



# **Ontario COVID-19 Protocols and Policies - 2022/23**

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## Overview

*FIRST* Robotics Canada has a primary focus of ensuring the safety of our participants and community during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they participate in the 2022-23 *FIRST* Season. While we are making a return to full sized in-person events this season, we recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic is still an incredibly serious and ongoing situation. Community positivity remains high as do more serious outcomes such as hospitalizations. As such, we have developed and will be continuing to implement COVID-19 Protocols and Policies to reduce the risk of coronavirus exposure and spread at in-person indoor events in Ontario. Safety recommendations are taken from [Health Canada](#) and [Public Health Ontario](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation. We are constantly evaluating the current situation, thus our policies and protocols may change due to updated advice, guidelines, and mandates from Health Canada and Public Health Ontario. Policies and protocols listed on this page may be strengthened if the situation worsens.

All updates will be made available at this website <https://www.firstroboticscanada.org/covid19/> and will also be communicated via Program Update emails and event specific emails. Specific venues may have their own specific requirements, which will be published in advance of the event, and which may change some of our procedures.

We know that vaccinations combined with public health measures like mandatory wearing of masks, increased ventilation, physical distancing, washing your hands, and staying home if you don't feel well, are the best defenses against COVID-19, and we will be applying these types of measures to our in-person events. All details on all COVID-19 safety protocols and policies are available in this document. Some major policies and protocols of note:

- Masks are mandatory for all attendees at any in-person indoor *FIRST* Robotics Canada event held in Ontario
- All attendees of any in-person indoor *FIRST* Robotics Canada event held in Ontario are highly recommended to have a full series of vaccinations based on eligibility requirements and recommendations from Public Health Ontario
- Although events will be open to the general public, with no specific capacity requirements, all attendees will be required to complete COVID-19 symptom screening at the start of each day they are attending an event before they are allowed to enter the venue. It is essential that if you are not feeling well, you must stay home.
- All event venues will be following the *FIRST* Robotics Canada Ventilation Policy & Guidelines to help minimize the risk of transmission for all attendees

We thank you for your ongoing diligence as we work to support our community through a safe return to play. We know the pandemic has been an incredible struggle for our community, but we are constantly inspired by your perseverance and dedication to the health and safety of all our communities.

## Masking Policy

Updated: 08/24/2022

### Policy

Face masks are mandatory for all event attendees and should always be worn in all indoor event areas. Masks may only be removed to eat or drink. It is recommended that attendees move more than 2m away from other individuals before removing your mask to eat/drink. You must put your mask back on immediately after eating/drinking.

### Types of Masks

Masks should fit well and be worn completely over the nose and mouth.

The following mask types are NOT approved for use at this event:

- Cloth masks with exhalation valves or vents since they allow respiratory droplets containing the virus to escape.
- A face shield used alone without a face mask
- Loose mesh
- Neck-gaiters
- Bandanas
- Scarves
- Ski masks
- Balaclavas
- Plastic or other non-breathable materials as a face mask

All attendees are required to bring their own masks. N95/KN95 masks are highly recommended and preferred. N95/KN95 will be available for team members and general public members who forget/lose/damage their own mask or don't have an approved mask option. N95/KN95 will be available for all volunteers.

### Exemptions

As per the [Province](#), the following categories of people are exempt from the requirement to wear a masks at events

- A person with a medical condition that inhibits their ability to wear a face covering
- A person who is unable to put on or remove their face covering without help from someone else
- A person receiving accommodations according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 or the Human Rights Code

Details on how to present exemptions will be communicated by the Tournament lead.

## **Recommendations**

- N95/KN95 masks are highly recommended and preferred.

Masks should:

- Fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- Maintain their shape after washing and drying
- Be made of at least two layers of tightly woven material (such as cotton or linen)
- Be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping

When wearing a face covering, you should:

- Wash your hands immediately before putting it on and immediately after taking it off (practise good hand hygiene while you are wearing the face covering)
- Make sure the mask fits well around your nose and mouth
- Avoid moving the mask around or adjusting it often
- Avoid touching the mask while using it
- Not share it with others
- Masks should be changed when they get slightly wet or dirty.

