

First Aid and Swimming & Water Safety Safe Classroom (in-person) Training COVID-19 Protocols



Protocols for maintenance of safe in-person classroom training for First Aid and Swimming & Water Safety programs during the COVID-19 pandemic

This document is to assist Training Partners by providing guidance on how to safely provide in-person training during the Covid pandemic. The Canadian Red Cross has outlined requirements in this document that **must** be followed and best practices that we **highly recommend**. As Provinces begin to lessen restrictions, Training Partners must continue to follow Provincial Public Health orders. If provincial public health orders require greater restrictions, the public health order will supersede Canadian Red Cross requirements.

The safety of Instructors and Learners is of the utmost importance, and we advise Training Partners to remain vigilant to keep health and safety a top priority. **You will note this revised document has moved several items from a “requirement” to a “best practice”, items moved are highlighted in blue.** A best practice is strongly recommended and provides maximum safety for participants and instructors, however, they are no longer a requirement or a “must do”.

Below is a list of provincial/territorial COVID-19 information pages:

- [Canada \(PHAC\)](#)
- [Alberta](#)
- [British Columbia](#)
 - [WorkSafeBC: COVID-19 information and resources](#)
 - [WorkSafeBC: COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)
 - [WorkSafeBC: Forms & Resources](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [New Brunswick](#)
- [Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [Northwest Territories](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)
- [Nunavut](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Quebec](#)
- [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Yukon](#)

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The most effective defense against the transmission of this disease is to clean your hands frequently with 70% or greater alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, maintain a two-metre (six-foot) distance between individuals, and use gloves and a properly fitted face mask/covering (refer to the *Cloth Masks and COVID-19 - Information Sheet*).

The health and safety of personnel and the public is a priority for the Canadian Red Cross. We remind Training Partners to continue to follow public health guidance regarding the administration of training courses. We also continue to encourage everyone who can get vaccinated, to do so.

This document will be updated as **new evidence and best practices emerge**. The points below are to highlight some of the key preventative measures to assist with alleviating the risk of transmission of diseases. Please ensure you are referencing the latest version.

Registration

Requirements:

- Training Partners are reminded to follow public health guidelines regarding vaccination policies in their province/territory.
- Prepare the registration list in advance of the course which should contain all necessary information an Instructor will require to avoid participants gathering.
- Ensure participants are checked into training and obtain necessary contact tracing **if required** by provincial/territorial public health orders.
- Ensure participants are aware that hand hygiene (clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water) will be required prior to entering classroom space, and before/after meals, snacks, and breaks.
- If Federal or Provincial Public Health requires masks to be worn indoors or outdoors, a properly fitted mask must be worn by all participants.

Best practice:

- Efforts should be taken by facilities to minimize interactions by using contact-free payment and participant-swiping of entrance cards. Use of electronic payment devices is preferred when possible. Also consider offering the option to pay in advance by phone or online.
- When taking registration, Training Partners should ensure participants are aware of the policies regarding no admittance if they have any symptoms of illness prior to class. Training Partners should provide accommodation for participants wishing to reschedule due to illness.
- [Gloves should be used during skill practice sessions. Hand hygiene should be performed before putting gloves on, and after taking them off](#)
- [If Provincial Public Health no longer requires the public to wear a mask while indoors the Training Partner may remove this requirement at their discretion, however, the CRC still recommends as a safety measure.](#)

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- We recommend every participant has access to their own pocket resuscitation mask (either they bring one in with them or purchase one from the Training Partner).

Prescreening

Requirements:

- Before admittance into the class: all participants must be asked to determine if they have been ill or have had any signs of illness within the last 72 hours (fever, cough, breathing difficulties/shortness of breath, or other symptoms), or been in contact with someone who is ill. (See **Sample screening questions below on page 8**)

Best practice:

- Establish a screening plan – either self-screening or screening officers at the entrance. With entrance screening, all participants and staff can be at a lower risk for having an active COVID-19 infection, with the caveat that there is a chance for asymptomatic carriers.

