

# A practical guide for coaches & leaders returning to athletics following the COVID-19 restrictions and during phase 3 of the route map for exiting lockdown.

This practical **guide**, prepared by our team in consultation with **sportscotland** and in line with government guidelines, outlines the specific measures **scottishathletics** recommend coaches take to ensure a safe return to athletics activity.

Version 4 – updated on 10 September 2020



## PHASE 3

Be aware guidance can change quickly and more restrictive rules may be applied in the future, so please refer to the [scottishathletics website](https://scottishathletics.gov.scot) regularly.

The guidelines in this document relate to phase 3 of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 route map through and out of the crisis.

This phase:

1. Permits the resumption of sport in line with sports specific guidance and public health advice.
2. Organised outdoor non-contact sporting activity can be undertaken by all ages with no physical distancing required on the field of play.
3. Test and Protect App can be downloaded <https://protect.scot/>
4. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with any updated Scottish Government guidance. Information on the Scottish Government's approach to managing COVID-19 is available at [www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)
5. Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be adhered to. Guidance is available at [Staying Safe and Protecting Others: Travel](#)



Follow physical distancing  
at all times



Follow public health guidance



Follow facility guidance



Follow jumps guidance  
at all times

scottishathletics 



Follow the group size guidance  
laid out by **scottishathletics**



Follow equipment hygiene  
and cleaning guidance

N.B. Whilst this guidance will be useful for any organisation offering athletics or running, please note that the exemptions for group sizes and physical distancing only apply to clubs and groups affiliated to **scottishathletics** and **jogscotland**. Non-affiliated clubs, running groups or non-affiliated event organisers must adhere to the Scottish Government guidance on group sizes and households.

## 1. Before you train

In this phase you must stay at home if you:

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have been overseas to a country on the quarantine list or exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have COVID-19 symptoms (self-isolate for 10 days) or are feeling unwell.
- Have been told to self-isolate as part of the contact tracing measures in place.
- You may be subject to a symptom check by your facility operator or club prior to training.

This list should be used by clubs and coaches to conduct and record a symptoms check with athletes prior to and/or on arrival at training.

## 2. Physical distancing & good hygiene behaviours

- Follow Scottish Government advice on physical distancing at all times.
- Do not share food, towels, and drinks.
- Clean your hands and equipment frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and dispose of any used tissue in your own bag and take it home with you. Wash your hands for 20 seconds or sanitise afterwards.
- Avoid spitting unless into a tissue which you should take home and dispose of.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on.

Further health, safety & hygiene guidance:

[Health Protection Scotland: General guidance for non-healthcare settings](#)

[UK Government / HPE: Cleaning in a non-healthcare setting](#)

[Health Protection Scotland: Hand hygiene techniques](#)

## 3. Safeguarding

Children and young people:

As club activity resumes in stage 3: -

- Clubs should ensure their [Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy](#) and their Welfare Officer contact details are both up to date and easily accessible on the club website and social media pages.
- Clubs should circulate their [Codes of Conduct](#) for coaches, athletes, and parents/carers so that everyone is reminded about the expectations of them and their roles.
- Clubs should make the [Responding to Concerns Procedure](#) widely available so that everyone knows what to do and who to contact with any worries or concerns.
- Outwith normal club sessions, coaches must have the express permission of the parent/carer of an athlete who is under the age of 18 to coach that athlete. If the session is

1:1 the parent must be in attendance. Where a group of children are being coached outwith club sessions then at least one of the parents must be present.

- Parents/guardians who are supervising their children should abide by Scottish Government physical distancing guidance and stay at least 2m away from those out with their own household.
- Groups of parents from different households should not congregate before, during or after the activity.
- Further considerations on the safe return of children and young people to sport can be found [here](#).

Para-athletes:

- General Assistance: para-athletes requiring personal support should bring a carer with them to training to provide any direct support.

