



## **Re-Opening and Recovering:**

**Best Practice Recommendations  
for Karate Clubs, Businesses and  
Professionals**

**ALERT LEVEL 2**

**RETURN TO PLAY**

# Reviewed and Approved by GNL Amended Karate NL Return to Play Plan August 19, 2021

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**Re-Opening and Recovery: Best Practice Recommendations for Karate Clubs, Businesses and Professionals**

**Section 1: Understanding Provincial & National Government Orders and Restrictions on Business Operations and Social Gatherings**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the provincial and national governments of Canada issued various orders and restrictions on business operations through out the country. These orders and restrictions were put in place to reduce the social interactions we have with each other, and therefore reduce the spread of COVID-19. The orders and guidelines often vary in scope, rigidity, and duration from city to city and province to province. We encourage you to stay up to date with your local authorities on what restrictions and orders are in place.

Just as these restrictions were issued over time and escalated in response to the increasing severity of COVID-19, they are now being lifted in a way that can be controlled and lowered as the disease’s impact decreases. As the province prepares to reopen its economy and allow businesses to ease into re-opening, the public will turn to sports as a way to cope with the “new normal” of our society. Sports will be a reminder of the importance of social interaction and physical activity in a serious return to play movement. Karate NL is dedicated to ensuring that this return to play phase of our society is as smooth and risk free as possible.

In coordination with provincial health care professionals and government guidelines, Karate NL is issuing best practice recommendations to serve as a guide for our karate community’s re-opening and recovery. These recommendations may be updated or revised to reflect new information as the recovery efforts from COVID-19 move forward. This document is intended for use by karate schools, businesses, and professionals and is designed to serve a reference guide to support individual planning and decision-making. Please note that these best practices do not take the place of government requirements or restrictions, which may prescribe specific operating standards during the COVID-19 pandemic. This information contained in this document does not constitute legal advice.

Karate NL recognizes that operating practices, space limitations, varying resources and capabilities of each club, and differing regulatory obligations from city to city may differ from one another. We strongly recommend that you consult with legal counsel and your insurance provider before re-opening your karate club and resuming the “new normal” operations.

When beginning to plan for your clubs reopening it is important for you to understand the regulatory landscape where you live and work. To find out about what regulations and rules may apply to you and your members, refer to your local governments, provincial government, and public health announcements.

Be sure to identify the following critical information:

- Does your club operate in a city or town subject to restrictions of business operations or social gatherings?
- To whom does this restriction apply?
- When does the restrictions end? When are the restrictions set to be lifted?
- What new health and safety requirements for business and professionals are there?
- Has your city or town issued guidance or FAQs to help the public understand relevant restrictions and guidelines?

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## Section 2: Making a Plan to Operate in the New Normal Society and Practice Safely

Just because you can reopen your doors for business does not mean it is 100% safe to resume business as usual. To protect yourself and the well-being of your members, you should first consider whether you have now or can develop the space, resources and capacity to operate and practice in a manner that prioritizes the health and safety of your members.

### Consider How COVID-19 Will Affect Your Club, Business, or Practice Facility

Consider how the COVID-19 outbreak may affect your club, business, and practice facility, including:

- Virus transmissions through in-person contact or use of shared space.
- Virus transmissions through the contact of shared training equipment. (Punching bags, sparring gloves, target mitts, etc.)
- Instructor illness or inability to teach due to other responsibilities (like childcare, mandatory isolation, illness, etc.)
- Concerns and fears of the karate community, which may temporarily reduce demand for in person classes.
- Difficulty obtaining supplies, protective equipment or cleaning products.
- Difficulty implementing and enforcing health and safety measures, especially if individuals are non-compliant.

As you consider when and how to re-open your club, deciding how you will address the COVID-19 related risks and concerns you identify will be a first step in your “Return to Play Plan” (RPP). You may need to modify how you operated classes before the pandemic, either by relying on more heavily virtual classes or by altering the configurations of your space or size of your classes. You may also need to obtain new or different equipment or implement a new disinfection and cleaning regimen. You will need to communicate with your staff, volunteers, students, and other related parties regarding your newly established safety measures and rules. For most of our karate clubs, we imagine that this may mean that you may want to consider a phased approach to re-opening your club that allows you to grow back into your old practices and some new ones, over time.

