

RETURNING TO AIKIDO PRACTICE IN BC

Guidelines to assist BCAF dojos in making decisions regarding in-person practice during Phases 2 and 3 of the COVID-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The BC Aikido Federation is a registered non-profit organization created to support Aikikai-style Aikido in BC. *Returning to Aikido Practice in BC* has been compiled using:

- BC's Restart Plan <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/bc-restart-plan>
- the viaSport BC Return to Sport Guidelines <https://www.viasport.ca/return-sport>
- the BCRPA Restarting Guidelines <https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/media/242766/bcrpa-restarting-guidelines-final.pdf>
- WorkSafe BC Gym and Fitness Centres: Protocols for Returning to Operation <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/gyms-and-fitness-centres>
- WorkSafe BC Sports and Recreation: Protocols for Returning to Operation <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/sports-recreation>
- the Judo BC Return to Judo Plan <http://www.judobc.ca/news/judo-bc-return-to-judo-protocols-for-bc-phase-2/>

We are indebted to these organizations for preparing clear and useful documents during the pandemic.

Returning to Aikido Practice in BC exists to assist BCAF dojo-chos and members in making informed decisions about safe Aikido practice during Phase 2 of BC's Restart Plan. None of this is intended to replace legal advice, and although the information was current to June 20, 2020, it is incumbent upon each individual dojo to be aware of updates and changes from the BC Health Officer, as well as the changing situation within their own Health Authority. All dojo-chos will "need to be mindful of the phase that the province is in and avoid moving too quickly to introduce activities (such as high-contact activities) prematurely" [viaSport BC *Return to Sport Guidelines*]. The board of a dojo is responsible for the oversight of risk, and is accountable for the decisions made.

On May 6th, 2020, BC's Provincial Health Officer, Dr Bonnie Henry, announced the start of Phase 2 of BC's Restart Plan. WorkSafe BC announced protocols for fitness centres and gyms to reopen on May 19th.

The organizational structures of member dojos of the BCAF are varied: some are independently located while others are integrated within a recreation centre. There is no one decision that will work for all. We have compiled this information from BC Organized Sport (viaSport BC), BC Recreation and Parks, and WorkSafeBC in the hope that it will be useful to have a summary drawn from these sources with the focus on Aikido.

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FOCUS

Our priority is the health and safety of all members, their families, and the communities in which they live. It is essential that we abide by provincial and regional health authority regulations.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The BCAF will be developing updates over the coming months as the province progresses towards Phase 4. The focus will be on ensuring alignment with the Provincial Health Officer recommendations.

- Aikido in Phase 4 of the BC Restart Plan – date TBC - The New Normal

DISCLAIMER

The *Returning to Aikido Practice in BC Guidelines* are intended to be used for the purposes described in this document. While we aim to provide relevant and timely information, because information about the COVID-19 coronavirus and recommended health and safety measures can rapidly change, no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided. It is important to note that the *Returning to Aikido Practice in BC Guidelines* is not a legal document and is to be used as a guide only. It is not a substitute for actual legislation or orders from the Provincial Health Officer. In the event of an ambiguity or conflict between the *Returning to Aikido Practice in BC Guidelines* and the Public Health Act, regulations, or orders thereunder, the Act, regulations and orders prevail.

Nothing in this document is intended to provide legal advice. Do not rely on this document or treat it as legal advice. This document contains links to third-party websites. Links are provided for convenience only and the BCAF does not endorse the information contained in linked websites nor does it guarantee its accuracy, timeliness, or fitness for a particular purpose. The information in these links may be updated from time to time. The BCAF does not monitor the linked websites and is not responsible for updates. BCAF dojos should check back regularly to ensure each dojo's Plan is up to date. Anyone using the *Returning to Aikido Practice in BC Guidelines* does so at his or her own risk. The BCAF shall not be responsible for any loss or damage of any kind arising directly or indirectly from the use of the *Returning to Aikido Practice in BC Guidelines* including, without limitation, reliance on the completeness or accuracy of the information provided.

