk. This will be guided by individual leisure centre and recreation providers guidelines.

8. Travel

To prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Stay at Home Direction restricts travel to participate in sport and recreation activities to day trips only.

How can your return to play plan ensure travel is minimised and participants stay in the local neighbourhoods and towns?

Participants are only allowed to participate in local activities until restrictions are further lifted.

No interstate matches will be played until travel restrictions are lifted.

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9. High injury risk activity

To reduce the strain on Victoria's health and emergency services, common sense should be used in avoiding activities that have a high risk of injury that may result in hospitalisation.

What measures are in place for high injury risk activities that may result in hospitalisation?

Powerchair sports is not a high-risk activity. Injury that requires hospitalisation is extremely rare and if that was to occur leisure facilities risk management protocols would apply.

Powerchair Sports Victoria will apply a graded return to mitigate injury risk, understanding that a sudden increase in training load may increase the likelihood of an injury occurring. Although this is quite a low risk for our athletes.

10. Protocols

What protocols or processes are in place to ensure participants are free of coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms?

When indoor restrictions are lifted to allow numbers of up to 20 people indoors, and participants are able to partake in training or play competitively indoors we will:

On the day of activity participants will need to answer no to the following questions in order to be allowed to participate:

- Have you been in contact with a known or suspected case of COVID-19?
- Do you feel unwell or have any of the following symptoms?
 - fever or respiratory symptoms such as cough, sore throat and shortness of breath
 - Other cold and flu like symptoms like runny nose, aches and pains

A temperature check of each person will be taken as they enter the area of competition.

What protocols do you have in place for people who present to training with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever or respiratory symptoms such as cough, sore throat and shortness of breath)?

Any participant that presents at training with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be sent home, asked to self-quarantine and seek medical advice.

Participant will need to be cleared by medical practitioner before returning to training if they have contracted the COVID-19 virus.

How will you coordinate and communicate and changes to the directions to your clubs, members and stakeholders?

An initial electronic communication will be sent to all program participants and stakeholders which will outline the following:

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1. A copy of the Powerchair Sports Victoria Plan
2. Links to department of health hygiene and hand washing procedures

Further electronic communications will be sent to all program participants and stakeholders notifying them of any changes to the COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies

11. Communication

Communicating coronavirus (COVID-19) risk mitigation strategies to participants is vital. Setting and promoting expectations for required behaviours prior to recommencing activities will be crucial to ensuring activities are safe to return to and remain free of further restrictions. This includes communicating current restrictions, improved health literacy of participants and social distancing measures.

List the measures you will use to communicate and provide guidance to participants, teams and programs?

An initial electronic communication will be sent to all program participants which will contain our Plan.

An electronic survey (Google Forms) registration form will need to be completed before a participant can attend a session, advising the following.

1. Current government restrictions
2. Hygiene protocols
3. Pre-registration and COVID-19 symptoms screening process
4. Protocol for participants that present with COVID-19 symptoms

Further communication will be sent detailing changes, based on further restrictions being lifted or other changes to the COVID-19 protocols.

11.1 Do you have protocols to advise participants, officials and parents or carers to not attend if they are feeling unwell?

The above communications will also apply for officials, committee members, parents/support persons.

11.2 Do you have strategies to address non-compliance?

Powerchair Sports Victoria will require all athletes and support persons to agree to all COVIDSafe rules via the form mentioned above. If this is not agreed to, the Powerchair Sports Victoria committee will address the non-compliance with those involved which may involve going through the tribunal process.