# **Ventilation Policy**

**Updated: 08/24/2022**

## **Policy**

In addition to other public health measures, ventilation has an important role in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 indoors. Outbreaks have been linked to poor ventilation where the virus appears to have been transmitted through aerosol production from infected individuals that became concentrated in the air over time. Thus improving ventilation is one of our most important defenses, along with masking, to keep our events safe.

## Guidelines

Events are highly recommended to take the following steps to improve ventilation for all attendees.

- When possible, opening exterior doors and windows, even just for a few minutes, ideally with more than one open at a time.
  - Opening windows in the colder months may not always be comfortable or possible. Doing so for a few minutes at a time during the event can still improve air quality, with minimal impact on the indoor temperature.
- HVAC systems will exchange indoor air a certain number of times per hour as a part of regular operation.
  - If possible, to increase ventilation, the HVAC system fan should be run continuously at a low speed to provide air movement and filtration without unwanted draft.
  - If possible, the HVAC system should be run for 2 hours at maximum outside airflow before and after the building is occupied.
- Portable air filtration devices with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, have been shown to reduce the concentration of some viruses from the air. Corsi–Rosenthal Boxes have been shown to remove aerosol particles at high rates and provide clean air delivery rates similar to those of portable HEPA devices. These devices should be considered as an additional protection when possible, especially in classroom or smaller sized rooms

## Pre-Event Screening Protocol

Updated: 08/24/2022

### Policy

All attendees will be required to complete the *FIRST* Robotics Canada screening & venue specific screening (if required by the venue) at the start of each day they are attending an event before they are allowed to enter the event.

The *FIRST* Robotics Canada screening will require attendees to use the following Provincial screening questionnaire: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

If you complete the screening and receive a “Do not go” as shown below, you may not attend the event.

COVID-19 school screening result

**Do not go to school/child care**



If you complete the screening and receive a “You can go” as shown below, you may attend the event.

COVID-19 school screening result

**Go to school/child care**



Please follow any other instructions you may receive from this screening.

## **Physical Distancing Policy**

**Updated: 08/24/2022**

### **Policy**

Attendees are encouraged to keep 2m of distance between themselves and people who don't live in their household or not part of their cohort whenever possible. There will be times at

events where it is not possible for attendees to keep 2m of distance between themselves, and in those times, which everyone should attempt to minimize both the frequency and duration, attendees should exercise extra caution.

*FIRST* Robotics Canada recognizes a single team as a cohort, which is not subject to the same 2m physical distancing recommendation. However, this exception only applies to members of the same team. In all other cases, the physical distancing recommendations outlined in this policy remain in effect.

Team to team and volunteer to team interaction is a fundamental part of our programs, teams should attempt to maximize physical distance during these interactions, but it is understood that this will not always be possible. As mentioned in the introduction of this policy, there will be times at events where it is not possible for attendees to keep 2m of distance between themselves, and in those times, which everyone should attempt to minimize both the frequency and duration, attendees should exercise extra caution.

### **Queuing**

Floor markings will be used to ensure some distancing between teams in the queuing line.

### **General Traffic**

Attendees are recommended to follow all physical distancing guidelines, including all signage and marker direction, such as those that are freestanding or on the ground, to indicate the appropriate direction of pedestrian movement or to maintain a safe physical distance from others.

### **General Distancing Etiquette**

Attendees are encouraged to not greet others with close physical contact (e.g. hugs, etc.) or open-hand contact (e.g. handshakes, high-fives, etc.). Consider greeting others with fist-bumps or elbow-taps instead. As is always the expectation, please be mindful of the personal space of all other attendees.

## **Food & Drink Policy**

**Updated: 08/24/2022**

### **Policy**

Events may choose to specify that food may only be consumed in designated areas within the venue. The designated areas should have increased ventilation via windows, doors, internal



HVAC systems, or portable air filtration devices with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. If used, these will be the only areas that masks may be off for a significant amount of time. Masks should only be removed right before eating and should be worn again as soon as the meal is over.

