

PURPOSE OF PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to Clubs and Branch Unions in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from any COVID-related issues that may arise from rugby returning in various forms across Ontario. It is a framework to guide actions and is subject to modification depending on the nature of the issue and influencing circumstances.

In times of emergency, actions and words will face intense scrutiny. The intent of the ERP Plan is to set out a system – comprised of appropriate protocols, processes and tools – to ensure timely, cohesive and consistent response to any incident that could threaten the perception and reputation of Rugby Canada, the Rugby Ontario, Member Organizations or the game of rugby.

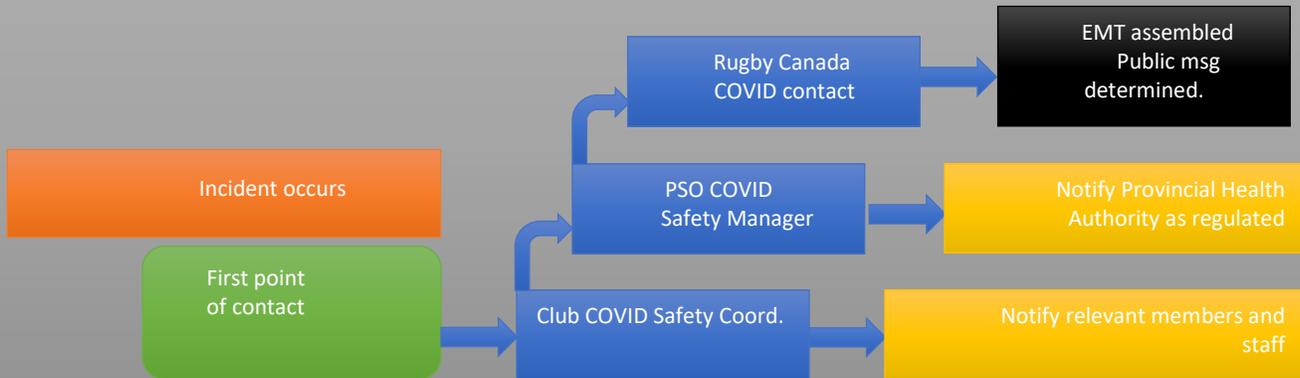
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Establish the facts as quickly as possible.
 - Stay abreast of developments and new information.
 - If necessary, correct misinformation.
- Keep the response plan simple, involve as few people as possible.
- Be aware of the tone and spirit with which all tactics and strategies are fulfilled.
 - Exemplify leadership and teamwork, generosity, transparency, respect, support and integrity.
- It is crucial that everyone is aware they play a role whether as leader or follower of protocols, and no one should operate outside the system.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

- First and foremost, we must communicate *truthfully* and *transparently* at all times. Stakeholders will understand a mistake, accident or poor judgment. However, they will not forgive any attempt – real or perceived – to cover up specific actions.
- The internet and social media will require a focus on and commitment to timely and sustained communication – of good news and bad – in order to prevent rampant or widespread speculation and rumor from filling any knowledge voids during any incident/crisis.
- Equally significant is the impact of “perception” on the sport’s reputation, and the need to not only respond to the “reality” of the incident, but also to appropriately manage stakeholder perceptions of rugby around the incident.
- Because during a crisis all stakeholders are focusing on actions and words, we must ensure that communications emphasize appropriate concern, care and empathy that acknowledges the impact of the incident on others.
- Communications should always consider external factors including stakeholder partners, media reaction, government relations, and potential legal ramifications.

RESPONSE PROTOCOL



RESPONSE PROCESS OBJECTIVES

- Gather and verify facts
- Inform and seek counsel and approvals from Emergency Management Team (EMT) when needed
- Inform all relevant stakeholders in a timely, credible and caring way
- Provide regular updates to all identified internal and external audiences

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM (EMT)

- Paul Hunter – Rugby Canada COVID Safety contact
- Jamie Levchuk – Managing Director, Communications (Rugby Canada)
- Billy Longland – CMO (Rugby Canada)
- Allen Vansen – CEO (Rugby Canada)
- Ryan Jones & Joe Schissler – Rugby Ontario COVID Safety Managers
- Myles Spencer – CEO (Rugby Ontario)
- Mississauga Blues COVID Safety Coordinator Lesley Swan & Shelley Theolis

STAKEHOLDERS

- Rugby Club
- Branch Union
- Rugby Ontario
- Rugby Canada
- Provincial and local health authorities
- Government and municipal partners
- Media
- Corporate/other partners

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM DUTIES

- Gather the group
- Assess the facts
- Assign responsibilities (internal and external actions/communications)
- Recovery process determined:
 - Prepare notification strategy (who needs to know; how/when do we communicate)
 - Prepare key messages, press release(s), statement(s), designate appropriate spokesperson

MISSISSAUGA BLUES RFC EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN



CATEGORIES

First determine – is it an issue, an incident or a crisis? Too often, organizations are too quick to deem a situation a crisis, which leads to panic and often, mismanagement. One of the first steps is to determine whether the category of the situation:

1. ISSUE LEVEL

- Positive COVID test of registered participant

Characterization: Generally does not have serious implications. Single individual impacted.