GOVERNING CONDITIONS OF PHASE 2 OF THE BC RESTART PROGRAM

- Non-contact practice only
- Indoor activities are allowed but social distancing must always be maintained
- Prohibition of gatherings of 50 people or more
- Self-isolation for a minimum of 14 days for individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19
- Self-isolation for 14 days if returning to British Columbia from another province or country

GOVERNING CONDITIONS OF PHASE 3 OF THE BC RESTART PROGRAM

- People can take part in smart, safe, and respectful travel within BC.
- The guidelines and extra safety precautions for sectors in Phase 2 are still in place.

PRACTICE CHOICES -- VIRTUAL, INDOOR, OUTDOOR

VIRTUAL PRACTICE

Many BCAF dojos are taking this opportunity to focus on solo practice via video conferencing software. The BCAF encourages such practice, however, BCAF dojos must be aware that the Canadian Aikido Federation (CAF) has updated its information regarding the insurance policy under which all participants and instructors are covered. *If you are conducting classes and do not contact the CAF to provide the information listed below, the CAF's insurance policy will not apply to your dojo's virtual classes.*

- Provide the CAF with your class schedule (i.e., which days you meet and for how long).
- Give a brief description of what students are asked to do (simple warm-ups, one-person movement of technique form, children's games; any break fall practice).
- Confirm the type of location (i.e., residence, private location, dojo) and the number of instructors who are hosting the online video. Keep in mind any applicable government restrictions regarding the use of locations.
- Confirm the number of participants who sign into the video, providing minimum and maximum numbers and average attendance.
- Confirm whether students (i.e., household members) are participating in groups.
- *Class is limited to the number of participants that can be safely monitored by the instructor by either viewing all participants on a single screen simultaneously or by cycling through screens to monitor the activities and practice environments of all students. There should be no more than four (4) participants in a single location, and physical distancing should be maintained whenever applicable.*
- Participants must currently be registered with the CAF and must sign and return any necessary waiver and/or consent forms to the instructor before participating in the virtual practice.
- Participant attendance must be recorded by the instructor at every practice.

INDOOR PRACTICE

MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCE IN THE DOJO – NON-CONTACT AIKIDO

Preparation

SCREENING PROTOCOLS

Attached to this document is a sample questionnaire for instructors and members to complete before practice – especially indoor practice – is resumed. This screening should occur at the start of every in-person practice session.

DOJO LOGISTICS

- The maximum number of participants must be calculated according to the number of tatami in each facility.
- Four (4) tatami per participant plus four (4) tatami per instructor are the minimum requirements
- No spectators are allowed.
- Parents or guardians who are accompanying minors should remain outside when dropping off or picking up their child and should maintain physical distancing.
- Allow 15 minutes before, between, and after class sessions to sanitize the mats and equipment (see attached requirements).
- Allow 15 minutes for arrival before and departure after each class; no practicing after class.
- Encourage any socializing before and after class to be conducted outside with appropriate physical distancing.

INDIVIDUAL LOGISTICS

- Mask-wearing during indoor activities may be required by the instructor, depending on the circumstances of the dojo.
- All instructors and students must sanitize hands and feet before stepping on or off the mats.
- These protocols are not recommended for children under the age of 12 unless additional supervision can be provided to ensure cooperation with the safety protocols. Additional supervision must fit within social distancing guidelines.

ENTRY AND EXIT

- No waiting area
- All participants and instructors must arrive wearing their dogi. No changerooms will be available.
- Participants are only allowed in the dojo when it is time for class to begin and must leave immediately after the end of class.

ALLOWED ACTIVITIES

- Tachi-waza and suwari-waza, individual or shadow-paired practice only.
- Ukemi practice; individual practice only.
- Postures, movement, coordination, mobility, core-stability; individual practice only.
- Individual strength, conditioning, and flexibility exercises.
- Shadow-paired weapons practice

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

- high intensity training
- partner work with contact
- randori
- kiai

Further detailed guidelines are provided below to aid BCAF dojos in making informed choices. Not all points will be applicable or appropriate for each dojo, but all have been included because they address issues of sanitization and physical distancing that may otherwise be overlooked. The BCAF believes that it is important to consider each action in the context of the BC Government's Public Health orders, no matter how time-consuming or arduous that activity might first appear.

