

# Return to Play Guidelines – Phase 1

## PRE-GAME



- Recommend that players, parents, coaches and umpires are aware of safety protocols prior to arriving (via email if possible)
- It is recommended that signage is well displayed in the entry area regarding the spreading of the virus, proper hygiene, information on physical distancing and what to do if you have any symptoms.
- Facilities should develop protocol on entry into a ballpark for the teams and umpires.
- Encourage the wearing of a mask
- It is recommended that everyone complete a Declaration Form before entering the facility.
- If the Declaration Form is not available, standard screening questions on each person's health should be asked:
  - Have you travelled out of country in the last 14 days?
  - Do you have any symptoms – cough, shortness of breath, or fever?
  - Have you been diagnosed with or waiting on test results of Covid-19?
  - Have you recently (within the last 14 days) been exposed to someone diagnosed with Covid-19?
  - If a person answers yes to any of these questions, they must be denied entry to the facility.
- If a person is denied entry because of pre-screening, a person should be encouraged to visit a medical facility or hospital immediately and ensure that persons contact information is maintained.

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## PRE-GAME (CONTINUED)



- Immediately recommend that everyone wash hands or sanitize hands upon entering facility by having wash stations and/or ample sanitizer available.
- Coaches meeting: only one coach should be allowed for each team and should stay 2 metres apart. Suggested to be the top outside corner of each batter's box when available. Hand lineups to umpire, and umpire verbally approves or asks any questions about the lineup. No players should be present.
- Avoid handshakes and team meetings.
- Direct spectators to a viewing area away from players – possibly behind the fence in the outfield and request that they maintain physical distancing.
- Encourage that pregame warm up is limited to 15 minutes – any stretching or non-softball warm up should be done away from fields.
- It is suggested that all players sanitize hands after warming up before entering the bench area and between innings.
- Ensure diamond layout is proper for coaches' box, on deck circle, umpire/catcher area to maintain physical distancing when possible.
- A designated smoking area far away from the playing field with proper disposable cigarette canisters/ashtrays are required. Smoking or throwing away butts near playing field is not permitted.

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## FIELD OF PLAY – BENCH AREA



- ⦿ Dugout / bench area should be disinfected prior to anyone stepping into the area. A disinfectant spray or wipes should be used to ensure the area is clean. The cleansing will also need to be done in between games.
- ⦿ Allow players to spread out beyond the bench either along the fence line or behind the bench to maintain distancing of 2 metres. The area can be marked with caution tape to extend the bench area.
- ⦿ Individual player bags should not be in the bench area but in the designated extended bench area to help keep the pathway to the field clear.
- ⦿ A closed garbage can (with lid) is recommended at the bench area to allow for disposing of tissues, sanitizing wipes and other refuse.
- ⦿ All players, coaches and umpires should have their own water bottles/sports drink. No community water jugs or shared plastic/paper cups.
- ⦿ Sunflower seeds, gum, chewing tobacco, candy etc. or spitting of any kind should not be allowed.
- ⦿ Each bench area is recommended to have a first aid kit with a supply of materials including masks and gloves to address any medical concerns or injuries. Teams should have a designated medical person to attend to injuries or issues.

## Return to Play Guidelines – Phase 2

### THE GAME



- Game balls should not be shared between the teams. Each team, or the home team, should provide sanitized approved or mutually agreed upon similar game balls. Balls should be controlled by the respective benches. If a ball goes out of play, the defensive team will throw a sanitized game ball into play. The out of play ball will be returned to the bench and be sanitized. All balls should be wiped and disinfected after each half inning by the appropriate team.
- Bats – players should have their own bats. Each bat is sanitized prior to the game or if shared it needs to be wiped prior to another player using.
- Once the game begins, umpires should not handle any equipment (bats, helmets, etc.). If an umpire must handle equipment (e.g. safety check) the equipment should be sanitized prior to use.
- Equipment should not be shared amongst players, especially gloves and helmets
- The sharing of catcher's equipment between players or teams should be strongly discouraged. All catchers should have their own gear, especially a mask. If it is necessary to share catcher's equipment, the equipment will be sanitized each half inning.
- On deck batter should be limited to only 1 bat and stay in designated area until stoppage of play.
- Refrain from the use of bat boys/girls. The batter should be responsible to pick up their own bat if an out is made. If the batter reaches a base, the on-deck person should retrieve the bat by the barrel side and return it to the bench avoiding contact with the grip.

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### THE GAME (CONTINUED)



- All plays at all bases should be force plays including home plate. There should be no tag plays, including catcher pick off attempts, to eliminate potential contact.
- Conferences should be allowed at the pitching area only with the coach and pitcher/catcher while maintaining proper distancing. It is recommended the coach wears a mask when coming onto the field.
- It is recommended that the coach wear a mask or cover their mouth while maintaining proper distancing from the umpire if there is any lineup change or coach challenge/dispute. The coach will ask for time from his current location and once granted, the umpire will go to a designated safe area to receive the change or discuss with the coach.
- It is recommended that players and coaches are not to shake hands or high five throughout the game.
- There should be no post game handshakes, celebrations, team meetings or cooldowns. Teams are asked to exit the bench area and facility as efficiently and safely as possible. A designated person from each team should ensure the area is clean and sanitized for the next team.
- Players are asked not to congregate in the parking lots.
- Players are encouraged to wash their equipment and shower once they get home.

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