Masks may only be removed to eat or drink. It is recommended that attendees move more than 2m away from other individuals before removing your mask to eat/drink. You must put your mask back on immediately after eating/drinking.

It is recommended that all provided meals be pre-packaged for easy distribution and to minimize personal contact. Teams may bring and distribute their own food, provided there are no venue-specific rules.

## Respiratory Etiquette and Hand Hygiene Policy

Updated: 08/24/2022

### Policy

Respiratory etiquette should be practised and encouraged by all event attendees.

- When not wearing a mask (e.g., while eating/drinking), and even when wearing a mask, if an attendee needs to cough or sneeze, they should do so into a tissue or the bend of the arm, not their hand
- When tissues are used they should be disposed of as soon as possible in a plastic lined waste container and hand hygiene performed immediately afterwards.
- All attendees should refrain from singing. Please use alternate ways to celebrate like clapping, dancing, finger-snapping, etc.
- Event audio levels will be lowered to facilitate easier communication without the need for yelling and shouting

[Hand hygiene](#) should be practised and encouraged by all event attendees.

- All attendees should wash their hands frequently (for example, before, and after check-in, touching garbage, using the restroom) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- All attendees should use hand sanitizer, available at hand sanitizing stations throughout the event, including before and after game play or practice field use or any other time that soap and water are not readily available.

# Hand Sanitizer Protocol

Updated: 08/24/2022

## Policy

- Hand sanitizer is recommended to be available at the entrance to the Event, Pits, Competition Gym, and any rooms in use by the event.
- All attendees should use hand sanitizer, available at hand sanitizing stations throughout the event, including before and after game play or practice field use or any other time that soap and water are not readily available.

## Prior to the Event / Event Prep

- Tournament Director / Event Staff Lead will ensure each room and entrance to Pits and Competition Gym has hand sanitizer prior to event start each day
- Tournament Director / Event Staff Lead will include a check on these levels at lunch each day and top up as necessary
- Signage to be put up at entrances to main areas beside the hand sanitizer stations reminding people of standard COVID safety procedures (wear your mask, stay 6' apart when possible, wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, etc.)

# Safety Glasses Policy

Updated: 08/24/2022

## Policy

As per the standard FRC and FTC rules, safety glasses are mandatory in the pit area and by the field. Typically *FIRST* Robotics Canada maintains a safety glasses table, where safety glasses can be loaned out to those who don't have them. Due to our COVID-19 restrictions, there will be no loaning of safety glasses this season. All attendees must bring their own safety glasses to the event. We highly encourage teams to bring extra pairs in case a member loses or breaks their own pair.

*FIRST* Robotics Canada will maintain an emergency supply of safety glasses, which may be given (not loaned) to an attendee with no other options (i.e. they have checked with their team and there are no extra safety glasses available at all).

# Developing Symptoms or Being Notified of COVID-19 Exposure While at an Event Policy

Updated: 08/24/2022

## Policy

Anyone who develops symptoms at an event, must visit first aid to get assessed. If first aid cannot diagnose a condition that is not related to COVID-19, you must be isolated immediately.

Anyone who gets notified that they have been exposed to COVID-19 while at an event must be isolated immediately.

You must [self-isolate](#) for 10 days (or as or as instructed by your local public health unit). You will not be allowed to enter another *FIRST* Robotics Canada event within 14 days until you test negative for COVID-19 or a healthcare provider has diagnosed a condition that is not related to COVID-19.

While at an event, if an attendee notices another attendee who may be exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, they should bring this to the attention of a volunteer who can then escalate the situation to their Tournament Director or *FIRST* Robotics Canada staff member.

## Student Attendee

The student will be isolated from the rest of participants in a designated area. One mentor from the team must contact the student's emergency contact and arrange for the student to leave the event. The student must be supervised by a mentor (or other adult if they are a student volunteer) until they are picked up by an emergency contact.

## Adult Attendee

The adult must either leave the premises immediately or arrange to be picked up from the premises as soon as possible. While transportation is being arranged, they will be isolated from the rest of participants in a designated area.