A note regarding ventilation: BC Health guidelines state that indoors with ventilation is better than indoors with no ventilation. However, if high-speed fans are used to cool the practice area, the allowable area for each participant should be enlarged and the time between classes lengthened. See "High-powered fans may result in greater dispersion of droplets." [WorkSafeBC <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/gyms-and-fitness-centres>]

Practice

BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE DOJO

- Take a shower and wash your hair.
- Make sure that your dogi is clean.
- Wash your hands properly and keep your nails short.
- Go to the restroom before coming to the dojo.
- Avoid public transport as much as possible and wear a mask on public transport if you can't avoid it.
- Wear your dogi under a tracksuit (+ a coat if necessary) to keep the dogi clean on the way to the dojo.
- Have a bag that is big enough to contain disposable tissue papers, sanitizing gel/liquid, zori, a water bottle, and contact information (for minors).

UPON ARRIVAL AT THE DOJO

- Where a dojo is within a multisport venue, the entry for the Aikidoka should be designated in such a way that prevents the usage of a common entrance for different sports.
- Prepare a welcome desk at the entrance manned by a responsible adult of the dojo who wears a mask. This person cannot be the instructor, who will need to be on the tatami.
- The name of each participant and accompanying person entering the dojo needs to be recorded. *This is essential for insurance coverage and contact tracing of COVID-19.*

- Check and collect signed Questionnaire and Participant Agreement – see attached.
- Each participant must have previously provided emergency contact information.
- Place a limit on the number of people (participants, accompanying person, staff & volunteers) who will be permitted inside the dojo at the same time.
- Parents cannot stay in the dojo for the duration of the class.
- Participants must arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before the start of the class.
- All doors inside the dojo must be propped open to avoid contact with door handles/knobs.
- Mark out the security distance using adhesive tape or other means.
- Provide hand sanitizer (gel or liquid) or a hand washing station or require participants to bring their own.
- Provide a trashcan for disposable tissues and litter.
- Check for appropriate mask wearing (covering nose and mouth; good fit; no touching), and provide masks to give out (if necessary).
- Instruct the participants to leave their shoes at a designated area and to put on their zori before entering the training area.
- Accompanying person should remain outside, near the dojo.
- Locker/change rooms must remain closed. Participants will have to arrive in dogi.
- Water fountains must be closed, and participants will have to bring their own water bottle.
- Except in exceptional cases, the washrooms will not be available.
- No cash transactions.

TRANSITIONING FROM A LOBBY/ENTRY AREA TO THE TATAMI

- The instructor/or a volunteer allows the participants to enter the training area.
- The instructor follows the circulation organized by the club (road marking, flagging tape, etc.) The circulation plans take into account the configuration of the dojo, but the sanitary security distance must be respected.
- An instructor assistant accompanies anyone who requires special attention.
- Security distances are to be marked out in the training for each participant to see where they can remove outer clothing.
- Participants place their bags in the assigned location and take the outer clothing off (below which they wear the dogi) folding it carefully and placing it in their bag (along with the coat, if any).
- Participants put the zori beside the tatami, taking out the bottle, the tissues, and the sanitizing gel/liquid. All other personal belongings must be kept in the bag (telephone, etc.).
- Participants sit on the tatami, the legs turned to the exterior, and apply sanitizing gel/liquid to their feet and then to their hands.
- Participants turn to the interior of the tatami and wait until the instructor invites them to go to their assigned place on the tatami.

SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING PRACTICE

- The instructor invites the participants by turns to go to the training area marked on the tatami (the tatami is segmented in areas of at least 8 square metres).
- The instructor provides a space for each participant.
- The participants stand up, greet the tatami, and go to the assigned area where they stay during the entire training session.
- The bow in at the start of the session will not be done in the traditional way, in a line, but from the allotted areas.
- At the end of the session, the bow out is performed again from the allotted areas and the instructor dismisses the participants by turns in order to get back to where the personal belongings have been left before the start of the session.

LEAVING THE MATS

- Participants apply sanitizer to their feet, put on the zori, and place their sanitary kit and bottle in their bag.
 - Participants put their outer clothing on top of the dogi and await the instructor's authorization to leave.
 - Participants put on their shoes that they left in the designated area and put away their zori in their bag.
 - Before leaving the dojo, the participants clean their hands with the sanitizing gel/liquid provided by the dojo.
 - Any minor participants must wait for the responsible person in charge to authorize them to leave and join their accompanying person.
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UPON ARRIVAL AT HOME

- Take a shower
- Wash the dogi, disinfect the zori, and disinfect the bag.
- Wash the water bottle.
- Restock your sanitary kit (sanitizing gel/liquid, tissue paper, mask).

SANITIZING AND CLEANING KIT SUGGESTIONS

Health Canada has a list of disinfectants that can be used to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>. The list is updated regularly.

- disinfecting wipes
- disinfecting aerosols
- disinfecting vaporizers
- air purifier
- cleaning paper and duster
- cleaning buckets + mops
- disposable gloves (latex or nitrile)

CLEANING FREQUENCY

The cleaning of the different spaces should be planned and agreed upon with the management of the facility.

Cleaning Type	Product Type	Concerned Area	Frequency
Floor disinfection (e.g. lobby, dojo, etc.)	Virucide product*	communal areas	At the end of each day
Disinfection of the contact points (e.g.: handles)	Virucide product	Closed in Phase 2 - Showers, locker rooms, sanitation facilities	Two or three times per day depending on the area
	General cleaning	communal areas	
Regular cleaning	Classic cleaning products (e.g.: disinfecting liquids, sprays, limescale removers, etc.)	Closed in Phase 2 Showers, locker rooms, storage of the pedagogical equipment & communal areas	At the beginning or the end of the day
Tatami and pedagogical equipment	Virucide product	Tatami Physio balls, medicine balls, belts, etc	After each use/session
*Anti-virus product			

OUTDOOR PRACTICE

MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCE OUTDOORS – NON-CONTACT AIKIDO

The following guidelines are provided as resources to consider when your dojo has outdoor practices. Most of these instructions are for the direction of larger groups (more than 10 or 12) and younger practitioners, or if the practice is in a populated area.

Preparation

SCREENING

Screening questionnaires should be completed, verbally or on paper, by all instructors and participants prior to every session. See attached.

OUTDOOR LOCATION

- The dojo may need to obtain the necessary park permits from the city or permissions from the landowner.
- The maximum number of participants must be calculated on the available space – minimum of 8m² per person.
- Ensure 8 metres between participants and the general public.
- Allow 15 minutes between sessions so there is minimal social interaction between groups.

INDIVIDUAL

- Wearing a mask is optional.
- Hands should be sanitized before and after class.
- These protocols are not recommended for children under the age of 8 unless additional supervision can be provided to ensure cooperation with the safety protocols.
- All practitioners must wear proper athletic shoes.

ENTRY & EXIT

- Encourage any socializing before and after class to be conducted away from the practice area with appropriate physical distancing.

ALLOWED ACTIVITIES

- Tachi-waza, no contact
- Fundamental motor and technical skills (individually).
- Postures, movement, coordination, mobility, core-stability, etc.
- Individual strength, conditioning & flexibility exercises.
- Solo and shadow-paired weapons practice.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

- High intensity training
- Physical contact or randori

- Activities that involve touching existing structures in the outdoor space i.e. stretches while holding a bench or chin ups on playground equipment.
- Any accompanying person should arrive 5 minutes before the end of the class, wait at least 8 metres from the group, and respect physical distancing.
- Paired weapons practice and disarming practice (avoid directly or indirectly touching any weapon surface that has been touched by another individual).

