



Ontario COVID-19 Protocols and Policies - 2023/24

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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 2023-24 *FIRST* Season. While most restrictions have been relaxed, this 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. Complete 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. Each venue may have their own additional 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 wearing of masks, increased ventilation, physical distancing, washing your hands, and staying home if you don't feel well, are the best defences against COVID-19, and we will be making these types of recommendations for our in-person events. All details on all COVID-19 safety protocols and policies are available in the documents linked below. Some major policies and protocols of note:

- Masks are recommended 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 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 should complete a COVID-19 symptom screening at the start of each day they are attending an event. 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 Recommendations

Updated: 05/01/2023

Recommendations

Face masks are recommended for all event attendees and should always be worn in all indoor event areas.

N95/KN95 masks are highly recommended and preferred and may be available for attendees at certain events.

Masks should:

- Be worn completely over the nose and mouth.
- 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.

The following mask types are NOT recommended 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

Ventilation Policy

Updated: 05/01/2023

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 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 Recommendations

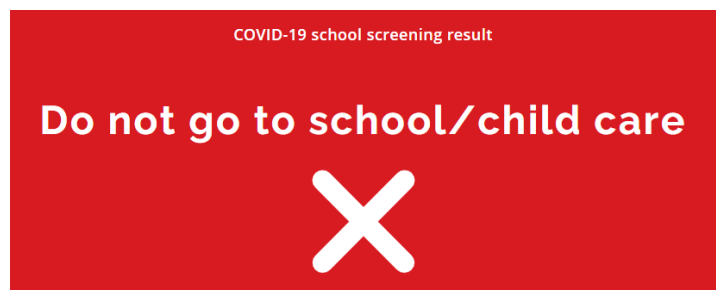
Updated: 05/01/2023

Recommendation

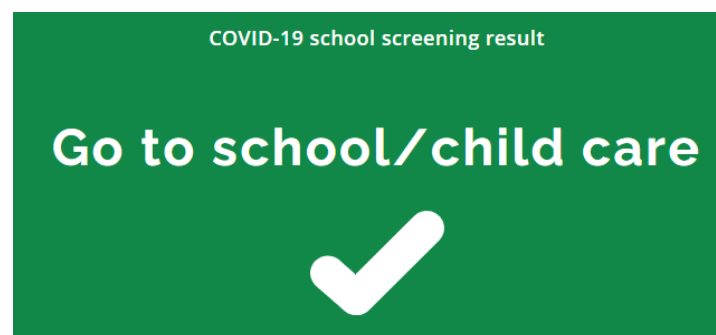
All attendees are recommended to complete the *FIRST* Robotics Canada screening & venue specific screening (if required by the venue) at the start of each day they are attending an event.

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 should not attend the event. It is essential that individuals who are not feeling well stay home.



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



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

Physical Distancing Recommendations

Updated: 05/01/2023

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.

Respiratory Etiquette and Hand Hygiene Recommendations

Updated: 05/01/2023

Recommendations

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

- 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.

[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 when soap and water are not readily available.

Developing Symptoms COVID-19 While at an Event Policy

Updated: 05/01/2023

Policy

Anyone who develops symptoms at an event, must visit first aid to get assessed.

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 or 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)

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.