While we understand the serious economic and social toll the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our community, we strongly urge karate clubs to be realistic about their capacity and capability when re-opening. It is likely that many karate clubs will not be able to readily implement some or all of the health and protective measures that will be critical to protecting their members at one time. In this document we will discuss a phased approach in building your RPP.

### Components of a Return to Play Plan (RPP)

When you decide to re-open, we recommend that you develop a comprehensive RPP. Your RPP should account for all aspects of your club, business and practice facility, including those related to:

- Club, worksite or practice space cleaning and sanitation protocols.
- Implementation of protective measures to promote employee and public safety, including social distancing protocols.
- Structure of classes or practice that can take place in person.
- Management of reception, shops and bathroom spaces to limit surface contact.
- Staff leave policies.
- Spectator capacity policies.
- Continuity of operations if staff or instructors cannot come to work.
- Provision of protective equipment and the availability of handwashing and sanitation stations.

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- Training for staff and instructors for communication with students and the public.
- Incident response protocols in the event of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case.
- Incident response protocols in the event of non-compliant students or other parties involved.

Your club operations should also consider for laws and regulations governing your club, business and practice facility, including for example:

- Government orders setting health and safety requirements for business conducting in person operations.
- Federal, provincial, and local employment laws on employee leave, work schedules, discrimination and reasonable accommodation requirements related to new COVID-19 related initiatives.

As well as developing an RPP, you should also consult guidance issued by leading health officials and safety authorities, such as those below:

- Government of Canada Health Updates & Advisories, [www.canada.ca/covid-19/coronavirus](http://www.canada.ca/covid-19/coronavirus)
- Government of Newfoundland & Labrador Health Updates, Reporting, & Advisories, [www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19](http://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19)
- Covid-19 Newfoundland and Labrador – HUB, <https://covid-19-newfoundland-and-labrador-gnl.hub.arcgis.com>

### Building your Return to Play Plan (RPP) – Level 2

Now that you have a understanding of the various rules, restrictions and guidelines that will provide boundaries and direction for your RPP, consider how you will start to implement your RPP consistently and effectively. It will help to develop written policies and procedures that govern how you will handle certain situations or accomplish specific tasks. It will also be helpful to post signage, both at your club or practice facility and online. This will instruct and set expectations of staff, students, parents & guardians, and other members of your club.

For example, if you plan to resume some in-person classes, develop a policy that sets your standards of operation. Below are some example areas to consider, as well as Karate NL's recommendation for your consideration:

- **Maximum class size?**
  - Karate NL recommends for every 100sq/ft of training space you allow one student to train. This will allow for a 6 ft (2 meter) distance 360 degrees around every student.
  - A minimum of two meters or six feet between all students and instructors should be maintained as much as possible. Brief interaction is allowed. Place physical distance markers on floors near entrance/exits and other appropriate signage to remind visitors of the need to maintain physical distance.
- **Maximum class duration?**
  - Karate NL recommends that the duration of your classes allow a transitional period of time between classes. Allow a time for students and parents from a previous class to leave your facility before permitting the next class of students and parents to enter. This will limit the amount of in person contact between members of different classes.
- **Space configuration to maintain social distancing?**
  - Karate NL recommends that all facility space be “social distance friendly” and allow all members the ability to social distance from one another.
  - Areas for spectators to watch the class should be spread out and avoid large close gatherings.
  - Students should maintain social distancing when entering and leaving class.
  - Allow only one student to enter and leave the training space at a time.

