

# 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

As provinces/territories prepare to reopen across the country, we would like to provide guidance on how Training Partners may safely resume in-person training **when appropriate and according to recommendations and timelines from your local public health authority. The following protocols do not supersede those from your local health authority.** Please stay apprised of updates from your local health authority.

The most effective defense against the transmission of this disease is **maintaining a two-metre (six-foot) distance between individuals and the use of gloves and a face mask/covering** (refer to the *Cloth Masks and COVID-19 - Information Sheet*).

This document will be updated as **new evidence and best practices emerge**. Please ensure you are referencing the latest version.

## Registration

### Requirements:

- If the Training Partner is unable to maintain a two-metre (six-foot) distance between participants and the participants/Instructor, then a three-ply face covering and gloves must be worn by the Instructor(s) and all participants.
- Hand hygiene will be required prior to entering classroom space, before/after meals, snacks, and breaks. Glove use will be required during skill practice sessions. Hand hygiene must be performed before putting gloves on, and after taking them off. Training Partners should inform participants they must be wearing a face mask or face covering and gloves to enter the classroom and complete training if they are unable to maintain a two-metre (six-foot) distance between participants at all times.
- If participants have a condition or are unable to wear a face mask or covering to their class, they will not be admitted into the class and must reschedule.
- Training Partners must inform participants they will be required to have a pocket resuscitation mask (either they bring one in with them or purchase one from the Training Partner).

### Best practice:

- Efforts should be taken by facilities to minimize interactions through the use of contact-free payment, participant-swiping of entrance cards, and discontinuation of sign-in systems where unnecessary. 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.

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## 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 7**)

### Best practice:

- Participants who have pre-existing conditions (e.g., allergies causing sneezing) should be discouraged from attending training. This extra due diligence ensures all participants in the course can feel secure.
- 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.

### Best practice:

- Building signage should include a notice asking those entering to not do so if they are ill or showing signs of illness.
- Clearly marked separate exit and entry routes and doors should be used.
- Training Partners should consider traffic flow into the entry of the building to ensure social 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.
- Encourage physical distancing as per local public health authority guidelines regarding the number of people in a social gathering in a confined physical space (e.g., common areas).
- **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 maintained, including but not limited to public health guidelines, space for social distancing, thorough cleaning, sanitization stations, etc.

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## 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.
- 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.
- Triangular bandages and blankets must be assigned to a participant at the start of the training and laundered immediately at the end of each day of training.
- 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.
- No manuals may be shared between participants nor be used in multiple training sessions as a classroom set. Participants must be provided with materials they can use and take with them (or be appropriately recycled/disposed of).
- Digital versions of manuals on tablets may be used but cleaning protocols are applicable to tablets after each use.
- Participants may bring their own tablet to class and access the digital version of the manual during training. Successful participants will have access to the digital version of the manual following the course through My Red Cross ([myrc.redcross.ca](http://myrc.redcross.ca)). Everyone will have access to the *Comprehensive Guide for First Aid & CPR* at [redcross.ca/comprehensivefa](http://redcross.ca/comprehensivefa).
- 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.
- 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* June 2019 (pages 108-109) and *Swimming and Water Safety National Program Standards* January 2020 (pages 15-16) following each class/training session.
  - Is based on equipment manufacturer's directions.

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- 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.

### 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).

### Classroom training set-up and standards

#### Requirements:

- There will be a minimum two metres or six feet of separation between participants and between participants and Instructors, with markings on floors to assist with maintaining social distancing.
  - This distance can be relaxed only if all participants and the Instructor(s) are wearing three-ply face coverings (not homemade masks).

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- If 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 6**) 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.
- Every participant must wear gloves during all skill practices and assessment scenarios. Participants have to change gloves frequently between skills and scenarios. Gloves cannot be reused.\* Be sure to review donning and doffing procedures for gloves.
- Every participant must 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 and not cleaned). Participants should bring their own pocket resuscitation mask or be provided with one (for purchase or included in training course fee).
- Only if it is 100% unavoidable, skills are to 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.
- **Equipment ratios:** A 1:1 participant-to-mannequin ratio will apply, along with a 1:1 participant-to-AED training device ratio, or end-of-class level cleaning for AED training devices between participants.
- The total number of individuals within a classroom including the number of participants and Instructors must meet the provincial requirements for group gatherings as well as meeting the spacing required for social distancing.

*\*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:

- Modify all hands-on activities (e.g., icebreakers/energizers, working in pairs or groups) to include physical distancing of two metres.
- 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 6**) 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)
- **Knowledge evaluations** – after correcting, Instructors should place knowledge evaluations in an envelope for 48 hours before handling by the administrative staff.

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## 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

(Source Government of Canada <https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>)

	NO	YES
Are you experiencing any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe difficulty breathing (e.g., struggling to breathe or speaking in single words)</li> <li>• Severe chest pain</li> <li>• Having a very hard time waking up</li> <li>• Feeling confused</li> <li>• Losing consciousness</li> </ul>		
Are you experiencing any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild to moderate shortness of breath</li> <li>• Inability to lie down because of difficulty breathing</li> <li>• Chronic health conditions that you are having difficulty managing because of difficulty breathing</li> </ul>		
Are you experiencing any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Runny nose</li> <li>• Headache</li> </ul>		
Have you travelled to any countries outside Canada (including the United States) within the last 14 days?		
Within the last 14 days did you <b>provide care</b> or have <b>close contact</b> with a symptomatic person known or suspected to have COVID-19?		
Did you have <b>close contact</b> 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"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Lived with or otherwise had close prolonged contact (within 2 metres) with the person while they were infectious; or</li> <li>• Had direct contact with infectious bodily fluids of the person (e.g., was coughed or sneezed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.</li> </ul>
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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) 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 three-ply face covering and gloves at all times if physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Participants are required to wear a three-ply 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:
  - o Beginning and end of class
  - o Before and after meals and snacks
  - o 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 required to bring their own pocket mask or be provided with one for purchase or included in training course fee.
- Disposal of all waste and non-reusable classroom supplies will be conducted at the end of each session.



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- 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).