Media Involvement: Limited or None

Actions:

- First point of contact assesses facts; escalates to Club Safety Coordinator
 - Appropriate local actions and communications undertaken
- Rugby Ontario Safety Managers are advised of issue
- Situation logged and monitored

2. INCIDENT LEVEL

- COVID outbreak within Club or region

Characterization: Moderate to serious implications. Multiple individuals impacted.

Media Involvement: Limited but could escalate

Actions:

- Rugby Ontario Safety Managers are advised of escalation
- Rugby Canada COVID contact is notified – EMT is convened asap
 - Media stand by statement is crafted if necessary (i.e. we are assessing the facts and will advise on situation as soon as possible)
- EMT works through duties
- Provincial Health Authority is advised as required

3. CRISIS LEVEL

- Life-threatening sickness of member(s) (player, coach, volunteer, etc)
- Loss of life

Characterization: Life-threatening implications to one or more individuals.

Media Involvement: situation has been picked up and/or request for comment has been made

Actions:

- EMT re-convenes to assess additional facts
- EMT works through duties
- Spokesperson identified
 - Message development

SITUATION REPORT

For any of the categories above, a situation report should be prepared by the Club COVID safety coordinator to ensure facts are understood:

- Describe situation (who, what, where, how, and who has been contacted/involved)
- Additional individuals/groups affected (if any)
- Severity/impact at time of reporting
- Current local priorities/actions

INCIDENT/CRISIS SPOKESPERSON

Any questions from the media ***must*** be deferred to the EMT and Managing Director, Communications who will designate an appropriate spokesperson. The principal reason for nominating spokespeople is to make sure all questions are dealt with promptly, thoroughly and courteously. COVID safety nominees are *not* responsible for answering questions.

MISSISSAUGA BLUES RFC EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN



Remember that speculation is dangerous. Do not respond to media or public questions until the EMT is consulted. The first message can make the difference in managing a situation effectively.

Spokesperson guidelines:

- Communicate only information that is approved for release.
- Prepare key messages in advance, practice their delivery and use them as often as possible in an interview.
- Stay calm. A journalist is driven by the need to get the story. The best way to respond to a hostile journalist is by being calm, cool, and collected.
- Don't feel pressured to provide the journalist with an answer on the spot. Think about the answer. Remain composed. If the reporter wants the answer, s/he'll wait for it.
- Honesty is the best policy. Don't take chances in an interview. Do not speculate. Do not guess. If you don't know an answer to a reporter's question, say "I can't give you an answer right now, but I will check on that and get back to you." And do that.
- No comment is the worst comment. No comment can be interpreted as a sign of guilt or ignorance. Try saying "*What I can tell you is . . .*"
- Don't speak or answer questions on behalf of other organizations. Simply respond by saying "You will have to ask X that question."

RECOVERY

- Statement(s) developed, approved, posted to website/social media and issued to appropriate stakeholders
- Rugby Canada Communications team leads in the drafting of key messages/Q&A for review and approval by Emergency Management Team
- Social media monitoring and strategy
- Complete a full report built on the initial situation report
 - For crisis: "dark site" online strategy potentially activated (if required) which replaces regular home page, and links to statement/press release

Competing Communication Priorities for public and/or media and the EMT

Public/Media:	EMT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Want information first and fast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EMT must value accuracy above speed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media (and some public) thrive on the drama of a situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EMT seeks to impose calm and order.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for simple answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EMT deals with complexity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May seek to assign blame	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EMT seeks solutions.

MISSISSAUGA BLUES RFC EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN



CONTACTS

EMT (Rugby Canada):

Paul Hunter, Director of Development (and Rugby Canada COVID Safety contact)

Cell:

Email: phunter@rugby.ca

Jamie Levchuk, Managing Director Events, Marketing & Communications

Cell:

Email: jlevchuk@rugby.ca

Paul will lead in the assembly of the EMT as required.

EMT (Rugby Ontario):

Myles Spencer, CEO

Cell:

Email: [mspencer@rugbyontario.com](mailto:m Spencer@rugbyontario.com)

Joe Schissler, Manager Competitions, Events and Marketing (and co-Rugby Ontario COVID Safety Manager)

Cell:

Email: covid19manager@rugbyontario.com

Ryan Jones, Manager of Development (and co-Rugby Ontario COVID Safety Manager)

Cell:

Email: covid19manager@rugbyontario.com

Myles will lead in the assembly of the provincial EMT as required.

EMT (Mississauga Blues Rugby Club):

Lesley Swan, President & COVID Safety Coordinator, Mississauga Blues RFC

Cell: 416-606-9406

Email: swanlesley4@gmail.com

Shelley Theoulis, COVID Safety Coordinator, Mississauga Blues RFC

Cell:

Email: stheoulis@gmail.com