Building protocols

Requirements:

- Easy, visible access to sanitization stations must be provided near the classroom space. Sanitization stations must include a space to wash hands with soap and water, paper towels instead of cloth towels, or hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol.
- Ensure physical distancing **as per local public health authority** and abide with guidelines regarding the number of people in a gathering indoors and outdoors.

Best practice:

- Building signage should include a notice asking those entering to not do so if they are ill or showing signs of illness.
- Ensure presence of sufficient handwashing facilities at the training venue, with continuous water supply and appropriate handwashing materials. These facilities should be present near the toilet/bathroom and where people congregate to eat.
- Clearly marked separate exit and entry routes and doors should be used. Ensure presence of hand sanitizers at the entrance and exit of the training room.
- Training Partners should consider traffic flow into the entry of the building to ensure physical distancing can be maintained – this can include markers for those standing outside the premises or where to stand within the premises.
- Training Partners should indicate clearly where participants should go when they have entered the premises for their training. Directional signage or markings on the floor should be used.
- **Off-site training** – there are additional considerations for off-site training. Off-site locations should be pre-screened to ensure all the protocols for a safe classroom can be

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maintained, including but not limited to public health guidelines, space for physical distancing, thorough cleaning, sanitization stations, etc.

Signage

Best practice:

- Post information on COVID-19 symptoms (as defined by [public health](#) including fever, cough, headache, sore throat, runny nose) at entry points and ask visitors not to enter when experiencing symptoms of illness.
- Post external signs indicating COVID-19 physical distancing protocols **if required by Provincial Public Health.**
- Install floor markings where service is provided or lines form, or to control the flow of high traffic areas.
- Post information regarding handwashing and sanitization stations throughout the facility.

Classroom training equipment protocols

Requirements:

- All non-disposable equipment and mannequins used during the class must be cleaned and disinfected prior to participant use. Clean the face, mouth, *and* chest plate of mannequins. Please consult manufacturer's cleaning and disinfecting instructions.
- Disposable lungs must be removed from mannequins after use. New replacement lungs must be reinstalled in mannequins just prior to the next use.
- All disposable materials must be provided for participant's individual use, including gloves, bandages, etc. Have a box of disposable gloves of each size on hand for each classroom.
- Digital versions of manuals on tablets may be used but cleaning protocols are applicable to tablets after each use.
- Successful participants will have access to the digital version of the manual or related resources following the course through My Red Cross (myrc.redcross.ca). Everyone in a First Aid or Lifeguarding course will have access to the *Comprehensive Guide for First Aid & CPR* at redcross.ca/comprehensivefa.
- Triangular bandages and blankets should be assigned to each participant at the start of the training and laundered immediately at the end of each day of training.
- Small props (such as EpiPens) must be cleaned and disinfected using 70% isopropyl or ethyl alcohol, or a similar disinfecting wipe after each user has handled the item and also prior to storage. After a small prop has been disinfected allow a minimum of 30 seconds of drying time before it is passed.
- Training equipment decontamination (disinfecting process):
 - Must follow national program standards for disinfecting solutions. For training aids and equipment that require decontamination refer to the *First Aid Program Standards 2021* (page 132) and *Swimming and Water Safety Program Standards January 2020* (page 14) following each class/training session.

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- Is based on equipment manufacturer's directions.
- Adheres to Public Health Agency of Canada use instructions for cleaning products (see below).

Best practice:

- Be mindful of the other items used in your classroom (e.g., pens, AED trainers, floor mats, tables, chairs). Ensure they are regularly cleaned and maintained. This includes cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that may collect germs using 70% isopropyl or ethyl alcohol, or a similar disinfecting wipe.
- **Manuals should not be shared between participants nor be used in multiple training sessions as a classroom set. Participants should be provided with materials they can use and take with them (or be appropriately recycled/disposed of).**

Storage of equipment

Requirements:

- Reinstalling disposable lungs in mannequins must be done just prior to next use. Storing training aids with lungs already installed can lead to contamination from airborne contaminants.
- Do not place contaminated training aids into your clean carrying bags – this creates contamination. Bring a separate receptacle (e.g., garbage bag, laundry tub) to transport the contaminated training aids to your cleaning space.