#### 4. Training groups and sizes

The rules for training group sizes and physical distancing are as follows;

The recent government guidance (issued 20/08/2020) permits adult outdoor sports training and competition in an organised setting in maximum groups of 30 athletes. A 'field of play bubble' can be created when athletics activity is taking place, in effect suspending Scottish Government household number guidelines for the duration of the activity.

**Whilst the guidelines have been relaxed (as outlined below) on the field of play, scottishathletics strongly recommends that physical distancing should be adhered to on the field of play whenever possible, thus reducing the risk of virus transmission.**

The government guidance permits the coaching of groups of up to 30 athletes, **scottishathletics** strongly recommends that the group sizes outlined below are adhered to during all athletics coaching sessions (please also refer to the group sizes for technical events in section 7).

##### Age 11 and under

- **scottishathletics** recommend a maximum group size (bubble) of 30 athletes following the UKA recommended coaching ratio of 1 coach to 8 athletes (1:8).
- Children aged 11 years and younger are not required to physically distance, as set out in Scottish Government guidance. This extends to organised sports activity and the field of play.
- Coaches and other adults assisting must continue to physically distance as per Scottish Government guidance.

##### Age 12 – 17 years

- **scottishathletics** recommend a maximum group size (bubble) of 15 athletes following the UKA recommended coaching ratio of 1 coach to 10 athletes (1:10).
- Athletes must stay within their designated bubble for the duration of the session.
- Normal physical distancing guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place (see [Scottish Government guidance](#)). This group size is recommended to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained prior to, and following, the coaching session.

- We advise that when possible physical distancing is still encouraged during coaching sessions.
- Coaches and other adults assisting must continue to physically distance as per Scottish Government guidance.

#### **Age 18 +**

- **scottishathletics** recommend a maximum group size (bubble) of 15 athletes following the UKA recommended coaching ratio of 1 coach to 12 athletes (1:12).
- Athletes must stay within their designated bubble for the duration of the session.
- Normal physical distancing guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place (see [Scottish Government guidance](#)). This group size is recommended to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained prior to, and following, the coaching session.
- Coaches and other adults assisting must continue to physically distance as per Scottish Government guidance.

For the purposes of track & field, the field of play is defined as the track and infield (including any external throws specific areas). For off track activity the field of play rules apply from the start of your warm-up to the end of your session.

**Independent coaches should be following the necessary rules.**

### **5. Preparing for a coaching session**

All coaches must follow the clubs and facility operators' guidance for access to athletics training. Coaches can continue to utilise online coaching measures wherever possible following **scottishathletics** social media [guidelines](#).

Recognised **scottishathletics** performance athletes should be aware of the guidance issued by the performance team and contact their respective performance manager.

All coaches must plan and prepare with their athletes for each face to face training session and the planning must be aimed at minimising the risk of infection/transmission. The following points must be included:

- Coaches should be aware that the easing of restrictions does not mean that all facilities/venues will open immediately. Owners and operators will require time to consider all the implications of opening facilities/venues and put plans in place to re-engage staff and to set up operations that ensure the safety of participants, staff and volunteers. This is a difficult time for everyone so please be patient.
- Coaches using an athletics facility **independently from a club** should agree with the facility operator the maximum capacity and booking process prior to resuming training. Limits on the number of participants accessing outdoor facilities should be risk assessed to ensure appropriate physical distancing can be maintained.
- From the 31 August 2020 indoor sport and leisure facilities are able to open if Scottish Government Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities is fully implemented:

- this includes the provision of indoor non-contact and contact sport training and competition activities for children up to and including 11 years of age; and
- indoor non-contact sport training and competition for those 12 years of age and over where physical distancing can be maintained.
- Read the separate guidance for clubs, athletes and facilities.
- Prepare a risk assessment based on planned activities/training environment/age etc. of the athlete(s) and additional hygiene and safety measures.
- Please refer to the event specific requirements in this guide when planning jump and throw related sessions.
- Hygiene: Cleaning, hand and respiratory hygiene are core measures and provision should be made for these. Clear guidance and plans must be in place for cleaning of equipment and waste disposal. Detailed guidance is available from [Health Protection Scotland](#).
- Identify and mitigate all circumstances where injuries or other accidents might occur and have agreed procedures and plans in place to manage such an issue while respecting all government guidance.
- It is **mandatory** to maintain a register of training sessions, who attended, where and when. This information may be necessary for government contact tracing initiatives (if a club coach, this information should be sent to the clubs Covid-19 Coordinator).
- Ensure where necessary that you pre-book access to the athletics facility or get permission to carry out your session at the chosen outdoor space.

