



## **Bowls Canada Position Statement: Care of Community Greens across Canada**

Ottawa (ON) | April 17, 2020

In 2019, 13,900 Canadians were affiliated as annual members of the 225 lawn bowls clubs across Canada and more than 110,000 Canadians were impacted by the sport of lawn bowls through community programming at the grassroots level.

Lawn bowling clubs play an essential role in the well being of local community members. It is a highly accessible activity and can be played by all Canadians regardless of age, gender or ability. As a low impact, affordable, socially engaging activity that is also cognitively stimulating, lawn bowling plays a key role in healthy aging. Lawn bowling clubs are vital links for Canada's seniors to socialize, get physical exercise and have the opportunity to play at both a recreational and competitive level. It is a lifetime sport for all ages to enjoy at many different levels from recreational to competitive.

The heart of a community lawn bowling club is its grass playing surface called a 'green'. As a specialty turf, lawn bowling greens require specific ongoing care by trained greenskeepers beginning as early as March. With physical distancing and the closing of essential services, clubs are closed and many greenskeepers are unable to access their facilities to provide a minimum standard of care.

While a lawn bowling green can survive a temporary lack of care of up to a few weeks, a longer-term lack of maintenance beyond 3-4 weeks will result in damage that becomes much more costly to repair. If greenskeepers across Canada are unable to perform a minimum standard of care, playable greens will be lost to weeds, disease, thatch and fungus which will result in the entire playing surface requiring replacement. The average cost to repair a grass green that has lost its playability is \$18,000 (not including labour). Repairing a green that is damaged at this level means it cannot be played on for at least another year resulting in a community club losing a minimum another year of revenue. The average club brings in a minimum of \$27,000 which is used to stimulate the local economy through tournaments, social leagues, local hospitality and community goods and services. With a minimum of 225 grass greens in Canada, this results a **staggering repair cost of \$9.7 million** if greens are not maintained throughout this pandemic.

**It is essential that greenskeepers across Canada are provided access their facilities to provide a minimum standard of care required to ensure the turf is maintained. This minimum standard of care can be provided safely and within physical distancing regulations.**

As a significant contributor to social, mental and physical wellbeing of Canadians, especially senior Canadians, lawn bowling clubs need to be supported until their activities can safely resume, particularly given our aging demographics. Government officials at all levels recognize that when life returns to normal the public, especially seniors, will need sports like lawn bowling to return to, for their physical health & mental well-being, as well as social interaction.



As an essential component of local economies, supporting lawn bowling clubs will help Canadian communities' recover from the pandemic. Lawn bowling clubs will be essential to help Canadians reconnect with their communities and contribute to a national emotional healing process.

Our priority remains the health and safety of our members, partners, coaches, officials, employees, volunteers, fans, partners and all associated with the Canadian lawn bowling community. It is essential that all clubs across Canada continue to follow the legislation and advice of our federal, provincial and municipal governments, health authorities and the Canadian Sport Medicine Advisory Council along with our provincial and national associations.

### **Recommended Safety Routine**

1. Bowls Canada recommends that two greens maintenance crew members be at the club for safety reasons. In case of an accident, the second person can call for help.
2. Physical distancing (minimum of 2m) must be maintained at all times.
3. Limit access to the equipment/storage area to only one person at a time.
4. Disposable gloves should be worn at all times.
5. All contact surfaces must be [disinfected](#) prior to use and upon completion of greens work.
6. Before leaving the greens, maintenance crew members must [wash their hands](#) thoroughly.
7. A log detailing the date, time, type of maintenance performed, and name of maintenance crew members is necessary in the event that transmission sourcing must be done.

### **Recommended Pandemic Maintenance Routine**

The goal of care during the pandemic crisis is to maintain greens such that they do not fall into a state of disrepair that would be too costly to reasonably fix. Even though participants are not bowling on the greens, they will still be susceptible to weeds, pests, diseases, and other causes for concern. Grass is a living organism and needs to be taken care of: lack of basic essentials (water, nutrients, etc.) can result in sickness (diseases) or worse. Once the greens are dry and firm enough, the following minimum maintenance practices are recommended:

- **Mow** at 1/4 inch in height
- **Verticut:** give the greens a good verticutting to clean up the thatch
- **Fertilize:** apply the day before the weather forecast calls for rain
- **Overseed** bare or thin patches
- Once you have done all of this, don't mow your greens for 4 or 5 days, and then mow on a regular schedule to maintain 1/4 inch height
- Verticut once per month if possible
- Keep watering as needed
- Address all weed, pest and disease infestations as they appear by applying the appropriate safe and approved remedy