



# VMSL Return to Play Guidelines

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## REVISED - GAME PLAY RULE CHANGES – COVID-19 Driven

- **Throw-ins are replaced with Kick-ins**

A kick-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

All kick-ins are INDIRECT FREE KICKS except that opponents can stand within 5 metres of the point on the touchline where the kick-in is to be taken (as opposed to 10 yards) and the kick is constrained.

The ball must be placed (using the feet, no hands) ON or NEAR (within 6 inches) the touch line where the ball exited the field. The ball must not be moving when the kick in is taken.

THE BALL CAN ONLY BE KICKED FROM A STANDING POSITION. NO STEP OR RUN UP TO THE BALL IS ALLOWED AT ALL FOR KICK-INS. The ball must be played in without significant delay. The ball cannot be touched twice in a row by the player taking the kick-in.

The Off-side rule is in effect for sideline kick-ins (unlike throw-ins).

A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-in:

- if the ball enters the opponents' goal – a goal kick is awarded
- if the ball enters the kicker's goal – a corner kick is awarded

The ball is in play when it is kicked, clearly moves and enters the field of play. If the ball does not enter the field of play or the ball is not stationary, the kick-in is retaken by the same team from the same position.

### **NO HANDLING OF THE BALL AT ALL!**

#### **STRICTLY ENFORCED. CONSISTENT WITH ALL STAFF & REFEREES**

Balls leaving the field of play must be retrieved with your feet, or by the goalkeeper wearing gloves. After a goal, balls must be retrieved from the netting with your feet, or by the goalkeeper wearing gloves.

- If a player touches the ball with his hands, they must go to the sideline to hand sanitize (play can continue without them)
- Staff can bring sanitizer to the sideline so that the player stays on the field to quickly sanitize
- If a player needs to leave the field to sanitize they must ask the referee for permission to leave and re-enter the field if there is no staff support
- The ball needs to be changed if it is touched by a player/staff hands and the touched ball sanitized before it can be used once again



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## INTERACTION WITH GAME OFFICIAL(S)

- **Rosters**  
Refs will be wearing masks and gloves at team check in. The league requests that one team staff also mask up for the check in. The referee will collect the system generated rosters and check players in. The ref will not give a copy to the other team but will offer to let the opposition team take a photo of it with their phone.
- **Cards**  
Refs will be wearing masks and gloves at team check in. The league requests that one team staff also mask up for the check in. This team staff will show the referee the cards on their phone as usual.
- **Health Check**  
In order to keep referees, the other team and their own players safe, it is the responsibility of the coaches/managers to manage the health of their players. Coaches/managers will confirm his players are healthy to play by adding his signature at the bottom of their team roster that says..."health check completed"
- **Payment of Referee Fees**  
Refs will be wearing masks and gloves at team check in. The league requests that one team staff also mask up for the check in. This designated home team staff will pay the ref in cash at time of check in.
- **Linemen's Flags (for Divisions Required to Provide own Linesman)**  
Clearly identify your designated linesman to the referee via a designated team lining flag they will hold. That is, Teams must bring to each game their own line flag, or shirt, pinnie, towel, or the like, to run the line. Do not share a team flag, shirt, pinnie, towel, or the like with other players
- **Coin Toss**  
Performed as usual at social distance and with only the official touching their coin
- **Substitutes**  
During the initial VMSL return to play via the casual Covid cup, all divisions will be able to use unlimited substitutes and no substitution slips will be required

## GAME RELATED PROCEDURES – COVID-19 Driven

- **Social Distance on Sidelines is Required**



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6 (six) feet / 2 (two) metres between people is still the mandate. This applies to all Team Staff and any Players on the sidelines as well as anyone else outside the team area. Maximum 50 people can be at the specific game field and direct surrounds. No non-rostered persons can be in the team area on the sidelines. Masks are recommended, especially in covered shelters

- **Cohort Restriction**

By registering and joining a VMSL cohort, members cannot engage at this stage in other game play or training, etc. outside of the VMSL. Similarly, teams should not train with other teams in their club in a different cohort. (Shared training fields are fine as long the teams are separate.)

- **Contact Tracing**

The League as a matter of course archives referee submitted roster snapshots that can help with league game contact tracing but ultimately, in the event of an outbreak, **it is the teams who are fully responsible for keeping records for contact tracing purposes of all players, staff and, although strongly discouraged, any supporters in attendance at each game and training session.**

Detailed game day procedures and outbreak plans follow



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## GAME DAY REQUIREMENTS

### Before You Get to the Field

#### Team Staff

- Prepare adequate first aid kit (including masks, gloves, sanitizer, wipes)
- Bring a sealable container or bag for disposing of all used hygiene supplies (such as masks, gloves, wipes).
- Have sufficient cones to mark Team Area, and to mark spacing for any off-field distancing
- Communicate to all players that they;
  - are not to touch the training equipment (coaches need to setup, tear-down)
  - bring their own drink container / water bottle
  - Change into their soccer apparel at home (not at the field location).
  - are not to handle any soccer balls with their hands (except goalie, with gloves)
  - limit heading the ball
  - minimize any fans brought to the field
  - ensure any fans are not in the Team Area and that all fans maintain social distance
  - do not share gloves (goalies) or water bottles or jerseys, etc.
- Make sure you have enough water before leaving the house to avoid having to touch a tap or water fountain handle
- No sharing any drinking containers. Bring your own water bottle.
- Players to sanitize hands prior to entering field of play

