

Victoria Orienteering Club

Return-to-Sport Guidelines

Effective: 9 Sep 2020

References:

- A. Orienteering in Canada and COVID-19 (<http://www.orienteering.ca/resources/covid-19>) (Updated 25 August 2020)
- B. Orienteering BC - Return to Sport Guidelines (24 July 2020)

Overview

The proposed guidelines for re-opening orienteering activities facilitated by the Victoria Orienteering (VicO) Club are based on the Orienteering BC (OBC) Return-to-Sport Guidelines and Orienteering Canada Covid-19 Management and incorporate all current recommendations and orders issued by the Province of BC and the Provincial Medical Health Officer. These recommendations and orders are intended to limit the transmission of the Covid-19 virus during the on-going pandemic, and include the following (as of July 2020):

- Self-isolating if you feel any flu-like symptoms
- Washing hands frequently
- Maintaining strict social distancing practices (2m separation between individuals)
- Avoiding assemblies of 50 or more people
- Sanitizing of all contact surfaces frequently
- Avoiding non-essential out-of-town travel

Covid-19 - Transmission Awareness

COVID-19 is transmitted via liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes but also potentially when they are talking in very close proximity to another person. The virus in these droplets then can enter the body of another person when that person breathes in the droplets or when the droplets touch the eyes, nose or throat of that person. This requires close contact – less than three to six feet - and is referred to as ‘droplet’ transmission, which is believed to be the primary way COVID-19 is transmitted.

COVID-19 can also be transmitted through droplets in the environment if someone touches a contaminated area then touches their face without cleaning their hands. The virus does not enter the body through skin, but it enters through the eyes, nose or mouth when the person touches their face. Unfortunately, human beings touch their faces very often throughout the day, much more than they realize. This is why regular hand-washing and cleaning of high-touch surfaces is so important.

For COVID-19 there are some emerging indications that there are people who can shed COVID19 virus 24 to 48 hours prior to symptom onset, but at present, it is not known whether this is a significant risk factor for transmission.

Droplet transmission is much more likely when in close contact in an indoor setting. Transmission is less likely in an outdoor setting, where there is more space for people to keep physically distanced. However, in the context of sports, even outdoors there can be risks from high-touch surfaces because many sports involve objects that are normally shared among players, officials or volunteers (SI units, flags, registration table, etc.).

Background of Orienteering:

Orienteering is essentially an individual sport, pursued outdoors. It involves moving quickly through the terrain while navigating from point-to-point with the aid of a map and compass. The points to which the orienteer is navigating are typically marked in the terrain (by flag or tape) in advance, by another person, but in its basic form (such as an informal training run), orienteering requires no person-to-person contact.

At organized orienteering competitions (in a pre-pandemic world), on the other hand, competitors are timed electronically, and start their course at staggered short time intervals (1-3 minutes separation). These events are open to all comers (although competitors must be current members of an OBC-affiliated club), and even non-championship events will often attract 30-100 participants.

Organizing officials place the check point markers and timing units in the competition terrain in advance of the event, and retrieve and store them after the event is finished.

The start and finish protocols for such events also involve teams of officials who manage the competitor traffic, confirm the identity of each starter and record their finish time. Other officials may be responsible for managing parking, and sometimes providing water, sports drinks and snacks at the finish area for competitors, who are encouraged to compare and discuss their results. The final results are typically posted on the organizing club's website.

Orienteering has inherent risks (bodily injury, exposure, etc.) and therefore OBC-affiliated clubs and their members carry liability insurance, arranged through Orienteering Canada, which provides liability coverage for suits arising from participation in orienteering activities. However, the current insurer has now specifically **excluded** coverage of potential suits arising from contracting Covid19 illness in the course of participating in orienteering events. A similar restriction is being faced by most other Canadian sports organizations at this time.

Return to Sport Guidelines for Orienteering

1. VicO Club members will conduct themselves in a manner that fully respects the recommendations of the Provincial Health Office and the local health authorities for the area in which an event is being held. It is anticipated that these recommendations will change as the pandemic unfolds, and that the VicO Club - Return to Sport guidelines will be modified as appropriate to reflect any relevant updates.
2. As of 25 Aug, 2020, the Orienteering Canada COVID-19 Management Plan has been updated to specify that traditional orienteering competitions with on-site officials and the use of Sport-Ident electronic timing are permitted. However, these are limited to low-competitive / training events conducted at the club level only. **Inter-club competitive events are not permitted at this time and travel to another club event is not encouraged.**
3. To enable orienteers to continue to derive the benefits of orienteering by staying active outdoors and enjoy participation in an orienteering event, the VicO Club will organize the following:
 - a. 'virtual' orienteering events for their members, either using GPS-based control identification and run-time recording systems such as *MapRunF*, or other non-contact control identification methods, and
 - b. in-person club orienteering events modified to increase social distancing and minimize contact between participants during the registration, start and finish process.

4. All virtual and in-person events must be organized by appropriately certified officials, in order to be sanctioned under Orienteering Canada rules, and thereby covered by our sport's liability insurance. Event advertising must also emphasize that **only current VicO Club members** can participate, since only members are covered by this insurance. Virtual events, by their nature, allow for participation without any contact with orienteering equipment or other orienteers and therefore can be conducted easily within Provincial Health Authority guidelines.

