

# **Guidance for Playing Golf in Wales and UK Under COVID-19 Restrictions**

**Version 13  
11/09/2020**



## **Updates 11/9/2020**

**Please ensure this updated document is shared with your Club Manager, Club Coronavirus Officer, Junior Organiser, PGA professional, Competition Secretary, Chair of House, Bar and Catering Manager, Volunteer Coaches etc. All additions are in red text.**

The latest government guidance for outdoor sports has recently been updated. **Please read this carefully on the link below. A summary of the applicable guidelines for our sport can be found below, but please ensure you have read the full guidance.**

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return-html#section-46491>

The Welsh Government have introduced a tightening of the COVID-19 restrictions from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> of September:

- A maximum of six people from the extended household bubble will be able to meet indoors at any one time. This rule applies in pubs and restaurants as well as in people's homes. Please note: Children under 11 will not be counted in the six people
- It will be compulsory for people over 11 to wear a face covering in public indoor spaces, such as professional shops, club houses, offices and bar and catering staff. Face coverings will not be required by customers in pubs or restaurants for the time being.
- Up to 30 people can still meet up outside

Local authorities are being given more power, so it is extremely important you keep up to date with the latest guidance for your local area and implement such changes in your club/facility risk assessment

The full welsh Government update can be found [here](#)

The Welsh Government have announced from Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September at 6pm, there will be new lockdown restrictions within the Caerphilly County Borough Council area.

Wales Golf have received a number of queries from clubs both inside and outside the Caerphilly County Borough Council area asking if members can travel into or out of the restricted area to play golf.

The new regulations for Caerphilly County Borough state that:

*'People will not be allowed to enter or leave the Caerphilly County Borough Council area without a reasonable excuse;'*

*'A reasonable excuse for travel includes for work, if you are not able to work from home, or for making a compassionate visit, or to give care.'*

Thus meaning that people cannot travel into or out of a restricted area for sport, as this is not a 'reasonable excuse' to enter or leave the area. Travel within the local area is permissible.

We are aware that there will be further implications for clubhouses, bar and restaurant and professional shop facilities so please follow all Welsh Government Guidelines when risk assessing these situations.

Wales Golf will continue to monitor the situation and will endeavour to keep all clubs updated. [Please view the new Caerphilly County Borough Council local lockdown restrictions here](#)

From the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, up to four households are able to join together to form an [extended household](#). This means all the people living in these separate households become part of one extended household for the purposes of the coronavirus restrictions.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August indoor bar and restaurant facilities were able to open. The statement can be found [here](#).

On 10<sup>th</sup> of August, swimming pools, indoor fitness studios, gyms and leisure centers are able to re-open along with their changing facilities. Therefore, both indoor teaching & practice facilities and club changing room facilities could re-open, **providing they can be re-opened safely and following the Welsh Government Guidelines.**

Risk assessments must be conducted to ensure these can be re-opened safely.

[Click here](#) for guidance around the re-opening of changing room facilities

[Click here](#) for the Welsh Government Tourism and Hospitality business checklist

[Click here](#) for UK Hospitality Cymru. Additional industry guidance, approved by the Welsh Government

As of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> of July, **3 and 4 ball golf was permitted from any household**, adhering to Government and Industry guidelines. This is as a result of organised outdoor activities being able to resume to allow larger gatherings of up to 30 people outdoors only where these are organised and supervised by a responsible person for sports and other leisure activities and classes.

On the **6<sup>th</sup> of July**, '**Local Travel**' restrictions in Wales were also **lifted** enabling members and visitors outside the local area to play golf at the club.

### **Key Principles**

Government guidelines, including [physical distancing guidelines](#), and industry guidelines (below), must be adhered to before, during, and after the round.

### **Useful resources**

[Here](#) are some useful safety poster resources provided by the Welsh Government which could be displayed at your facility, along with our golfer info-graphic which can be accessed by [clicking here](#)

### **Appointing Responsible Officers**

The new Welsh Government Sports Guidance advises club's to 'appoint responsible officers'. As Golf has been open some time, these roles should already be in place. It may be that these roles can now be delegated from the Club Manager or Professional to a club representative, where appropriate training is provided?