## [Covid-19 Symptoms](#)

- **Fever and/or chills**  
Temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius/100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and/or chills
- **Cough or barking cough (croup)**

Continuous, more than usual, making a whistling noise when breathing (not related to asthma, post-infectious reactive airways, or other known causes or conditions you already have)

- **Shortness of breath**

Out of breath, unable to breathe deeply (not related to asthma or other known causes or conditions you already have)

- **Decrease or loss of taste or smell**

Not related to seasonal allergies, neurological disorders, or other known causes or conditions you already have

- **Tiredness**

**Unusual** fatigue, lack of energy (not related to depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction, or other known causes or conditions you already have)

- **Muscle aches**

**Unexplained, unusual**, or long-lasting (not related to sudden injury, fibromyalgia, or other known causes or conditions)

## Contact Tracing Policy

Updated: 08/24/2022

### In the event of a covid-positive scenario

- Lead mentors should let the Tournament Director / *FIRST* Robotics Canada Event Lead know if they or any attendees from their team test positive for COVID-19 after the event
- Volunteers should let the Tournament Director / *FIRST* Robotics Canada Event Lead know if they test positive for COVID-19 after the event
- If contacted by an attendee, the Tournament Director / *FIRST* Robotics Canada Event Lead Staff Member will share all pertinent details with *FIRST* Robotics Canada COVID-19 Task Force
  - The *FIRST* Robotics Canada COVID-19 Task Force will provide guidance and appropriate message for communication to the Tournament Director / *FIRST* Robotics Canada Event Lead
  - The Tournament Director / *FIRST* Robotics Canada Event Lead will send a communication to all attendees.
  - If it is possible to isolate a positive case to certain portions of the event (e.g. positive attendee only sat in the stands), these details will be shared in the communication
  - No names or identifying information will be provided regarding the person who tested positive.
- People with questions will be referred to the local Public Health Unit if they have questions regarding where to get a test, what self-isolation means, etc.

# Signage at Events Policy

Updated: 08/24/2022

## Policy

Posters, signs and collateral communication products will be available at entrances and other strategic locations at events informing attendees of important *FIRST* Robotics Canada COVID-19 policy and procedural information.

Posters and signs will include information on:

- COVID screening questions
- PPE requirements (eg: face mask required when indoors, safety glasses in designated areas, etc.)
- Personal hygiene reminders (ie: hand washing/sanitizing)
- Physical distancing recommendations

# COVID-19 Protocol Lead

Updated: 08/24/2022

## Policy

Successful implementation of the *FIRST* Robotics Canada COVID-19 policies and procedures as developed and recommended by the COVID-19 Task Force requires the identification of individual(s) responsible for the safe and effective deployment of the protocols and processes at in-person events.

### Protocols prior to event

Responsibility for communicating COVID-19 policies and procedures will be the responsibility of the Tournament Director for FLL and FTC events, or the Volunteer Lead of the *FIRST* Robotics Canada COVID-19 Task Force.

### Protocols at the event

Responsibility for the safe and effective implementation of COVID-19 protocols at the event will be the responsibility of the Tournament Director for FLL and FTC events, or the *FIRST* Robotics Canada Event Lead for FRC events. Specific duties include:

- Implementation and enforcement of *FIRST* Robotics Canada COVID-19 Policy and protocols

The event Volunteer Coordinator can support the Tournament Director / *FIRST* Robotics Canada Event Lead by managing the following:

- Ensure appropriate PPE is available to all volunteers
- Ensure COVID safety information (posters and signs) are prominently displayed
- Regularly check that all volunteers and attendees are wearing PPE appropriately and physically distancing when necessary
- Promptly report incidents of non-compliance to the Tournament Director or a *FIRST* Robotics Canada staff member.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Tournament Director / *FIRST* Robotics Canada Event Lead.