5. For in-person events, all efforts must be made to minimize person-to-person contact through modified registration, start and finish protocols designed to encourage social distancing and avoid prolonged contact and handling of objects. Guidelines for organizers and participants as detailed below must be followed.

In- Person Orienteering Events - Guidelines for Officials

- Participant Awareness - Event details must include instructions for all VicO club members to familiarize themselves with the guidelines contained in this document prior to attending an orienteering event hosted by the VicO Club. All participants at VicO events must be current members and have completed the on-site waiver.
- Event Payment - Payment will be completed via a non-contact process either through pre-payment or an on-site touchless payment system. Cash will not be handled.
- On-site Registration - All participants will be required to use hand sanitizer prior to proceeding with the registration process. All registration will be completed via-self registration to minimize contact between organizers and participants. All organizers and participants must wear masks during the registration process. Pens will be brought by participants or if used must be sanitized prior to re-use. All participants must space themselves a minimum of 2 meters away while waiting for the registration process.
- Health Questionnaire - All participants will be required to provide answers to a Health Questionnaire as part of their registration process.
- Map Distribution - Maps will not be handed out. Maps will be picked up by the individual participants in an area close to the start. It is the responsibility of the participant to bag their own map (if desire).
- Sport-Ident Sticks (if used) - will be picked up by the participant and returned at the Finish. Participants will write down their SI number during the self-registration process. After use at the event, Sport Ident sticks will be quarantined for a minimum period of 48 hrs prior to next use.
- Starts - A separate Start Area away from registration will be used. Participants will be encouraged to space themselves to allow a minimum of 2-3 minutes between starts. A large start window is to be used (depending on expected number of participants) to ensure there is no bunching at the start.
- Finish - a separate Finish will be located away from the Start and Registration Area. A combined Start/Finish will not be used. Participants will be encouraged not to congregate near the Finish Area.

- Participant Tracking - One person at the event will be assigned with the task of recording the names of personnel who head out on the course and checking them off on their return.
- Timing - Participants will either self-time or use MapRunF as a timing device. If Sport Ident is used, participants must ensure they maintain social distancing during the punching process and download phase. All used Sport Ident sticks must be collected in a labelled container and identified for quarantine.
- Results - Results will be posted online only. Results will not be announced or posted at the event venue so as to avoid the gathering or crowding of participants.
- Refreshments - Snacks and water will not be provided and are the responsibility of participants.

In- Person Orienteering Events - Guidelines for Participants

- Please make sure to follow all instruction to ensure pre-event registration has been completed prior to heading to the event, including confirming membership, and completing the waiver. Please consult the VicO Website for instructions.
- IMPORTANT - You **must** bring a signed Declaration of Health document to the event on the day of the event. This document can be found here: http://www.orienteeing.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/OrienteeringCanada_DeclarationOfHealth.pdf. This Health Questionnaire must be completed EVERY TIME you come to an orienteering activity. You will not be able to orienteer if you have not completed and signed the form. This form cannot be signed in advance; it must be signed on the day of the activity. This is an absolute requirement with no exceptions.
- On the day of the event, make sure you feel healthy and have no COVID-19 related symptoms. If you do in any way not feel well, DO NOT attend the event.
- Bring your own hand sanitizer, water and post-race snacks to the event and any other required orienteering equipment. Also, bring a pen to help complete the registration process. Sanitized pens will be available but may be limited in quantity.
- Wear a mask while in proximity of the organizers and other participants in the registration area. Mask can be removed once you are at the Start Area.
- Upon arriving at the event, make sure to complete the Health Questionnaire and follow all instructions to complete the self-registration process.
- Pre-pay for the event, or be prepared to pay at the registration site via a contact-less process using a credit or debit card. Cash will not be accepted.
- Maps will be located near the Start. Please collect your own map and bag it (if desired).

- Provide ample space around other participants (minimum of 2 meter distance), while waiting in the Registration Area. Only head to the Start when there are no other competitors waiting there.
- If control flags are used, avoid touching the flags or any other orienteering equipment. Ensure you allow distance between yourself and other competitors when approaching a control flag.
- Upon completing your course, please avoid congregating near the Finish Area. Return any Sport Ident equipment in the proper container.
- It is ok to socialize with other competitors, but please do so at the recommended distance of 2 meters while remaining in an outdoor location.
- As always, respect the course closing time. Remember that an official is waiting for you at the finish to record that you have returned safely.
- Please remember to be appreciative of any opportunities you have to be outdoors, active and orienteering. Be patient with others, be forgiving, be kind, stay safe, and thank the volunteers who make an orienteering opportunity of any sort possible for you.

6. All of these guidelines should be consistent with the guidelines distributed by Orienteering Canada, as posted at <http://www.orienteering.ca/resources/covid-19/>. Organizers should regularly monitor this website for on-going updates along with with updates to the Orienteering Canada Management Plan for COVID-19 Risk, which can be accessed here:

(https://docs.google.com/document/d/12K7ToqWk_aJ2cAPHjhoFsGIXr1VfiboDH-JYnhHYU/)

7. The resumption of orienteering activities must be carefully weighed against the evolving risks in the transmission of COVID-19. Changes may be expected as the situation continues to evolve. The pursuit of outdoor activities is considered low-risk and is fundamentally encouraged by Provincial Medical Health Officer to help promote physical and mental health during this challenging time. Staying safe is everyone's responsibility. Please be mindful to adhere to all the guidelines described here in order to have a safe and enjoyable orienteering experience.