Best practice:

- Any disposal receptacles being reused require cleaning after each use.
- Wait until training aids are fully dry following decontamination before storing in your carrying bags. Store the bags in a cool, dry location to prevent mildew.
- Storage bins, cabinets, and bags should be wiped down or washed often. *

**Check your cleaning chemicals and wipes for how long they are required to remain wet to kill germs and therefore be effective.*

Disposing of training equipment

Best practice:

- If possible, dispose of used personal protective equipment (PPE) in a biohazard bag. Otherwise, place it in the regular garbage (ensure the garbage is closed and tied).

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Classroom training set-up and standards

Requirements:

- If Provincial Public Health requires social distancing, there must be a minimum of two metres or six feet of separation between participants and between participants and Instructors, with markings on floors to assist with maintaining physical distancing.
 - This distance may be relaxed if all participants and the Instructor(s) are fully vaccinated, are symptom free and are wearing a properly fitted mask.
- If Provincial Public Health requires masking and physical distancing cannot be maintained (two metres or six feet), Instructors and participants will be required to wear three-ply face coverings and gloves (see **Face mask protocols on page 7**) during class and while in the facility. For brief periods of the classes that have CPR practice, it is understood and acceptable that the mask will have to be lowered.
- If Provincial Public Health requires social distancing, skills should be practiced and/or demonstrated using mannequins or other inanimate training aids. If skills must be done on participants, a mask and gloves must always be worn. Considerations can be made for family members who live in the same household to work together.
- The total number of individuals within a classroom including the number of participants and Instructors must meet the provincial/territorial public health orders for group gatherings as well as meet the spacing required for physical distancing.
- If Provincial Public Health requires social distancing, modify all hands-on activities (e.g., icebreakers/energizers, working in pairs or groups) to include physical distancing of two metres or six feet. Eliminate passing objects among participants.

***Nitrile gloves are to be used as they provide the best protection against disease transmission. If none are available vinyl can be substituted. If used in training, please note vinyl is 68% more likely to tear than latex or nitrile gloves. If the glove tears: immediately stop activity, remove glove, perform hand hygiene, complete an incident report, replace glove, and resume activity.*

Best practice:

- Have participants reduce exposure by working with the same partners and groups for the entire class or course. Avoid mixing up groups and partners for activities.
- At a minimum, hand hygiene (see **Handwashing protocols on page 7**) should be performed at the following times by all participants and Instructors:
 - Beginning and end of class
 - Before and after meals and snacks
 - Before and after skill practice sessions (when wearing gloves, hand hygiene should be done before putting on gloves and after removing them)
- Every participant should wear gloves during skills practice and assessment scenarios. Participants should change gloves frequently between skills and scenarios. Gloves cannot be reused. ** Be sure to review donning and doffing procedures for gloves.
- Every participant should use a pocket resuscitation mask with **single-use one-way valve** when giving rescue breaths on mannequins (one-way valves should be disposed of after each participant). We recommend participants bring their own pocket

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resuscitation mask or be provided with one (for purchase or included in training course fee).

- **Equipment ratios:** A 1:1 participant-to-mannequin ratio is recommended, along with a 1:1 participant-to-AED training device ratio, or end-of-class level cleaning for AED training devices between participants.

Face mask protocols

Best practice:

- Non-medical/surgical masks can become contaminated on the outside or when touched by your hands. When wearing a mask, Instructors and participants should take the following precautions:
 - Avoid touching your face mask while using it
 - Change the mask for a fresh one as soon as it becomes damp or soiled
 - Non-medical face masks that cannot be washed should be discarded and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled, or crumpled
- Visit [My Red Cross \(myrc.redcross.ca\)](https://myrc.redcross.ca) > News > COVID-19 to download the *Cloth Masks and COVID-19 - Information Sheet*.

Handwashing protocols

Requirements:

- Instructors and participants must perform hand hygiene using soap and water for at least 20 to 30 seconds. The use of soap and water is encouraged as the most effective method of hand sanitization.
- If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol must be used.