**Coronavirus Officer** - This role is strategic in the phased return to sport activities. It is not a role to be feared though, it is in no way a medical or healthcare position. The Coronavirus Officer will simply manage and ensure that the required processes and information are put in place and monitor compliance with the guidance and legal requirements.

- An existing member of the organisation must be appointed as Coronavirus officer
- They will be responsible for oversight of the Coronavirus risk assessments
- They will be responsible for ensuring the necessary level of risk assessment and mitigations are in place
- They will be responsible for ensuring that the organisation can adhere to its guidance responsibilities within local constraints.
- Club Coronavirus Officers should liaise with their NGB equivalents for reassurance and guidance.
- There is nothing in this role that will in any way 'medical' or require specialist knowledge of the virus or health protection.
- The role will be no more onerous than being a safeguarding officer – probably less so.

**Activity Session Responsible Person** - All sessions must have an individual, responsible person. It is the duty of this person to ensure that the rules and requirements set out by the NGB, the Coronavirus Officer and Welsh Government are adhered to. This role can be carried out by the Coronavirus Officer or another suitably instructed person. The responsible person's duties shall include:

- Taking of a register of attendees and other persons as described in this guidance.
- Ensuring all attendees understand the Covid-19 measure and rules that are in place.
- To ensure that Covid-19 self-declarations are provided where required.
- To monitor the session for compliance with the Covid-19 rules both general and specific to the activity.
- To ensure a timely and safe dispersal at the end of any session.
- The warning of or ejection from the session of persons that do not follow the rules or reasonable instructions thereby causing a nuisance or a risk to health of other participants, attendees or staff.

## **Test, Trace, Protect (TTP)**

Clubs should implement an appropriate and thorough record-keeping system. This will support the Welsh Government's Test, Trace, Protect strategy in terms of staff on duty at the club, and individuals using the facilities to ensure they can be traced, contacted, advised to self-isolate and tested accordingly for Coronavirus by TTP. This is in the event of them having used the facilities, or been working at the venue, at the same time as an individual, or staff member, who has since tested positive for Coronavirus.

**IMPORTANT NEW ADVICE FROM WSA** - CONSENT is NOT required to use contact information for TTP. The terms upon which any individual can participate in an activity can be defined by the NGB (Wales Golf) or club. If the club asks for consent for contact details to be passed to the Test, Trace and Protect Service (TTPS) and this consent is refused, the club will not be able to refuse entry to an activity without breaching data protection law. This is because the club has made the consent conditional and not a free choice. The WSA recommend that you avoid using consent for this purpose.

On the basis that the Welsh Government advice requires sports activities and events to be organised, it is, therefore, reasonable for the club to insist on having contact details so that changes to any event can be communicated quickly to avoid any unnecessary gathering or travel.

It is at the club's discretion whether to advise participants that their details will be passed to the TTPS in the event of a COVID incident. The club would need to consider if this will cause fear and put people off or instil confidence.

Under the data protection law, participants DO NOT need to be advised that details will be passed on to TTP. The law allows the club to pass their details to TTP without consent.

Participants within Wales Golf schemes/events such as Championships, Performance squads etc. (as well as Wales Golf funded schemes such as New2Golf) will be required to provide their contact information which will be used if required for Test, Trace and Protect purposes.

**Contact Information Required** - The following details should be taken:

### *Staff*

- Names of staff who work at the premises.
- A contact telephone number for each member of staff.
- The dates and times that the staff are at work.

### *Customers, participants and visitors*

- The names of customers or visitors, or if it is a group of people, the name of one member of the group – the 'lead member'.
- A contact telephone number for each customer or visitor, or if this is a group from the same household the lead member of that group.
- Date of visit and arrival and departure times.

Welsh Government Test, Trace and Protect information, which can be used to show your customers, if required, can be found [here](#).

For further information, visit

<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-process-summary-html>

<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-your-questions>

### **How the Test, Trace and Protect Service (TTPS) Works**

It is important to understand how the TTPS operates to ensure that it is effective without causing fear or unnecessary work. Much of the advice of Welsh Government is confusing when it discusses isolation and testing of persons suspected of being infected. **It is NOT the role of any club or NGB officer to instruct anyone to isolate or book a test.**

How it works

- The person who suspects they may have Covid-19 (or has symptoms) should self-isolate along with other members of their household
- They should apply for a test. This can be done online or by telephoning NHS 111
- If the test is positive, they will be contacted by the TTPS
- The TTPS will get details of contacts the infected person has had since two-days prior to the first symptoms
- The TTPS will contact each person that has been in close proximity to the infected person. This is when your organisation will be contacted
- You need to give the TTPS all the details of those in attendance at the date and time the TTPS tell you
- The TTPS will NOT tell you who has tested positive unless the individual has given permission. If you are told DON'T make any note of it – it is unimportant and recording it may be unlawful.
- Information given to you is CONFIDENTIAL – DON'T GOSSIP!
- DON'T contact anyone yourself, not even staff, it is the job of the TTPS to do this.
- The process is outlined here: <https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-guidance-employers>

**What to do if someone advises that they have Covid-19** - If someone who has been at your site calls to inform the club that they think they have COVID-19 or have symptoms, urge them to contact the Coronavirus 111 services using the link above or by calling 111. Do not express any opinion on the matter other than you think they should access the NHS services.

What should you do?

- Don't panic. It may not be Covid-19.
- Tell them to contact the Coronavirus NHS service for help and advice.

- Do not record any details about them as this may be unlawful. Do not spread any gossip. You should inform your organisation's Coronavirus Officer.
- Coronavirus Officers should contact the Coronavirus 111 service for advice if they are unsure.
- Notify Wales Golf of the situation but do not disclose any known details of any individual.
- DO NOT contact other people who may have been at the session. You are not allowed to do this lawfully. Let the TTPS do their job.
- Seek advice from your Coronavirus Officer about extra cleaning that may be required.

### **Risk Assessment linked to COVID-19**

It is a requirement. Golf clubs must conduct a risk assessment to plan, prepare, and mitigate risk linked to COVID-19. It also must be adapted to meet the needs of the club and aligned and amended according to the correct Government advice and restrictions. A Wales Golf template risk assessment has been developed to support clubs in implementing the safest possible procedures. This is available by contacting the Wales Golf Development team.

PPE should also be used where applicable. Wales Golf can also put clubs in contact with several retailers who can provide this.

The risk assessment should also be sufficient to ensure that activities can be run safely, in a manner that conforms to **Welsh Government legislation and guidance** and appropriately protects all individuals involved (e.g. athletes, staff, spectators). The risk assessment should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate under changing circumstances.

### **People who become symptomatic**

Clear protocols to manage any person who becomes symptomatic in the training or play environment should be included in the risk assessment (process outlined above).

Clear protocols to provide/display clear messaging to individuals that anyone displaying symptoms of Covid-19 should not turn up for training or to play and call 111 and **follow the Welsh Government's self-isolation guidelines**.

- [Self-isolation: explanatory diagram](#)
- [Symptoms and self-isolation for contact tracing](#)
- [Test, Trace and Protect process summary](#)
- [Employers guidance](#)

The risk assessment should also outline how staff or customers returning to the club environment from self or household isolation due to suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19 or other Covid-19 related reasons (such as having to isolate as part of a household where a member(s) was suspected or confirmed as having Covid-19) will be medically assessed prior to return.

A risk assessment and risk mitigation plan should also be prepared for single sporting events and competitions, such as for matches being played and group sessions.

### **Organised Activity**

There is presently a limit of 30 persons in any activity or space

Here is a checklist:

- Social distancing must take place at all times (legal requirement)
- Risk assessments for Coronavirus impact must be conducted (requirement)
- The guidance advises organisations to collect contact details so that the Test, Trace and Protect System (TTPS) will be effective should there be an incidence of Covid-19 exposure at any activity.
- Permitted events must be organised, so booking details must be collected.
- Consent is not required to pass details to the TTPS.
- It is a decision of the NGB or club if they wish to advise participants that their details will be passed to the TTPS in the event of a COVID incident. You will need to balance whether this will cause fear and put people off or instill confidence. You do not need to advise participants under the data protection law that allows you to pass their details without consent.
- Be sure that guardians have permitted their charges to attend any session where this is appropriate and that you have the guardians contact information.
- You will not need the child's contact details if you have the guardian's.
- Ensure that a register of who attends is kept by staff in attendance, ideally those who have booked.
- Ensure the register is retained and kept secure for as long as you deem necessary – this must be at least 21 days to be of use. We would recommend that you keep this data for no less than 6 months. You should seek guidance from your insurers on this (Wales Golf template available [here](#))
- Should a participant (or guardian) refuse to provide contact information, then the organisation needs to determine if the participant should be refused entry but NOT citing COVID contact tracing as the reason. This can be avoided by collecting the details at booking time. Document your approach and be sure to train your Coronavirus Officer and Responsible Persons leading the activity on what to do should this arise.
- A self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms and self-declaration with advice to stay at home if they should be self-isolating, or if they or someone they live with, is **symptomatic** - or suspects they may have been exposed to the virus (Wales Golf template available [here](#)).

**Taking bookings** - Booking in advance, online or over the phone should take place. Encourage contactless or card payment to avoid handling cash.

Remember that some people do not have internet access. You should make provision for them to be able to make bookings/enquiries offline.

When taken a booking, all the necessary information should be communicated, including:



- On enquiry, take participant's or parent/ guardian's name, contact telephone number and email
- After taking the enquiry email/communicate:
  - Booking and consent form with participants/parents/ guardians / spectators (see below) correct contact details
  - Session information
  - What the club has put in place to ensure participants remain safe
  - Rules including those on safe arrival and departure (see below)
  - A self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms and self-declaration with advice to stay at home if they should be self-isolating, or if they or someone they live with, is **symptomatic** - or suspects they may have been exposed to the virus
  - A self-declaration and registration form template can be found **here**.

Ask for the return of this prior to arrival at the event. For those who do not have access to emails or a computer, information can be read out over the telephone and the completed on arrival).

**Arrival and Departure of the Organised Activities** - Plan the session times to avoid the potential of 2 organised sessions merging. Ensure there is adequate time between the finish of one group to the arrival of the next. Where possible, have a different entry and exit route to and from the venue.

**Register of attendance** - Ensure the **register** is taken for each session, retained and kept secure for as long deemed necessary – this must be at least 21 days to be of use. It is recommended that you keep this data for no less than 6 months. You should seek guidance from your insurers on this.

Ensure that non-participants/ spectators (outlined below) are counted within the numbers (max limit of 30) if on or near the playing area and are included on the register of attendees even if they are not actively participating.

A template can be found **here** to be used in conjunction with the booking form and self-declaration.

**At the sessions** - It is VERY IMPORTANT that upon arrival, all participants (or guardians as appropriate) are shown the COVID symptom and self-isolation statement and can still agree with it. If they cannot agree, they must leave immediately. Remember that some time may have elapsed between booking and the event and their circumstances may have changed.

You should place the statement clearly on signage, and the Responsible Person should ensure that everyone looks at it and can agree to it.

**Returning to activity after illness** - The government advice also requires any participant to be judged as fit to participate in an activity after a period of illness, especially if it has been Covid-19 related. This will apply if the club is aware of the participants period of illness. It is acceptable for the participant to confirm that they have consulted a medical professional such as their GP practice, and they have been told it is OK for them to return to activities.

### **Risk Assessment for Organised Activities**

A COVID-19 risk assessment must also be conducted prior to organised activity such as junior and adult group coaching. Preparation should include those in charge to take specific training. Please refer to the

government guidelines, '[Guidance for sports, clubs and facilities](#)', for more information to help you prepare.

Here is some information that should be included:

All participants, officials, volunteers and spectators must undergo a **self-assessment for any COVID-19** symptoms. No-one should leave home to participate in sport if they, or someone they live with, is **symptomatic** - or suspects they may have been exposed to the virus and follow the government guidelines. Entry should be refused to anyone unable to provide assurance that they have done so and that to the best of their knowledge, it is safe for them to take part.

**Travel to the club or organised activity** - Participants are to be encouraged to follow best practice for **travel**, including minimising the use of public transport and limiting car sharing. Walk or cycle if you can. People from one household and extended household can travel together in a vehicle.

**Arrival at venues** - Clubs should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before activity begins. **Social and physical distancing measures** must be applied at such times. Meet-up times should reflect this. This includes arriving changed and ready to begin the warm-up, if possible, to minimise time spent waiting.

**Use of equipment** - Sharing of equipment should be avoided where possible. Where equipment is shared, equipment must be cleaned to the appropriate standard, before use by another person. Check the latest guidance on **cleaning** and advice from **the Welsh Government**.

**Ball use** - Participants when playing must only use their own ball. In organised group sessions, balls must be washed and cleaned before use by another participant.

Before, during and after organised sessions, industry guidelines as outlined below must be followed.

**Adherence to measures** - A code of behaviour should be developed by a club for **individuals** to ensure a commitment for all involved to adhere to COVID-19 adaptations, club officials should be empowered to ensure measures are adhered to through appropriate sanctions linked to the club's disciplinary procedures. **Wales Golf will contact clubs that are seen to be operating outside government and industry guidelines**. Additional breaches will then be reported to the relevant authority and clubs could face closure and/or suspension.

**Injury treatment** - Injuries should still be treated as participant wellbeing is utmost. The best way to protect yourself and others is through rigorous cleaning, personal hygiene and regular hand hygiene. An increased frequency of **cleaning and disinfection** of all surfaces and equipment, using standard household cleaning and disinfection products, is recommended. **Face coverings** are also advisable when undertaking treatment (ensure these are added to the first aid kit).

Before and after contact with an injured participant, clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact or the minimum 2-metre social distancing was maintained. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose.

**Spectators** - Supporters and other spectators should be limited at this stage to only those persons who **need to attend**, e.g. parents or guardians of children who require their attendance for health or safeguarding reasons (and should be from the same or extended household). All spectators are to remain socially and physically distanced from each other and from the area of play while attending events or group sessions, including accessing and leaving the venue, use of any facilities and while watching a game or session.

Anyone on the area of play, or closer to it, then social distancing rules would permit and will count towards the total number people considered to the gathered for the organised outdoor activity, where a limit of no more than 30 persons applies.

Add other elements which may be applicable. Some areas may have been covered the clubs main COVID risk assessment, such as cleaning of toilet facilities etc.

## **Juniors**

A club must have a Safeguarding policy and procedures in place. At the club's discretion, juniors should be accompanied by an adult until the club, and their parents/ guardians are confident the junior(s) can adhere to the new guidelines and protocol.

**If golf continues to be allowed, the protocol governing the safe playing of the game (below) may be updated in line with any changes to public health measures. For these reasons, we will continue to monitor developments very closely and will update our advice as required. It is essential that golf clubs and golfers regularly check [www.walesgolf.org](http://www.walesgolf.org) for updates.**

**There is a major responsibility for golf clubs and golfers to ensure that our sport is conducted safely and responsibly. Full adherence to the provisions of this protocol is essential. It should be noted that the Government continues to monitor the situation closely and retains the right to reintroduce restrictions which could see golf clubs closed once again if the protocol is not followed.**

## **Maintaining hygiene, through handwashing, sanitisation facilities, and toilets**

To help everyone maintain good hygiene, consideration should be given to:

- Using signage and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into your arm

- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms
- Enhancing cleaning for busy areas
- Sufficient provision of automated hand sanitising dispensers in public places

### **Clubhouse**

When accessing and leaving facilities, people should wipe down areas of contact, wash their hands thoroughly, use paper towels where possible and avoid touching any surfaces in transit.

Clubs should also regularly clean touch-point areas and surfaces in line with their club COVID-19 risk assessment.

**Ventilation** - Ensure, where possible, that windows and doors to the exterior on the opposite side of a building are opened to create airflow, as this is the most effective way of clearing micro-droplet airborne particles created when someone sneezes or shouts.

**Changing and Locker Rooms** –As from the 10<sup>th</sup> of August these can re-open **providing this can be done safely and following the Welsh Government Guidelines.**

Risk assessments must be conducted to ensure these can be re-opened safely.

[Click here](#) for guidance around the re-opening of changing room facilities

**Restaurant and Bar area** - On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August it was confirmed indoor bar and restaurant facilities were able to open. The statement can be found [here](#).

Currently, only those who are members of the same household are able to sit indoors in a bar or restaurant facility. From the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, up to four households are able to join together to form an **extended household**. This means all the people living in these separate households become part of one extended household for the purposes of the coronavirus restrictions.

They will enjoy the same legal freedoms people living in individual households currently have – such as being able to meet indoors, have physical contact and stay in each other's homes.

### **Toilet and Washroom facilities**

The club must ensure toilets are regularly **cleaned** (within the governments **cleaning guidance**) and **well managed** to minimise the risk of the transmission of the virus.

- A full risk assessment should be carried out setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Toilet capacity should be managed via entry and exit and to allow for the 2m physical distancing to be maintained. Consider a one in one out system and 2-metre queueing point outside the building.
- More frequent rubbish collection

- Replacing hand dryers with paper towels in handwashing facilities

Clubs can also contact their **local Environment Health and Safety Authority** for additional advice and guidance regarding **opening toilet facilities**. It is also recommended that clubs **check** everything with **their insurance companies**.

### **Bars and Restaurants**

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, Bar and Restaurants are able to operate service in both an indoor and outdoor setting. Please see Government guidelines [here](#).

### **Coaching, Retail, Club Fitting and Driving Ranges**

#### **Coaching**

From the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, both indoor teaching & practice facilities were able to re-open, providing they can be re-opened safely and following the Welsh Government Guidelines [here](#).

Coaching also permissible under strict infection control measures, observing 2-metre physical distancing. PGA professionals should complete a comprehensive risk assessment and refer to the coaching guidelines on the PGA COVID-19 resource hub <https://www.pga.info/covid-19-resource-hub/>

**Group coaching sessions** and Wales Golf schemes such as **New2Golf** can re-start whilst following the Welsh Government ([here](#)), Industry and Wales Golf guidelines.

If your club is interested in starting a New2Golf scheme, please contact your Wales Golf development officer, who can talk you through the new scheme requirements.

#### **Retail**

As of Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, Professional Shops in Wales can re-open for retail purposes. Please ensure all shops are adhering to the social distancing and Welsh Government Guidelines.

#### **Club Fitting**

Club fitting can commence. However, when considering whether to custom fit golf clubs at your facility, the following points need to be followed:

- Carry out a comprehensive risk assessment considering current Welsh Government advice.

- **Social distancing** must be adhered to.
- Consideration needs to be given to the strict hygiene measures relating to the sharing of equipment.

### **Driving ranges**

The First Minister announced the re-opening of outdoor sports facilities from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> of June and indoor leisure facilities from 10<sup>th</sup> August, as long as social distancing, hygiene measures and government guidance is maintained. Therefore all types of driving ranges can open.

Facilities **must** conduct a full risk assessment.

#### Further Clarification

We will be sure to update you as further clarification comes available. In the meantime, our advice remains unchanged: where there is any room for doubt the safest option should be pursued.

[Click here](#) for the latest Welsh Government Guidelines.

[Click here](#) to view the Welsh Government 'Keep Wales Safe in Retail' guidelines.

[Click here](#) for further considerations for re-opening Driving Ranges.

### **Golf Industry Protocol**

UK Golf Industry (led by the R&A) has carefully considered how to ensure the safe management of a golf facility when government COVID-19 restrictions are eased. These detailed industry guidelines have been issued for the benefit of all staff, including greenkeepers, club professionals and golf facility managers, administrators, and, of course, all golfers (see <https://www.pga.info/covid-19-resource-hub/>).

Golfers will be required to comply with the rules on social distancing throughout. Some temporary provisions in relation to the Rules of Golf will also be necessary to ensure safe play (see below).

While each club/facility will need to adapt its procedures to ensure compliance with government restrictions, the following aspects of the golfer experience, divided into the five following categories, will need to be considered:

- a. Course Set-Up
- b. Before the Round
- c. During the Round
- d. After the Round
- e. Rules of Golf Related Matters

### **a. Course Set-Up**

For up to date guidance on essential maintenance, please refer to the most current version of the "Essential Maintenance Statement for Golf Courses during COVID-19 Outbreak". Visit [www.walesgolf.org](http://www.walesgolf.org)

#### On-Course Items

- All rakes and ball-retrievers to be removed
- Ball washers and drinking fountains to be covered up
- Benches and bins to be removed, covered, or sign-posted in such a way that players don't touch them. Or conduct a risk assessment for their safe use.
- All other removable items to be removed, except that stakes defining areas of the course, can be treated as immovable obstructions.

#### Hole and Flagstick

- Flagsticks can be retained, but it is strongly recommended that a sign is put on the flagstick, stating that it is not to be touched.
- A method of inserting the hole liner to be used means that all of the ball does not fall below the surface of the putting green and can be easily retrieved by handling the ball only.

#### Practice Areas

- Practice areas, including practice nets, to be closed unless safe sanitising practices can be guaranteed.

### **b. Before the Round**

#### Bookings

- Clubs/facilities to organise a system of booking and allocation of tee times that ensures the safety of staff and golfers.
- The maximum number of golfers in a group per tee time to be confirmed by the club/facility and must be in accordance with any government requirements.
- There should be a minimum of 10-minute intervals between tee times. If considering smaller intervals (no less than 8 minutes), a risk assessment should be conducted to identify if it is safe and that no hold ups are likely to occur on the course.

#### Arrival and Waiting to Play

- The clubhouse and locker room facilities will be closed.
- Limited essential access (for example, to use the toilets where applicable) may be allowed by the club/facility.
- Clubs/facilities to communicate in advance with golfers to advise on social distancing requirements that are being applied on arrival at the club/facility, for example, not leaving cars until a certain time before their tee time.
- Clubs/facilities to have procedures in place to ensure social distancing requirements in the area of the professional's shop or starter's building in advance of golfers teeing off.

- No trolleys, carts, or other items to be available for hire unless safe sanitising practices can be guaranteed.
- Clubs/facilities to have procedures in place for the practice putting green, for example giving priority of use to the player(s) in the next group due to tee off.

**c. During the Round**

- Guidance and reminders should be provided by clubs/facilities to golfers is to ensure that they keep at least 2 metres apart during the round.

**Teeing Areas**

- Remind golfers to keep 2 metres apart at teeing areas due to the normal close proximity of golfers to one another when tee shots are being played.

**General**

- Remind golfers to stay more than 2 metres apart when walking to the ball, searching for a ball, and playing shots.
- Remind golfers not to touch stray balls.

**Bunkers**

- With no rakes allowed on the course, remind golfers to make their very best efforts to smooth the sand using their club and/or their feet.

**Putting Green**

- Remind golfers to keep 2 metres apart on the putting greens and not to touch the flagstick.

**d. After the Round**

- Remind golfers that social distancing is as important after a round as it is during the round, so when the round is over, they must either leave the course and the club/facility immediately or if food and drink is being served OUTDOORS (within the Government Guidelines) it is recommended to limit the time to ensure social distancing and other Government regulations can be met.

**e. Rules of Golf Related Matters**

Until further notice, the following provisions are considered acceptable on a temporary basis:

**Forms of Play and Scoring**

- If competitive stroke play is played, a method of scoring needs to be used that does not require any handling or exchanging of scorecards.



- Committees may choose to allow methods of scoring in stroke play that does not strictly comply with Rule 3.3b or do not comply with the normal methods used under Rule 3.3b. E.G. Players may enter their own hole scores on the scorecard (it is not necessary for a marker to do it). It is not necessary to have a marker physically certify the player's hole scores, but some form of verbal certification should take place. It is not necessary to physically return a scorecard to the Committee provided the Committee can accept the scores in another way.
- As provided in the Rules of Golf, scorecards can be electronic, which could include emailing or texting scores to the Committee.

#### Bunkers

- If golfers take due care when smoothing bunkers, there should be no need to provide a Local Rule for bunkers. But if the Committee feels that the enjoyment of the game is being significantly affected by there being no rakes, it may introduce preferred lies in bunkers and provide that a player may place a ball in the bunker within one club-length of the original spot and not nearer to the hole than that spot (or within 6 inches if submitting for competition or handicapping purposes).

#### Flagstick

- Golfers are required to leave the flagstick in the hole at all times and not to touch it. It is a matter for the Committee to decide whether it establishes this policy by way of a Code of Conduct or Local Rule, and whether it provides a penalty under the Code of Conduct or for a breach of the Local Rule.
- As a temporary provision, flagsticks can be used for the purpose of player safety which do not meet the specifications in Part 8 of the Equipment Rules.

#### Hole and Holed

- The hole liner (sometimes referred to as the hole 'cup') is to be set in a way that means that all of the ball cannot be below the surface of the putting green, so the ball is considered holed if any part of it is below the surface of the putting green.
- To minimise the need to lift the ball from the hole, it is recommended that the Committee provides that a ball is holed with the next stroke if it is within 12 inches of the hole (which is just over the length of a standard putter grip) for casual play only. This does not prevent a player in match play conceding a stroke that is outside this length.
- The Committee may decide to have the hole liner sitting above the surface of the green and treat a ball as holed if it strikes the liner.

Note: Consult the relevant handicapping authority on whether scores using any of the above provisions are acceptable for handicapping purposes

#### Competition

Wales Golf guidance regarding club competition is available by [clicking here](#).

Below is the Wales Golf Stay Safe Guidance for Golfers info-graphic, produced using the industry guidance. This is a resource to help clubs communicate with club members and players. It is available to download by [clicking here](#)

## Course

**Safe Course Routine Maintenance Practices** - Routine maintenance practices can take place, providing safe working practices are in place that are in line with Government safe working guidelines, and all golf facilities implement stringent measures to ensure staff members are not at risk. The number of greenkeeping staff and the amount of time they spend at work should be tailored to fit with safe working practices.

These include but are not limited to:

- Focus on hygiene and social distancing
- Ensure staff members work separately
- Allocate individual machinery to one worker only
- If multiple staff are on-site, then stagger working hours and break times
- Limit or prohibit the use of communal areas
- Regularly disinfect any surface that is contacted, e.g. door handles, fuel pumps, communal machinery
- Ensure there is a robust lone working policy
- Ensure that golfers and greenkeepers are kept separate from each other and observe social distancing

For current maintenance, guidance [click here](#).

The industry operational guidelines can also be found by [clicking here](#) Our golfer info-graphic accessed by [clicking here, and is also displayed below](#).



**WALES GOLF**  
EVERYONES GAME. ANYWHERE

**BACK2GOLF**

**GOLFERS STAY SAFE GUIDANCE**

**2 METRE SOCIAL DISTANCING AT ALL TIMES!**  
SANITISE YOUR HANDS AND GOLF BALL BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER YOUR ROUND

**1 BEFORE YOUR ROUND**

- Book your round of golf online if possible
- If you are ill or have symptoms, stay at home
- Use the toilet facilities before you leave home
- Sanitise equipment before and after play
- Bring your own hand sanitiser hydration/ food to the course
- Arrive at the facility 15 minutes before tee time and change shoes etc. in the car park
- Do not arrive at the first tee more than 5 minutes before your allotted tee time
- No roll ups or groups to congregate around the club or tee area

**2 DURING YOUR ROUND**

- 1 player on the tee box
- Smooth the sand with your club or foot
- Keep 2 metres social distancing at all times across the course
- Do not touch the flagstick
- Do not exchange equipment with other e.g. borrowing tees or balls

**3 AFTER YOUR ROUND**

- Do not shake hands
- Leave the venue as soon as your game is complete

**VERSION 2**  
**18.05.2020**

**USE ALONG WITH CURRENT CLUB, GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY ADVICE. [WWW.WALESGOLF.ORG/COVID-19/](http://WWW.WALESGOLF.ORG/COVID-19/)**

Want to know more about Wales Golf? Log on to the website and click on [www.walesgolf.org/findoutmore](http://www.walesgolf.org/findoutmore)