## 6. Prior to the session

- Each facility or club may issue separate guidance on accessing and using the specific facilities. Coaches and athletes should be familiar with all guidance.
- Coaches should plan the allocation of athletes for a session in advance to avoid larger groups congregating before being split into smaller training groups.
- Athletes of any age should not travel to and from training with a coach or other athlete unless they are from the same household.
- Athletes should be advised to bring their own technical equipment.
- If the session is a 1:1 with an athlete under 18 years of age it is preferable that only one parent/guardian from the family is in attendance.
- Athletes should be advised to arrive ready to train as changing facilities are not available.
- Athletes and coaches should bring with them hand sanitiser and/or suitable antiviral wipes.

## 7. During the training session

- At all times, coaches, and helpers, should adhere to the Scottish Government's physical distancing guidelines of staying at least 2m away from others including when giving feedback and when athletes are resting. Scottish Government guidelines are available at <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>.
- Only those who need to be at the training sessions should attend and spectating should be discouraged.
- Hygiene: Cleaning, hand and respiratory hygiene measures must be followed at all times.
- When training finishes athletes/coach must leave promptly maintaining physical distancing.

## 8. Event specific guidance

### General safety & hygiene

Athletes must be aware of current club and facility first aid procedures. The club/facility will ensure the first aid equipment has been updated appropriately for the COVID-19 pandemic and that first aiders are aware of COVID-19 specific first aid advice <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>.

- Athletes should not handle any shared coaching equipment (cones etc.). Only the coach should do this.
- Athletes are advised to use their personal equipment wherever possible and follow hygiene guidance.
- Personal equipment should not be shared, and measures must be put in place to reduce the risk of contamination.
- Where there is a requirement for athletes to share equipment, it should be thoroughly cleaned before and after use.
- Clean all equipment with suitable antiviral wipes/spray at the conclusion of your session.
- Be aware of what surfaces other athletes and coaches touch.
- Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on.

### Track

- On the “field of play” athletes can participate without the need for physical distancing. At all other times athletes aged 12+ must continue to physically distance.
- Equipment such as hurdles and barriers may be used if the facility and the club have both assessed the risk and put in place measures to ensure it is safe to do so.
- The facility should have in place a protocol for the setup and clear-up of hurdles and/or barriers. Facility operators should make it clear to athletes and coaches whether cleaning of hurdles and barriers will be carried out by the facility staff or whether the coach or athlete will be expected to do it.
- Hurdles and barriers should be cleaned using antiviral wipes/spray before and after use.
- It is advised to use personal starting blocks but if you require to use shared blocks all surfaces should be cleaned using suitable antiviral wipes/spray.

### Field Events

Opening jump areas is a decision for the facility operator based on their risk assessment of the activity. The following guidance will inform that assessment and applies where the operator allows vertical and horizontal jumps.

### Vertical Jumps

- A maximum training group size of 8 athletes can jump during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 12+ when not in the “field of play”.

- An adult, either the athlete, coach or facility operator should perform a wipe down of bars and uprights using suitable antiviral wipes/spray before and after the session. Facility operators should make it clear to athletes and coaches whether cleaning will be carried out by the facility staff or whether the coach or athlete will be expected to do it.
- Athletes should sanitise hands before and after each jump and maintain good hygiene practices.
- Signage must be prominently positioned at each jump area stating the rules/guidance for use. High mist spray of an antiviral disinfectant cleaner to be used on the bed between sessions. **Operators must contact the manufacturer of the jumps mats in use at their facility to confirm whether the proposed cleaning products can be used safely on their equipment.**
- Coaches should check with athletes if they have any skin conditions that may react to the cleaning product used on the mats.
- If an athlete coughs or sneezes on the bed it should be closed for cleaning.
- After each bubble cleaning of the pit must be completed, and minimum of 15-minute drying time must be allowed, before the next bubble starts.