## **Enforcement of and Non Compliance with COVID-19 Policies**

**Updated: 08/24/2022**

### **Policy**

Any person entering any *FIRST* Robotics Canada event is required to abide by all COVID-19 health and safety policies along with the *FIRST* Code of Conduct. Non-compliance may result in removal from this event and being barred from future participation in *FIRST* activities.

If at any time, any attendee (team member or volunteer) has any concerns with the COVID-19 safety of the event, they should contact an event volunteer who can then escalate the situation to their Tournament Director or *FIRST* Robotics Canada staff member.

Any attendee who fails to comply with any of the outlined policies, will be given a friendly reminder to correct their unsafe behaviour immediately. If the attendee refuses to correct their behaviour, or repeats the behaviour, the Tournament Director or *FIRST* Robotics Canada staff member will be contacted who will then have a discussion with the attendee and their team's lead mentor (if the attendee is on a team). If the attendee still will not cooperate, they will be asked to leave the venue. If they still refuse to cooperate, venue security (if available) will be contacted to escort them from the venue. All disciplinary incidents will be handled on a case by case basis. All attendees are expected to be honest and complete with any declarations (e.g. screening, medical exemptions) made at the event. Anyone found to have intentionally misled in any of these areas, would be considered in violation of the *FIRST* Robotics Canada Code of Conduct and subject to disciplinary action, not limited to this event.

### **For Volunteers**

If any interaction discussing non-compliance of the COVID-19 health and safety policies ever becomes uncomfortable, we encourage you to reach out to the Tournament Director or a *FIRST* Robotics Canada staff member. No volunteer will be asked to handle these situations on their own, and may excuse themselves at any point.

### **Gracious Professionalism and Self Enforcement**

As always, all attendees are expected to demonstrate Gracious Professionalism at our events. Part of Gracious Professionalism is taking care of others and ensuring that we are all safe. As such we ask attendees not only to diligently follow our safety protocols, but also help remind others to do the same in a friendly and gracious manner. In addition, we expect that all attendees will be following protocols at all times, even when not in the presence of volunteers and staff.

## **Data Protection Policy**

**Updated: 08/24/2022**

### **Policy**

Implementation of the *FIRST* Robotics Canada COVID-19 policies and procedures may require the collection and storage of personal and confidential information and data. This policy serves to ensure the collection, storage and destruction of this data complies with the *FIRST* Privacy Policy, *FIRST* Data Protection Policy, and applicable privacy regulations enforced in the province of Ontario. Through the application and implementation of the *FIRST* Robotics Canada COVID-19 policies and protocols, *FIRST* Robotics Canada will make every effort to limit the collection and storage of personal and confidential information to that which is necessary for reporting to and follow up by Public Health units.

### **Pre-Event Screening**

All participants will be required to complete an on-line symptom screening tool within 24 hours of the event.

Collection: None.

Storage: None.

Disposal: N/A

### **Data Handling At Event - Contact Tracing and Screening**

#### **Symptom Screening**

Each attendee (including *FIRST* Robotics Canada staff, volunteers, contractors, guests and all team members and affiliates) must undertake a symptom self-screening before

being allowed entry to the event areas. The symptom self-screening can be done on-line or by reviewing screening questions on posters or other media.

Collection: None.

Storage: None.

Disposal: N/A

### **Data Handling At Event - Other forms**

Forms or documentation that may reference COVID-19 information that can be linked to an individual and/or an individual's personal information at minimum will be handled according to procedures consistent with the *FIRST* Privacy Policy and *FIRST* Data Protection Policy. Examples include Medical Incident, Non-Medical Incident forms.

Collection: In person.

Storage: Hard copies must be kept in confidential file folders while in use by authorized personnel. Post-event storage is dictated by the specific form (ie: securely stored by *FIRST* Robotics Canada, securely stored and archived by *FIRST* HQ or shredded).

Disposal: Shredded.

## **Acknowledgement of Protocols and Policies**

By attending a *FIRST* Robotics Canada indoor in-person event in Ontario, each attendee agrees to abide by the Ontario COVID-19 Protocols and Policies. Coaches agree to share this policy and compliance expectations with their team members and their families prior to the start of the event.