#### Team Staff & Players

If a person feels unwell/shows symptoms of COVID-19, do not attend the game. If a person starts to feel unwell or show symptoms of COVID-19 during the activity, leave the activity immediately

### At the Field

- All players, team staff and official must hand sanitize prior to entering the field of play
- Comply with the distancing measures and recommendations issued by the BC health authorities, including the arrival and departure of players (except for family members or persons residing in the same household)
- Avoid touching door handles, gates, benches and all other objects where the virus could survive. If you touch something, make sure to wash your hands and disinfect the surface you have touched as quickly as possible.
- Using your supplies, clean all of your equipment, including your water bottle
- Make hand sanitizer, wipes, masks readily available to your players
- Players are not to touch any equipment, including game balls, with their hands
- If any equipment is touched by players, the player must sanitize their hands, and equipment must be sanitized at the next, earliest opportunity
- Wipe down the team equipment, the team bench & area before the game, and again at the half



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- Wipe down all game balls before the game and at half time
- Team Staff are to setup (and tear down) any equipment for warm-up
- Team Staff are to use cones to outline the Team Area and to mark 6 (six) foot increments along the bench to allow proper spacing of substitutes
- No sharing of drinks. Bring your own water bottle
- If you cough or sneeze, do so in a tissue or in your sleeve
- At no time are spectators, family, friends, or any non-rostered players allowed in the Team Area

## On the Field

- The game officials will do a cursory inspection of all players' current health during check-in
- No pre-game parade or hand-shake
- During pre-game warm-up, keep to your designated area of the field
- As much as possible, keep a 2-meter distance with other players
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with other players
- At no time can any player, or team staff come within 6 (six) feet of the game officials (referee, assistant referees, linesman)
- Do not touch the ball and other equipment with your hands
  - Ball leaving the pitch must be retrieved with your feet, or by the goalkeeper with their gloves on
  - Ball leaving the field can be retrieved by coach/staff wearing gloves
- Goalkeepers must not share gloves.
- Players are not to spit or clear their nose on the field – doing so will require a 14.5 minute mandatory isolation (substitution) as per Phase 2 guidelines
- Any goal celebration must maintain social distance
  - No hand shakes, high-5's, fist bumps or the like with other players (on either team)

## Post-Game

- No hand-shakes
- No lingering at field
- Ensure all equipment, apparel, and garbage leaves the team area when you leave
- Do not use changing rooms
- Leave the field as quickly as possible after you finish playing

## First Aid

In the event that first aid is required to be administered during an activity, all persons attending to the injured individual must first put on a mask and gloves. Any and all injuries that require 3<sup>rd</sup> party first aid should be documented – injured player, first-aid attendee and any others engaged within the 6 foot (2 metre) distance.



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## Outbreak Plan

Early detection of symptoms will facilitate the immediate implementation of effective control measures. In addition, the early detection and immediate implementation of enhanced cleaning measures are two of the most important factors in limiting the size and length of an outbreak. An “outbreak” is two or more cases; a “case” is a single case of COVID-19.

- a) Identify the roles and responsibilities of staff or volunteers if a case or outbreak is reported.
- b) If staff (including volunteers) or a participant reports they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and have been at the workplace/activity place, implement enhanced cleaning measures to reduce risk of transmission. If you are not the facility operator, notify the facility right away.
- c) Implement your illness policy (page 32 of Via Sport’s Return to Sport Guidelines) and advise individuals to:
  - monitor their symptoms daily, use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool to help determine if it is an emergency.
    - i. Individuals can contact 8-1-1 if further health advice is required and 9-1-1 if it is an emergency.
    - ii. Individuals can learn more about how to manage their illness here: <http://www.bccdc.ca/healthinfo/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/if-you-are-sick>
- d) In the event of a suspected case or outbreak of influenza-like-illness, immediately report and discuss the suspected outbreak with the Medical Health Officer (or delegate) at your local health authority. Call 8-1-1. Implement your Illness Policy and your enhanced measures.
- e) If your organization is contacted by a medical health officer in the course of contact tracing, cooperate with local health authorities.

## Contract Tracing

The VMSL will record and hold match rosters to support weekly contact tracing documentation. However, RESPONSIBILITY LIES WITH TEAMS TO TRACK AND TRACE ALL SOCCER ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHEDULED COVID-CUP GAME PLAY INCLUDING TRAINING. THE VMSL STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT TEAM TAKE AND DOCUMENT TRAINING ATTENDANCE. *There are several digital application-based tools that can be used to aid with this including **TeamSnap**, **TeamLinkt** and others.* IN THE EVENT OF AN OUTBREAK THE TEAM WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING CONTACT DETAILS AS REQUIRED BY PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICIALS.

NOTE: Failure to comply with any of the above requirements may result in players, staff, or teams being removed from the schedule, and sanctioning by BC Soccer.