



May 15, 2020

Dear BC Sailing Members,

The BC Sailing Board of Directors would like to update you on the actions we are undertaking on your behalf to ensure a safe return to the sport of Sailing for our members.

You recently received a Return to Sailing communication from Sail Canada. While it contains important information about the Return to Sport, BC is in a different state in the Pandemic Recovery process than other Provinces and there are different considerations that are unique to Eastern Canada that do not apply to our region. As you may have seen, the BC Government recently laid out a series of steps that all sectors will take together to protect people and ensure that our province can open up some sectors at this time of COVID-19, called [B.C.'s Restart Plan](#). We are working with ViaSport, to develop the Return to Sport Guidelines which will outline the key criteria and methodology on how to resume sailing programs in our province in manner that reduces risk to our participants as much as possible during this pandemic. We have been working with ViaSport for several weeks now on the Sailing specific Return to Sport document. That work has included virtual meetings with the other Water based Provincial Sport Organization (PSO), including, Rowing, Canoe /Kayak, Wake Board and Water Ski. We have also been working with key Members that have large Race Teams and Learn to Sail Programs as part of this process. Each PSO must develop their own guidelines with sport specific criteria. Additionally, we expect to receive the Government's general sport sector guidelines soon, and we must ensure our guidelines align with the Provincial Guidelines.

Upon receipt of the Provincial Guidelines for return to sport, our BC Sailing team, lead by Kevin Black, Provincial Coach, will work diligently to prepare the final Sailing Return to Sport guidelines which will require the approval of the BC Sailing Board of Directors. We hope to have this document to the membership before the end the month.

While we await the final version of the BC Sailing Return to Sport Guidelines it is the strong recommendation of the BC Sailing Board that, sailing programs not recommence without the BC Sailing Return to Sport guidelines being in place. We need to be seen to be working cooperatively with both the BC Health Ministry and ViaSport to ensure a safe return to sport.

When the BC Sailing Return to Sport Guidelines are in place, we intend to host a virtual town hall meeting with our members to discuss them and answer questions concerning them and how best to implement the recommendations.

Responding to the COVID pandemic is uncharted territory for all of us. Things are changing quickly which requires us to be flexible and creative in our approach. BC Sailing is working hard to determine the best path forward for our members and organization that keeps us all safe and able to get back on the water.

We will keep you informed of important developments and look forward to sending you our Guidelines for returning to our sport.

We feel it is worth noting that recreational boating in BC was never banned, and in fact Our Provincial Health Officer suggested boating as good means to socially distance your family and enjoy the outdoors. There were recommendations made about not traveling away from home, making sure your boat is properly maintained, boating with just those in your immediate family only and staying clear of small communities. It can be confusing managing the differences between getting back on the water as a recreational boater vs Sail Canada / BC Sailing sanctioned programming. To help, we feel the following links provide additional information to assist in your decision making.

Boating BC:

[https://www.boatingbc.ca/articles/maintaining-social-distancing-while-boating-in-bc?fbclid=IwAR0a0GTv-b16qulXk4\\_LHZI5O4TznbqO4mUFWd09dLqr0pAa8RJq7OPd--Q](https://www.boatingbc.ca/articles/maintaining-social-distancing-while-boating-in-bc?fbclid=IwAR0a0GTv-b16qulXk4_LHZI5O4TznbqO4mUFWd09dLqr0pAa8RJq7OPd--Q)

and Transport Canada:

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/initiatives/covid-19-measures-updates-guidance-tc/covid-19-guidance-posters-marine.html#s1>

Stay safe and healthy!

Regards

Paul Mendham, President