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- **Rules regarding hands-on adjustments or other physical contact during class?**
  - Instructors should avoid any unnecessary contact during class. (high fives, etc.)
  - If an instructor adjusts a student's technique or comes in contact with a student, they should use hand sanitizer or other safe cleansers to disinfect their hands.
- **Pre-class health screening of employees and students?**
  - Karate NL does not recommend temperature checks of students or employees in consideration of personal privacy. Instead, Karate NL recommends a self-report method and instructors should inform members that if they or any member of their household are showing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 that they should not come to the dojo and follow provincial guidelines.
- **Pre & Post Class Cleaning Practices?**
  - Karate NL recommends clubs put into place an extensive cleaning protocol for pre & post class cleaning practices. Disinfecting high contact areas such as door knobs, light switches, bathrooms, lockers, training equipment etc. will not only provide a layer of protection to your members and staff, but may also make all those attending your dojo or facility feel a sense of safety and find comfort in the space being clean.
- **Face-covering rules?**
  - In accordance with the public health announcements, effective August 24, 2020, wearing a non-medical mask that covers the nose and mouth is mandatory for people 5 years of age or older while in any indoor public facility.
  - Masks must be worn when entering and exiting any facility.
  - All non-participants (staff/coaches/etc.) must wear non-medical masks at all times unless they are exempt from doing so.
    - Athletes/ students can remove their mask once they are on the training surface.
    - When athletes/ students are not directly involved in a drill it is recommended, they be masked.
    - Non-medical masks should be worn as much as possible when in indoor spaces.

### **Health Guidelines do not require masks for the following people or situations:**

- Children under the age of 5. however, wearing a mask is encouraged for children between 2 and 4 years of age. It is not recommended for those under age 2.
- People with physical or mental health exemptions – People whose particular physical condition or mental health prevents them from wearing a mask (these people are encouraged to wear a face shield instead, if possible), including but not limited to:
  - people who are unable to put it on or take it off by themselves due to a physical disability.
  - people with facial deformities.
  - peoples who, due to cognitive impairment, an intellectual disability, an autism spectrum disorder, or a severe mental health condition, are unable to understand the requirement, or for whom wearing a mask causes significant distress.
  - people who have a severe skin condition on the face or ears that is significantly aggravated by wearing a mask;
  - people with a severe respiratory condition or disease for whom a mask would further impair their breathing (please note that there is no evidence that indicates NMMs impair oxygenation of those with respiratory disease);
  - anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- During treatments, services or physical activity – People who are receiving treatment, receiving a service or engaging in a physical activity or other activity that requires it to be removed. In these cases, they may remove their mask for the duration of the treatment, service or activity only;
- Showing identification – people who remove their mask momentarily for identification purposes.

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- Workplaces – Requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations, as well as any workplace specific health and safety plans, will continue to apply to workers. However, workers must wear their mask when they are in a publicly accessible lobby, reception area, hallway, stairway or elevator when physical distancing cannot be maintained and physical barriers (window, plexiglass ect.) are not in place.
- Seated areas – People who are seated in the following places, provided physical distancing of two metres can be achieved between individuals or bubbles, (they must put their mask back on when moving around in these places):
  - in the classrooms of a post-secondary educational institution,
  - in a place where activities or services of a religious, cultural, or entertainment nature are offered,
  - in a restaurant, a food court, or a lounge.
- It is recommended that people exempted from wearing a mask due to a health condition avoid, as much as possible, places where they are mandatory. If they go to these places, it is recommended that people who are exempted strictly maintain a physical distance of two meters from other people, except the people accompanying them, if any.

**\*\*Please note: Face masks should not impede normal breathing.**

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- **Rules on the use of training equipment brought from home and on sharing equipment while training?**
  - Karate NL requires that students do not share training equipment such as sparring gloves or training targets while at class. Any equipment brought from home should be wiped down before entering the dojo and before leaving the dojo with a disinfecting wipe.
  - Karate NL recommends that instructors do not hold training targets, kick shields, etc. while students practice their techniques. After the drill or training has concluded, all equipment used during class should be cleaned using a disinfecting cleaner.
- **Rules on the use of facilities including lockers, changing rooms, bathrooms and showers as well as the storage of personal belongings during classes?**
  - Karate NL recommends that all students keep their personal belongings in a bag that can be kept closed when not in use. The bag should be stored away from any high contact or high traffic areas of the dojo.
  - Karate NL recommends that all students change at home and do not use any locker rooms or bathrooms for changing into karate uniforms. Uniforms should also be washed after each class.
- **Hand washing and good hygiene?**
  - Karate NL recommends that staff, students, and other members wash their hands with soap and warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds before and after every class or use hand sanitizer.
  - Hang signs and encourage all members to practice best handwashing methods.
  - Post signs in bathrooms and around your facility to respect cough and sneeze etiquette (cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and then throwing it away, using upper sleeve if a tissue is not available, refraining from touching your face, etc.) Make tissues available to the extent possible.
- **Limit Contact Surfaces?**
  - Karate NL recommends minimizing the surfaces that are touched by multiple people. For example, offer no-touch garbage cans, soap dispensers, door entrances, etc.
  - Remove all unnecessary items, like décor, from common spaces.
  - In retail areas, encourage students and members to only touch what they plan to purchase.
  - Use contactless forms of payment such as interac e-transfer, tap credit cards and do not accept cash if you can avoid it.
  - Clean pens for signature before and after each use.

