

February 5, 2021

Alberta Health approves Exemption for High Performance Athletes to Train

Swim Alberta is pleased to share with our membership that an Exemption for targeted High Performance Athletes has been approved by Alberta Health and communicated to Swim Alberta late this afternoon, February 5, 2021.

In December, recognizing the need of athletes who are on Athlete Assistance with Sport Canada (sometimes known as carded and whom may have served on previous National Teams) and those who would be invited to the Swimming Canada Olympic and Paralympic Trials event in the spring, Swim Alberta saw the need to ensure those athletes had the ability to train within the province. While working through the exemption application and approval process, Swim Alberta collaborated with key facility partners which could provide facility access to a small number of athletes. Additionally, over the last several weeks, Swim Alberta also worked closely with Canadian Sport Institute (CSI)– Calgary and the Provincial Government, both Alberta Health and Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Branch to support the exemption and assist in the process. Until today, Alberta was the only large province of the four that did not have an exemption in place for this level of athlete. This is the first stage of a multi-staged approach to seeing Alberta Athletes, specifically swimmers, return to training.

As we support these athletes to their return to training and work closely with clubs, coaches and facilities to ensure this is done safely, Swim Alberta is also looking at how we can support a safe return to training for all members.

“In all likelihood, the return to for the general membership may look very different than it did in June of 2020”, says Cheryl Humphrey, Executive Director of Swim Alberta. “We may not see the same type of opening with large cohorts of 50 people, but rather a slower opening with smaller sized groups and a staged approach to returning.”

Swim Alberta remains committed to ensuring the safe return to sport of all our athletes and in following all requirements of Alberta Health. We are also working with the Government of Alberta, exploring how Provincial level athletes could have guidelines for participating that are separate from mass sport/recreation participation guidelines that existed in the summer/fall of 2020.

Over the past several weeks, Swim Alberta has been conducting research on the safety of competitive swimming while managing Covid-19. In the coming days Swim Alberta will be sharing the results of this work with the membership and Albertans in general.

The Mental Wellbeing and Health of individuals has been identified as a concern by parents, club board and others in the sport community, including Swim Alberta. Swim Alberta recently launched a [Mental Wellbeing and Health Initiative](#) to support the entire membership from grassroot level athletes to masters swimmers; parents and other involved adults; and coaches as this was identified as a priority where resources needed to be allocated. Members can subscribe to the [Mental Health and Wellness Newsletter](#).