

June 18, 2020

Sport brings people together and has the opportunity to help us get back to our 'new normal' during the pandemic. I'm extremely pleased that our collective efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 in communities throughout B.C. means that people can get back to playing the sports they love.

Following consultation with the sport sector, viaSport, in conjunction with WorkSafe BC, released the guidelines that outline how sport organizations can operate safely and resume play. We know many of you are now working on sport-specific plans to adjust the way of playing and abide by health guidelines.

For example, the guidelines recommend adjusting from a focus on competition to individual or skill development activities. In most sports, this may mean individual drills. These changes will keep coaches, players, volunteers and families safe, while engaging with athletes in-person in a way that has been very missed. To date, 34 provincial sport organizations have already released guidelines and are working with local clubs and associations to get back to play, with more organizations' guidelines being approved every day.

We heard from many people in the sport sector about the challenges they've faced with insurance as a result of the pandemic. Most insurance companies are not providing coverage for COVID-19 related damages, or the insurance is too expensive. Volunteers are the backbone of many teams and the insurance liability posed a significant barrier to people feeling comfortable enough to safely resume the sports they enjoy within their communities.

On June 10, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Mike Farnworth signed a Ministerial Order so that non-profit amateur sport organizations cannot be held liable for damages resulting directly or indirectly from COVID-19. This protection applies as long as sports organizations are complying with applicable guidance, including orders from the provincial health officer and provincial sport guidelines. This means people throughout British Columbia will be able to get back to amateur sports sooner and enjoy the many mental and physical benefits that community sport offers.

We all know the importance of safely reopening our ice rinks, courts and fields so athletes, families, coaches and volunteers can return to sport. I want to

thank viaSport for leading the work to ensure amateur sport organizations have the guidelines and necessary health measures in place to restart play.

Stay safe and stay well.

Hon. Lisa Beare

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Beare", written in a cursive style.

Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture