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## Maintaining records for contact tracing?

- Karate NL recommends that clubs maintain clear records of who is present in the school or studio at any given time. In the event of notice of an infected visitor, records of others present at the time will be important to help identify who may have come in contact with the infected visitor.
- **Creating notice mechanisms?**
  - Karate NL recommends that clubs establish a way of informing students, staff and members in the event you become aware that an infected or potentially infected person was at your club or facility. It is important to make sure that you have the contact information for employees and students if contact is required.
  - Be mindful of privacy. If you provide notice, omit identifying details about the person infected or suspected to be infected.
- **Restricting spectators during karate classes?**
  - Karate NL recommends spectators be limited as much as possible.
  - Students with any specific health needs or disabilities that may require a parent or guardian to assist with may be encouraged to stay.

## Section 3: Review and Evaluate Your RPP

As you bring your RPP together and learn more about operating in the new normal of our society and especially as new guidance becomes available, set time aside to review and evaluate your plans, policies and procedures on a regular basis.

Ask yourself:

- Are your written documents up to date?
- Do you need to update or modify your plan, policies, or procedures?
- Do you need more procedures to help guide tasks?
- Are there new rules or guidance that you need to address?

We know that COVID-19 has impacted you, your families and our community significantly. As we navigate this period of time together, Karate NL is continuing to monitor our community and develop guidelines and resources for our members. Please refer to this document when reviewing your RPP.

Reach out to us with your feedback, questions or concerns at [karatenl@gmail.com](mailto:karatenl@gmail.com). Thank you for the work that you do for your communities and especially now in these difficult times. We will get through this together.

## Section 4: Tournament Guidelines & Regulations

Karate tournaments may take place as long as the following guidelines and regulations are satisfied:

- Physical distancing should be maintained by all officials, parents, spectators, athletes, and staff during the operation of the tournament. This includes prior, during, and after the tournament.
- Non-Medical Face (NMM) masks must be worn inside the facility at all times.
- When competing athletes can remove their mask for the duration of event without physical distancing if:
  - Individuals warmup with the same partners.
  - All individuals are from the same health region. (Eastern Health, Western Health etc.)
  - Athletes do not leave the competition area. If an athlete must leave the competition area they must put on a mask.



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- Coaches, managers, and other team personnel who verbally interact with athletes must wear a NMM while coaching.
- Officials must wear a NMM while officiating if social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Officials should maintain physical distancing from all athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators if a NMM is not being worn.
- The gathering size limit of the tournament is 200 individuals and they must all be from the same regional health authority. This includes officials, parents, spectators, athletes, and staff.
- Game organizers must maintain a record of all persons at the event for a minimum of 14 days after the event.

**\*\*Please Note: Providing contact information for contact tracing is voluntary and individuals should not be denied entry to an activity if they opt not to provide the information.**

- Participants must supply their own equipment.
- Registration processes must be completed online.
- Spectators must maintain social distancing if not from the same household bubble.
- Physical pre- and post-game gestures, such as high fives or handshakes are not permitted.
- For large facilities, arrows/ markers should be placed to indicate one directional traffic where possible.
- Athletes should immediately leave the facility once they are done competing.
- Food and beverages are not permitted to be provided for onsite consumption. Officials should be told to bring a lunch. During the lunch break they must socially distance while eating if not in the same bubble.

We know that COVID-19 has impacted you, your families, and our community significantly. As we navigate this period of time together, Karate NL is continuing to monitor our community and develop guidelines and resources for our members. Please refer to this document when reviewing your RPP. Reach out to us with your feedback, questions or concerns at [karatenl@gmail.com](mailto:karatenl@gmail.com). Thank you for the work that you do for your communities and especially now in these difficult times. We will get through this together.