

Guidance for Playing Golf in Wales and UK under COVID-19 Restrictions

**Version 24
16/07/2021**



Updated 16/07/2021

Please ensure this updated document is shared with your Club Manager, Club Coronavirus Officer, Activity Organisers, Junior Organiser, PGA professional, Competition Secretary, Chair of House, Bar and Catering Manager, Volunteer Coaches etc.

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 these regulations is essential for the safety of all and will ensure Golf can be continue to be played.

It should be noted that the Welsh Government continue to monitor the situation closely. Wales Golf as a National Governing Body is accountable to ensure the game remains safe. We have a responsibility to contact clubs that are seen to be operating outside government and industry guidelines. Any breaches will be reported to the relevant authority, and the club could face closure and/or suspension.

An update to Wales Golf and Golf Industry Guidelines

Following the First Minister's announcement on 14th July 2021, Wales will be moving fully into Alert Level 1 COVID-19 restrictions and will also take its first steps into Alert Level Zero from Saturday 17th July. We, therefore, are now in a position to ease the Wales Golf guidance for clubs in Wales.

Please note, clubs **MUST** conduct a thorough risk assessment when implementing any changes (see below). Clubs should consult with their **Local Authority Environment Health and Safety Authority** and insurance provider when making any changes.

The following changes will be made from Saturday 17th July:

- **Scoring in Stroke Play (Rule 3.3b)** – the provisions of Rule 3.3b apply where the player's score is kept on his or her scorecard by a marker. Certification of the scorecard by the marker and by the player should occur, as per the guidelines of Rule 3.3b(2).
- **Flagsticks** – There will no longer be a requirement to leave the flagstick in the hole at all times.
- **Hole, and Definition of Holed** – Coronavirus related changes to the definition of a hole and when the ball is holed are now removed.
- **Rakes** – Preferred lies in bunkers will no longer be permissible, and bunkers should no longer be made *ground under repair*, so it is recommended that rakes are returned to the course.
- **On-Course Furnishings** – Course furnishings such as ball washers, benches, bins etc. can be in use on the course.
- **Social Distancing** – The regulations will no longer give particular prominence to 2 metre physical distancing **outdoors**.

Shared use of buggies

The current advice from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales is that the regulations will no longer give particular prominence to 2 metre physical distancing (outdoors only) at Alert Level Zero.

If club's wish to allow shared buggy use, a risk assessment process will need to take place.

Mitigating circumstances could include:

- A Perspex screen, and/or
- Driver and passenger remaining in the same place throughout the round of golf
- All buggies should be thoroughly sanitised before and after each use
- To minimise the time people spend on the buggy in close proximity where possible

NB: THE ABOVE ONLY APPLIES TO BUGGIES WITH OPEN SIDES

Potential Additions to your current Risk Assessment

Touching items such as flagsticks and rakes can increase the risk of transmitting the virus unless the decontamination processes are adhered to rigorously.

- Clubs should:
- Regularly sanitise touch point areas such as flags and rakes
- Provide regular hand sanitiser stations on the golf course
- Remind golfers to bring their own hand sanitiser with the option to purchase these at the club
- Communicate that golfers should NOT touch on course items without sanitising their hands
- Provide guidance to golfers, including that before touching on course items, any gloves should be removed and hands should be sanitised. After touching an on-course item, hands should be sanitised again. In addition, the items should be cleaned regularly.
- If the public health situation allows, Wales will move fully into an Alert Level Zero from 7 August.

[Further details including the update Coronavirus Control Plan: Alert Level Zero can be found here.](#)

[Full Welsh Government update can be read here.](#)

[Review of the Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restriction\) \(No.5\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020 \(14 July 2021\)](#)

Wales Golf have updated their guidance on **Foursomes & Greensomes Competitions during Covid-19**. [Click here to view this document](#)

[Click here](#) for updated Wales Golf Organised Sports Guidance.

Regulations and Guidelines

Below are some guidelines to ensure we keep our golfers, volunteers and staff safe and that your club remains compliant with Welsh Government, Industry and Wales Golf regulations and guidelines.

Please ensure you regularly check <https://gov.wales/> for updates.

Coronavirus Officer

The Welsh Government Sports Guidance advises clubs to appoint a 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 a 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.

Risk Assessment linked to COVID-19

It is a requirement that Golf clubs conduct a COVID-19 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 (additional changes must be added) and 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.

Taking bookings

Booking in advance, online or over the phone must 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.

On enquiry

- Take the participant's or parent/ guardian's name, contact telephone number and email and readout/ send/ display on online booking system your self-assessment statement (example below).

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

- Booking details (and consent form with participants/parents/ guardians / spectators correct contact details if applicable)
- Session/ reservation information
- What the club has put in place to ensure participants remain safe
- Rules including those on safe arrival and departure
- Self-assessment and declaration form/ statement

Self- assessment and declaration form/ Statement – this can be read out or put on a notice board which should include a part about localised lockdowns/ travel restrictions (where applicable). Here is an example:

"I have NOT HAD in the last 10 days any of the following Covid-19 symptoms: A continuous high temperature; A loss of taste or smell; A new continuous cough. I also confirm that I have not to the best of my knowledge, had contact with anyone else who has had these symptoms or tested positive for Covid-19.

"I also confirm that I nor any other person in my household or extended household have NOT been told to self-isolate and are not currently subject to Covid-19 quarantine after travel or illness. I also confirm that I have not travelled into or away from an area that is currently subject to any form of local coronavirus restriction or lockdown."

The participant must agree to the statement (verbally is fine) to be able to book and also play golf on the day. You may use a checkbox on a web form to indicate the participant has read and can agree to the statement. In the case of a minor, the guardian will be required to indicate the truth of the statement on the child's behalf.

Local restrictions and lockdowns (if applicable) - Generally, the usual residence of someone is determined by their entry on the register of electors at their local council. Clubs and organisations must not allow temporary changes of address as a way of being allowed to participate.

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.

NHS COVID-19 App - The NHS COVID-19 app is an important part of the Test Trace Protect programme to control the spread of Covid-19. The app will be used, alongside traditional contact tracing, to notify users if they come into contact with someone who later tests positive for Coronavirus.

The app allows people to report symptoms, order a coronavirus test, check in to venues by scanning a QR code, and it helps the NHS trace/ notify individuals that may have Coronavirus.

Find out more about the NHS COVID-19 app [here](#)

NHS COVID-19 App advice for business & creating your own QR code [here](#)

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>

Clubhouse Management

Under lower levels, these guidelines will need to be kept under constant review as Welsh Government and public health advice may change at short notice. It may be necessary to agree a periodic / weekly review meeting with club staff.

- The management and administration of the club will in many ways remain focused on its core objectives. However, certain procedures and policies will need to be introduced or amended to ensure the welfare of the staff, golfers and those outside personnel who will visit the club in their normal working day i.e., delivery, maintenance and even emergency services personnel.
- Whilst the clubhouse may remain closed at certain COVID-19 alert levels, there will be a need for the management of the club to be maintained. At this time, offices and administration areas should not be available for golfers or visitors to frequent or visit. All members and visitors will need to be made aware of the alternative communication channels that are available to them.
- Those responsible for overseeing the running of the club, owners, directors and committee members, need to agree and adhere to a cohesive policy and set of procedures that are delivered on a consistent basis.
- The club administration areas and offices will need to be sufficiently arranged to ensure that either lone working (split shifts) or adequate social distancing is adhered to. Should there be need to provide a reception facility, then adequate protective screening will need to be deployed.
- Hand sanitisers and only disposable hand towels should be used for staff toilet facilities - regular cleaning procedures will be required for these areas.
- In the instance of maintenance personnel being involved in clubhouse activities, they should be suitably attired with protective clothing and report in and out of the facility.
- Administer the arrangements for playing golf as outlined above.
- In the event of a club offering a takeaway service enforce social distancing rules and ensure staff wear face coverings.
- All take-away drinks or snacks can be served in either plastic or paper containers.
- Ensure all safety measures are shared with all employees and that their health and wellbeing is the number one priority, encourage them to share any concerns and empower them to request that golfers adhere to social distancing measures and report any issues to managers.

Ventilation

Ensure, where possible, that windows and doors to the exterior on the opposite side of a building are opened to create airflow.

Toilet and Washroom facilities

The club must ensure toilets are regularly **cleaned** (within the UK Government's [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 social 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.
- 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.

When in enclosed public places, people are still required to wear face [masks FAQ: Face coverings here](#)

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

Changing and Locker Rooms

Risk assessments must be conducted before opening **changing rooms and showers**

Changing rooms and showers are an area of increased risk of transmission and their use should be avoided, where possible. All clubs should encourage golfers to continue to change their shoes in the car park and, where possible, to travel home to change/shower.

If changing rooms and showers are to be used, for example after inclement weather, golfers should use the facilities as quickly as possible and the following measures will usually be needed:

- Where mains water has been turned off or unused since the close of the premises at lockdown, when it is reconnected it will need running through to flush away any microbiological or chemical residues built up while the water supply was disconnected (see additional guidance in section 4, 'Principles to prepare for safe management of indoor and outdoor facilities').
- Set clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items, controlling the number of individuals using those facilities at any one time to ensure compliance with the rules on indoor gatherings, that [physical distancing](#) is achieved as much as possible, and requiring the wearing of face coverings (as appropriate) for those aged 11 and over.
- Consider closing communal showers if possible.
- Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities regularly during the day and at the end of the day.
- For additional reassurance, provide cleaning materials and hand sanitiser for customer use at touch points.

- Provide additional signposting in these areas to maintain [physical distancing](#).
- Considering changes in policies to ensure limited time is taken in changing areas, especially during the changeover of group activity to maintain [physical distancing](#).

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

Bars and Restaurants

Bars and Restaurants can re-open an indoor service and allow any 6 people to meet indoors (not including children under 11 years of age or carers from those households)

As an employer or business operator in Wales, you have a legal responsibility to protect employees and visitors; and anyone else on the premises, from risk to their health and safety. You also need to assess the risks from COVID-19 and take reasonable measures to minimise exposure to the virus. Risk assessments are used to identify and address these risks or minimise them.

Welsh hospitality guidance and risk assessment guidance can be found [here](#)

Further industry guidance [here](#)

Coaching, PGA Services and Driving Ranges

'Organised outdoor activities' for adults can take place.

'Organised Indoor activities' for up to 50 adults (including indoor coaching) can resume (capacity dependant)

Our full guidance for organised activities can be found [here](#).

Welsh Government Organised outdoor activities for children FAQ can be found [here](#)

The booking guidance above and TTP is also applicable to golf lessons/ coaching as well as organised sports guidance. Guidance Sports Guidance can be found [here](#). Organised Outdoor Activity FAQ is yet to be updated.

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/>

For additional guidance, see our Wales Golf coaching/group session template risk assessment available from your Development Officer.

Coaches should adhere to the following guidelines to ensure the safety of both customers and professional staff during this or lower levels:

Coaching area:

- For multiple users in group sessions, set out clear hitting areas to allow for social distancing along with safe areas 2-3 meters back, ensure social distancing is

maintained at all times. **This may be relaxed for outdoor activity however this is the safest option and any changes should form part of the risk assessment. For example, for vulnerable groups this should still take place.**

- Should bays not be separated by partitions or walls, close every other bay to allow for social distancing.
- Provide sanitising wipes for people to use as required.
- Clean the ball dispenser and any surfaces frequently.
- Coach on the side of the range/ practice area that fewest people have to walk past.
- Ask people to use their own equipment (where possible).
- If equipment is loaned, it should be thoroughly sanitised before and after use.
- Wash practice balls between uses.

Coaching:

- Where possible, conduct coaching and playing lessons outdoors rather than indoors
- Keep group sessions to a minimum (where possible) and no more than the Welsh Government regulations (or more than capacity allows))
- Wash hands with soap and water before and after the session.
- Provide sanitising wipes for the coach and golfers.
- Offer short game coaching sessions that allow the golfers to use their own golf balls. Therefore, they are not sharing equipment that other people have touched.
- Take flags out of the holes in practice areas.

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.

PGA Professional Services

The Professional shop will require the adoption of a range of procedures including but not limited to:

- There should be clear external signage to inform golfers a maximum of 2 golfers will be allowed in the shop at any one time (this may need to be 1 golfer at a time for small shops).
- For larger shops, agreed numbers of customers may be permitted to enter but this must be in line with social distancing recommendations.
- Larger shops may also wish to suggest a route to be taken around the shop by use of arrows on the floor
- Staff shift patterns should be amended to take account of government advice, ideally one person working at a time - this may result in a lower staffing level in the shop than usual and a more basic service may be offered on initial opening.
- Staff in the shop must conform to UK Government advice on social distancing - ideally one person at a time working in the shop, but if this is not possible, then a 2-metre distance should be kept.
- Shop staff should wash hands regularly and wear a face covering as required.

- Ventilation should be maximised.
- Ideally one member of staff would use the till during a particular shift - if multiple people are operating the same till then, hands should be washed / sanitised after each transaction.
- There should be a clearly defined queuing area outside the shop where golfers must adhere to social distancing of a minimum of at least 2 metres.
- Hand sanitiser should be positioned at the entrance to the shop, and all customers should be asked to sanitise before entering.
- The shop door should remain open to avoid contact with handles by golfers and to easily view number of customers in the shop.
- In store signage should direct customers to the till area and then back out of the shop.
- Transactions should be by customer account or card only.
- Sanitiser wipes should be provided for use before and after each transaction.
- Rental trolleys will not be available unless handles are able to be removed and sanitised between each use.
- Buggy use should be on basis of one person only hire, with strict sanitisation between hires.
- Where possible, a clear screen should be employed to protect shop staff.
- Ideally, the shop should be merchandised with essential items positioned close to the till area, especially given possible lower levels of staffing.
- Other transactions requiring advice will be located in an area where shop staff can offer advice whilst also observing safe social distancing of 2 metres.

Club fitting sessions:

Club fitting sessions are permitted both indoors and outdoors. Where possible, club fittings should be carried out outdoors and should adhere to the following guidance to ensure safety of both customers and professional staff:

- This service should only be offered by prior booking.
- Hand sanitiser should be positioned at the entrance to the club fitting area and all customers and fitters will be required to sanitise before entering.
- Customer advice signage should be placed prominently when entering the fitting room or zone to notify the measures and procedures in place.
- A strict 2-metre social distance must be adhered to between the fitter and the customer.
- All golf fitting components must be sanitised after every use with conforming alcohol sanitising wipes before being returned to its storage location.
- Particular attention must be given to the sanitising of the club grip and the passing of component clubs between fitter and customer.
- Golf balls used in the club fitting must also be kept clean to avoid cross-infection between customer and fitter.

Driving ranges

Hygiene measures and Welsh Government guidance is maintained. Facilities **must** conduct a full risk assessment.

Safe use procedures include but are not limited to:

- Should bays not be separated by partitions or walls,
- Make sure the ball washer has soap in the machine.
- Provide sanitising wipes for people to use as required.
- Clean the ball dispenser surfaces frequently.
- Coach on the side of the range that fewest people have to walk past.
- People should use their own equipment.

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

Buggy Use

Shared use of buggies

The current advice from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales is that the regulations will no longer give particular prominence to 2 metre physical distancing (outdoors only 17/07/2021) at Alert Level Zero.

If club's wish to allow shared buggy use, a risk assessment process will need to take place.

Mitigating actions could include:

- **A Perspex screen, and/or**
- **Driver and passenger remaining in the same place throughout the round of golf.**
- **All buggies should be thoroughly sanitised before and after each use.**
- **To minimise the time people spend on the buggy in close proximity where possible**
- **NB: THE ABOVE ONLY APPLIES TO BUGGIES WITH OPEN SIDES**

Here is the Sports guidance (extracted for Section 5)

[Sport, recreation and leisure: guidance for a safe return \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

'Where participants are likely to be in close proximity (within 2m) or in contact, efforts should be made to limit this contact if it cannot be avoided altogether, and organisers and National Governing Bodies should consider all reasonable measures to prevent the spread of the virus, including whether the activity really needs to proceed. In cases where such an activity does proceed, mitigating actions must be put in place to minimise risk and keep participants safe.

Golf Course Preparation

At all times staff safety is paramount.

Measures relating to staff should include but not be limited to:

- Ensuring suitable disinfectant and hand sanitiser is provided in all communal areas.
- Staggering working hours and break times.
- Prohibiting use of communal areas.
- Ensuring there is a robust lone working policy.
- Encouraging staff to bring their own food and drink for breaks that should be stored safely and separately.
- Appointing a senior member of staff to be responsible for COVID-19 protocols and disinfecting/sanitising all surfaces that are touched, for example, door handles and fuel pumps. The same member of staff should be responsible for opening and closing doors to the maintenance facility.
- Ensuring team meetings, if they are necessary, are held outdoors.
- Utilising modern communication methods, for example, online systems or mobile phones for team communications rather than indoor briefings and job sheets.
- Ensuring there is a high focus on hygiene and physical distancing.
- Ensuring staff members work separately, not in pairs/groups where possible.
- Allocating individual machinery to one staff member only.
- Fully sanitising all machinery after use, focusing on all areas that the staff member has come into contact with.

Permitted Play

Social Distancing – The regulations will no longer give particular prominence to 2 metre physical distancing **outdoors but this should be encouraged.**

Society **Golf** bookings can take place as an 'organised outdoor activity'.

However, Welsh hospitality guidelines must be adhered to.

E.G. 4 ball to play golf, eat in the clubhouse (max 6 indoors) and depart at the same time without mixing with other groups.

Please view the Wales Golf organised sports guidance [here](#).

Facilities should implement a range of procedures to allow safe play to take place, including but not limited to:

- Play should be managed by the professional staff / starter and they should remind golfers of the guidance on safe play.
- Updated guidance and advice for golfers should be posted on websites and on tee times booking pages.
- Tee time booking should be done online if at all possible.
- Consider the time between tee times
- Any payment should be taken online or by contactless methods.
- Social distancing should be encouraged.

Plans should be put in place to ensure that any practices required of golfers before, during and after the round, including communications of changes to temporary positions relating to the playing of the game can be accessed in advance and reinforced when golfers arrive to play.

It may be appropriate to send these guidelines to golfers, place them on the online booking areas of a website and also place signage on the first tee as a reminder.

Clubs **MUST** conduct a thorough risk assessment when implementing any changes. Clubs should consult with their **Local Authority, Environmental Health and Safety department and insurance provider when making any changes.**

Potential additions to your current Risk Assessment

Touching items such as flagsticks and rakes can increase the risk of transmitting the virus unless the decontamination processes are adhered to rigorously.

When introducing on course items etc, Clubs should:

- **Regularly sanitise touch point areas such as flags and rakes**
- **Provide regular hand sanitiser stations on the golf course and facilities**
- **Remind golfers to bring their own hand sanitiser with the option to purchase these at the club**
- **Communicate golfers should NOT touch on course items without sanitising their hands**
- **Provide guidance to golfers, including that before touching on course items, any gloves should be removed and hands should be sanitised. After touching an on-course items, hands should be sanitised again. In addition, the items should be cleaned regularly.**

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

- **Course Set-Up**
- **Before the Round**
- **During the Round**
- **After the Round**
- **Rules of Golf Related Matters**

Course Set-Up

On-Course Items

All golf course furniture may be returned for normal use, including the removal of flagsticks, standard hole cups, bunker rakes and ball-washers (see risk assessment guidance).

Practice Areas

- Practice areas can be in use and safe sanitising practices should take place. We recommend that clubs provide access to hand sanitiser around practice facilities.

Before the Round

Bookings

- Clubs/facilities to organise a system of booking and allocation of tee times and contact details collected for TTP

During the Round

- **Hole, and Definition of Holed** – Coronavirus related changes to the definition of a hole and when the ball is holed are now removed.

Teeing Areas

- Encourage golfers to keep to keep social distancing

General

Flagsticks

- There will no longer be a requirement to leave the flagstick in the hole at all times.

Bunkers

- Preferred lies in bunkers will no longer be permissible, and bunkers should no longer be made *ground under repair*, so it is recommended that rakes are returned to the course.
- If golfers do not what to touch the rakes remind golfers to make their very best efforts to smooth the sand using their club and/or their feet.

Marking a scorecard

- **Scoring in Stroke Play (Rule 3.3b)** – the provisions of Rule 3.3b apply where the player's score is kept on his or her scorecard by a marker. Certification of the scorecard by the marker and by the player should occur, as per the guidelines of Rule 3.3b(2).

After the Round

- Remind golfers that Welsh Government regulations applicable to the clubhouse and hospitality