



## Canadian Underwater Games Association (CUGA) Return to Play Guidelines During COVID-19

The Canadian Underwater Games Association (CUGA) is committed to ensuring the safe return to play for our underwater hockey and underwater rugby athletes across Canada. We strongly believe that with proper safety protocols and guidelines, our members can safely return to the pool.

Firstly, we would like to present some research on the effects of COVID-19 transmission in the water and the safety aspects surrounding it:

- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has very specific research on the transmission of COVID-19 within the water. Their full findings can be seen here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Pools,-Hot-Tubs,-and-Water-Playgrounds>
- The US Masters Swimming society has done a full breakdown on COVID-19 and a safe return to the water: <https://www.usms.org/fitness-and-training/articles-and-videos/articles/what-the-cdcs-latest-covid-19-guidelines-say-about-going-back-to-the-pool>
- Swimming Victoria Inc. (based in Australia) has produced a comprehensive study: [Exploring the Relationship Between Swimming Pools and COVID-19](#)

As shown in these findings, we believe that the transmission risk of COVID-19 is minimal. This, combined with the enhanced measures outlined below, further solidifies our view that our sports are safe to play.

It is very important to note that the **CUGA Return to Play (RTP)** plan is fluid and can be catered to the different restrictions, guidelines and rules that exist in any pool, city, province or jurisdiction. CUGA fully recognizes the COVID-19 situation is ever evolving and some regions are more affected than others which in turn requires an altered approach. CUGA and its affiliate clubs and members across Canada will alter this plan or create a hybrid plan in order to ensure the ongoing safety of the players, facility staff and general public.

1. Self-Monitoring – All CUGA members, players and coaches will not attend practices or games should they be displaying any COVID-19 symptoms.
2. Attendance & Contact Tracing – The local club will be responsible for attendance tracking including names, phone numbers and email addresses of each participating player to ensure reliable and accurate contact tracing.
  - a. Local clubs will abide by attendance guidelines put in place by the local jurisdiction. This can include limiting the number of players allowed on-site.
  - b. To minimize on-site attendance, only local club members who have signed up to play or coach will be permitted to attend. No spectators will be allowed.
3. Accessing the facility – Our members play in a variety of facilities and pools across the country. CUGA strongly encourages our local clubs to work with their facility in order to establish safe entry and exit. This can include but not be limited to:
  - a. Use of specific entranceways/exits
  - b. Entering the facility at a designated time
  - c. Exiting the facility in a timely fashion and clearing the premises by a designated time

4. Equipment – A bare minimum of equipment will have to be used (ex. underwater hockey nets need to be placed in the pool), but local members will be on hand to ensure only the essentials are handled, and social distancing rules are observed. Anything the club members find marked unusable will remain untouched.
  - a. Personal equipment - All member’s personal items and equipment will be brought to the pool deck and will leave the facility with our members once the session ends.
  - b. Shared equipment – CUGA will strongly discourage any sharing of general equipment. New players can be loaned club-owned equipment but said equipment must be cleaned and sterilized before and after each use.
  - c. Snorkels – a snorkel is standard equipment in the sports of underwater hockey and underwater rugby as seen in the CMAS rule book (image below). CUGA has found no research showing that the use of snorkels in the water increases risk of COVID-19 transmission. Note that CMAS is the international organization governing a variety of water sports including Underwater Hockey and Underwater Rugby.

**11.3 Players’ Equipment and the Stick**

11.3.1 Each player shall be equipped with a mask, which must have safety glass or other safety material fitted; a non-metal, pliable snorkel; a pair of conventional underwater hockey fins (made of non-dangerous, pliable, synthetic material OR must be covered by an intact protective film which will prevent any injuries if they are damaged); players will wear a device/guard that adequately protects them against injuries to their teeth and gums; hand protection for the playing hand(s), and an underwater hockey stick.

Source: <http://cuga.org/en/official-rules-uwh/>

5. Physical Distancing – All members will respect 2m physical distancing guidelines and must wear masks or face coverings when using the facility up until the point where they enter the water. Masks or face coverings must be reapplied upon exiting the pool and the facility.

Should your facility have any questions on the sports of underwater hockey or underwater rugby or any aspects of our guidelines listed above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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