Practice

BEFORE LEAVING FOR PRACTICE

- Take a shower and wash your hair.
- Make sure that your dogi is clean.
- Wash your hands properly and keep your nails short.
- Go to the restroom before coming to the dojo.
- Avoid public transport as much as possible & wear a mask on public transport if you can't avoid it.
- Wear your dogi under a tracksuit (+ a coat if necessary) to keep the dogi clean on the way to the dojo.
- Have a bag that is big enough to contain your disposable tissue papers, sanitizing gel/liquid, water bottle, and a paper containing the contact details of your accompanying person who can be reached in case of issues during the training session (for minors).

UPON ARRIVAL AT THE PRACTICE AREA

- Prepare a welcome area manned by a responsible adult of the dojo who wears a mask and disposable gloves. This person cannot be the instructor who will be leading the activities.
- The name of each participant and accompanying person needs to be recorded. *This is essential for insurance coverage and contact tracing of COVID-19.*
- Check and collect signed Questionnaire & Participant Agreement – see attached.
- Provide hand sanitizer (gel or liquid).
- Participants place their bags in the assigned location and take the outer clothing off, below which they wear the dogi, folding it carefully and placing it in their bag (along with the coat, if any).

TRANSITIONING FROM THE WAITING AREA TO THE PRACTICE AREA

- The instructor/or a volunteer allows the participants to enter the practice area.
- The instructor follows the circulation plan organized in the area (road marking, flagging tape, etc.).
- An instructor assistant accompanies any participant who require special attention.

SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING PRACTICE

- Security distances may be marked out in the practice area so that each participant knows where to stand.
- The instructor makes sure that the necessary equipment for the session is well cleaned and disinfected.
- The bow in at the start of class will not be done in the traditional way, in a line, but from the allotted area.
- At the end of class, the bow out is performed again from the allotted area and the instructor dismisses the participants by turns in order to get back to the assigned area (where the personal belongings have been left before the start of the session).

LEAVING THE PRACTICE AREA

- Participants await the instructor's authorization to leave (and join their parents, accompanying person).
- Before leaving the area, the participants clean their hands with the sanitizing gel/liquid.
- Any minor participants must wait for the responsible in charge to authorize them to leave and join their accompanying person.

UPON ARRIVAL AT HOME

- Take a shower
- Wash the dogi & disinfect the bag.
- Wash the water bottle.
- Restock the sanitary kit (sanitizing gel/liquid, tissue paper, mask).

FIRST AID

If 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.

A WorkSafe BC guide for employers and Occupational First Aid Attendants during the COVID-19 pandemic is available here

- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/ofaa-protocols-covid-19-pandemic?lang=en&origin=s&returnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worksafebc.com%2Fen%2Fforms-resources%23q%3DCOVID-19%26first%3D10%26sort%3Drelevancy%26f%3Alanguage-facet%3D%5BEnglish%5D>

OUTBREAK AND MITIGATION

- Report any suspected case(s) of COVID-19-like illness among participants, volunteers, or employees to the local Health Authority Medical Health Officer and facility operators.
- If a case or outbreak is confirmed, follow the orders of the local Health Authority and inform any participants who attended an Aikido class that involved the individual with the suspected case of COVID-19.
- Enhance cleaning and infection control measures to reduce risk of transmission in your dojo.
- Ensure self-isolation for participants, volunteers, or employees who have symptoms of COVID-19 for a minimum of 14 days.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

COVID-19 POSTERS

- STOP Do Not Enter - http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19_DoNotEnterPoster.pdf
- SPACE OCCUPANCY - <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-occupancy-limit?lang=en>
- HAND HYGIENE - http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_Handwashing%20Poster_MD%20offices.pdf

LINKS TO REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES

Fraser Health: <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/>

Interior Health: <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/Pages/default.aspx>

Island Health: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/>

Northern Health: <https://www.northernhealth.ca/>

Vancouver Coastal Health: <http://www.vch.ca/>