### Horizontal Jumps

- A maximum training group size of 8 athletes can jump during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 12+ when not in the “field of play”.
- Sandpits should be covered when not in use and signs positioned to ensure they are not used.
- Athletes should sanitise hands before and after each jump and maintain good hygiene practices.
- Athletes should use their own tape measure.
- Signage must be prominently positioned at each jump area stating the rules/guidance for use.
- During each session, one adult, either a coach or athlete, should be responsible for the raking of the pit. The rake should be cleaned using suitable antiviral wipes/spray before and after use.
- High mist spray or watering can of sterilising fluid should be sprayed over the sand after use, turned and raked. Facility operators should implement a process for this procedure ensuring correct PPE is used for spraying.
- An adult, either the athlete or coach, should clean any other equipment used.
- After each bubble cleaning of the pit must be completed, and minimum of 15-minute drying time must be allowed, before the next bubble starts.

### Throws

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 4.
- Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 12+ when not in the “field of play”.
- Risk assessments must have been completed and shared with all coaches and athletes for both the throws facility and specific training session.
- Athletes are encouraged to use their own equipment which must be cleaned using suitable antiviral wipes/spray before and after use.
- Coaches and athletes should ensure that any shared equipment is used by only one athlete at a time and is thoroughly cleaned before and after each session.

- Athletes and coaches should avoid touching the shared cage/netting.
- Where a cage door requires to be moved, it should be moved by an adult, either athlete, coach or facility operator who is familiar with its operation. The facility operator should make clear to coaches and athletes who can move cage doors. Any surfaces touched in the process of moving the cage door should be cleaned with suitable antiviral wipes/spray before and after use.
- Facility operators should make it clear to athletes and coaches whether cleaning will be carried out by the facility staff or whether the coach or athlete will be expected to do it.

#### **Para-athletes**

- Where possible, para-athletes should use their own personal equipment. All equipment should be cleaned before and after a session following the hygiene guidance.
- Wheelchair, race running, and seated throws athletes should be helped and supported into any equipment by the guardian/carer only.
- Guide Runners: guide running can now take place following hygiene measures including the cleaning of the running tether in between sessions.

#### **Off track coaching and leading including road running**

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 4.
- A “field of play bubble” for all ages means that physical distancing can be suspended for the duration of the activity. At all other times physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 12+.
- Athletes must not congregate with other athletes outside their bubble prior to, and following, the coaching session.
- Coaches, athletes, and runners should adhere to all restrictions that may be placed on a public space by the owner of that space.
- Coaches should ensure they have carried out a standard risk assessment of any training space or route, as they would normally, prior to the session taking place.
- Coaches, athletes, and runners should ensure they carry out standard safety procedures (e.g. phones, route planning etc) when accessing ‘wild’ public spaces.
- Be aware of other members of the public using the same space you are training in. The group should be briefed on how they run together in a way that respects physical distancing, and which does not cause unnecessary risk or anxiety to members of the public.

Further guidance and templates for coaches and leaders is available at [Getting your coaches ready for sport](#) on the **sportscotland** website.

## 9. Contacts

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**Remember FACTS  
for a safer Scotland**

**F** Face coverings 

**A** Avoid crowded places 

**C** Clean your hands regularly 

**T** Two metre distance 

**S** Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms 

nhsinform.scot/coronavirus  
#WeAreScotland

 Healthier Scotland  
Scottish Government

 NHS  
SCOTLAND

 CORONAVIRUS  
STAY SAFE  
PROTECT OTHERS  
SAVE LIVES