Public Health Agency of Canada cleaning protocols

- [Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19](#)
- [Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\): List of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19](#)

Additional resources

- [COVID-19 - Novel Coronavirus: Canadian Red Cross Relief and Resources - Resources for families and communities](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Awareness resources](#)

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Sample screening questions

	NO	YES
Are you experiencing any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe difficulty breathing (e.g., struggling to breathe or speaking in single words) • Severe chest pain • Having a very hard time waking up • Feeling confused • Losing consciousness 		
Are you experiencing any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild to moderate shortness of breath • Inability to lie down because of difficulty breathing • Chronic health conditions that you are having difficulty managing because of difficulty breathing 		
Are you experiencing any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Cough • Sore throat • Runny nose • Headache 		
Have you travelled to any countries outside Canada (including the United States) within the last 14 days? If yes, did you follow re-entry protocols?		
Within the last 14 days did you provide care or have close contact with a symptomatic person known or suspected to have COVID-19?		
Did you have close contact with a person who travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days who has become ill (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or headache)?		

Note: Please check your provincial/territorial public health for local questions.

<p>Close contact is defined as a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided care for the individual, including healthcare workers, family members or other caregivers, or who had other similar close physical contact without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment; or • Lived with or otherwise had close prolonged contact (within two metres or six feet) with the person while they were infectious; or • Had direct contact with infectious bodily fluids of the person (e.g., was coughed or sneezed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

The Public Health Agency of Canada strongly urges anyone who has any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or headache to **ISOLATE** at home or another suitable location.

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Safe classroom checklist

Registration

- Registration policy includes a self-declaration from all participants that they have had no known exposure to COVID-19 or shown any symptoms in the previous 14 days.
- Registration is taken over the phone or online only.

Administration

- Payment for training can be completed online or over the phone to reduce physical interaction.
- Confirmation of registration and/or payment is provided electronically by email.
- Traffic patterns are clearly marked throughout the facility with safe entrance/exit paths to the classroom that allow the staff and clients to maintain physical distancing.
- There is a screening questionnaire in place for all participants and staff entering the training facility or classroom.
- There are strict class size limits to accommodate physical distancing requirements (two metres or six feet) which are outlined at registration.

Training

- Classroom set-up has marked training spaces for each participant which are a minimum of two metres or six feet apart to accommodate physical distancing during classroom activity.
- Instructors are required to wear a properly fitted face covering and gloves at all times if physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Participants are required to wear a properly fitted face covering and gloves at all times if physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Equipment and processes used in the classroom have been modified to allow for limited or in some cases no contact during competency assessments for certification.
- At a minimum, hand hygiene will be performed at the following times by all participants and Instructors:
 - Beginning and end of class
 - Before and after meals and snacks
 - Before and after skill practice sessions (when wearing gloves, hand hygiene should be performed before putting on gloves and after removing them)
- Handwashing stations have Canadian Red Cross handwashing posters visible and hand hygiene protocols will be clearly listed. Hand sanitizer is available if handwashing is not possible.

Equipment

- Each participant has their own equipment for use in the classroom including: mannequins, AED's, first aid equipment, sandbags, blankets, knee pads or mats (optional), required course documentation, pens, and any other material expected to be required by the participant during the course. Equipment for each participant is included in their personal training space.
- All pocket masks will be fitted with a one-way single-use valve per participant. Participants are recommended to bring their own pocket mask or be provided with one for purchase or included in training course fee.

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- Disposal of all waste and non-reusable classroom supplies will be conducted at the end of each session.
- Lungs for mannequins will be disposed of immediately after classroom use. New lungs will not be installed until just before participants are ready to use them.

Cleaning

- Classroom cleaning policies and procedures are in place for all equipment utilized in the classroom.
- Facility cleaning procedures have been adjusted to accommodate for additional COVID-19 cleaning needs including for all common areas in the facility during/after use and during business hours (beyond regularly scheduled end-of-day cleaning).