



A practical guide for athletics facilities returning to athletics following the COVID-19 restrictions 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 athletics facilities take to ensure a safe return to athletics activity.

Version 5 – updated on 01 October 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/
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



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



Follow equipment hygiene and cleaning guidance

N.B. Our guidance has been developed with affiliated **scottishathletics** clubs and **jogscotland** groups in mind. Non-affiliated clubs and groups delivering organised athletics or running activity may also follow this sport-specific guidance and benefit from the exemptions that are in place for the sport. To qualify for these exemptions, they must appoint a COVID Coordinator, ensure risk assessments are in place for all sessions, record attendance at all sessions, and ensure a UKA licensed coach or leader leads or sets all training sessions. Independent licensed coaches should also follow the **scottishathletics** guidance.

This document provides athletics specific guidance to help athletics facility operators. It complements and should be considered alongside the more comprehensive **sportscotland** facilities guidance — [Getting your facilities fit for sport](#).

Additionally, this guidance should be considered alongside the phase three guidance for athletes, coaches and clubs published by **scottishathletics**.

Plan

- The reopening of outdoor track and field facilities and indoor athletics areas (not before 31st August) is at the discretion and consent of the facility owner or operator.
- The facility operator should engage with athletics users at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss planning towards the resumption of athletics activity.
- Ensure all changes to operational requirements are communicated to athletics users at the earliest opportunity to allow them to plan effectively for a return to activity.

Prepare

- Work with athletics clubs and coaches to inspect the condition of equipment and identify areas/equipment for deep cleaning.
- Identify with athletics clubs and coaches any high traffic touch points around the athletics track.
- Share venue risk assessments and physical distancing measures with athletics clubs and coaches. Limits on the number of participants accessing athletics training facilities should be risk assessed to ensure appropriate physical distancing can be maintained.
- It is the responsibility of each venue operator, club committee and deliverer to undertake documented risk assessment, based on their local circumstances, prior to activity taking place. Consider safety first, particularly focusing on minimising the risk of infection/transmission. Appropriate measures must be put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are always protected.
- Ask clubs and independent coaches to submit their risk assessments and plans for meeting physical distancing requirements for the activities they will be delivering.
- Prepare guidance and signage for athletics users covering hygiene, cleaning, and health & safety.
- Remove any unnecessary equipment and items from the track and surrounding area.

Protect

- Contact the athletics clubs and/or **scottishathletics** for clarification on any of our guidance.
- Liaise with athletics clubs and independent coaches to ensure they have processes in place for maintaining an accurate record of attendances. Share with clubs and coaches any facility protocols being implemented to ensure work is not duplicated.

- Work with athletics clubs and independent coaches to ensure physical distancing measures are being adhered to outside of the “field of play”.
- All fixed and moveable athletics equipment should have a clear, ongoing hygiene and cleaning plan in place.

Review

- Review regularly with athletics clubs and independent coaches the physical distancing, hygiene, safety, and risk assessment measures that are in place.
- Ensure all updates from **scottishathletics** are shared with the relevant staff and volunteers.
- Ensure accurate records of attendances are being maintained whilst test and protect remains in place.

Phase 3

- Clubs and facility operators may re-open all outdoor sports areas, including athletics facilities, if documented risk assessments are undertaken and all appropriate measures are put in place to ensure the safety of participants, staff and volunteers.
- Indoor athletics areas will not open before the 31st August.
- All athletics disciplines can resume following the guidelines set out under ‘General Safety & Hygiene’.
- Sports facility operators and clubs may open toilets for public use if they follow the guidelines outlined on the Scottish Government website [Opening Public Toilets Guidelines](#).
- Access through an indoor area can be provided if suitable risk assessments and safety measures are put in place. These should include restricting access as much as possible, ideally one person at a time and with a one-way system in operation where possible. Persons moving through an area should not stop or congregate at any time.
- Signage should be displayed in the athletics track and field area to reinforce hygiene and safety protocols.
- All athletics clubs providing activity must abide by relevant **scottishathletics** guidance and have a named ‘Covid Coordinator’ who will complete documented activity risk assessments and ensure all appropriate mitigations are put in place by the sports organisation before any children’s outdoor activity is undertaken.

Health, safety & hygiene

- Ensure access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained. Where equipment is stored indoors please ensure public access to enclosed indoor areas is restricted as much as possible with hygiene and safety protocols reviewed as part of the risk assessment.
- Please ensure that first aid equipment has been updated appropriately for the COVID pandemic and first aiders have appropriate training.
- [Click here](#) for further COVID-19 specific first aid advice.
- Make hand sanitisers or wipes available for use at entrance/exit to venue/tracks area and beside equipment if in use.
- Athletes should ideally bring their own equipment. Where shared equipment is used, this must be cleaned before and after use in line with facility procedures.
- All fixed equipment should be checked prior to use to avoid participants having to adjust or touch it.
- No spectating should take place other than where a parent is supervising a child or vulnerable adult. Physical distancing guidance should always be followed.

- 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.
- Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on. Cleaning products should conform to EN14476 standards.
- Scottish Government advice on cleaning is [here](#).

Training groups & sizes

All training sessions should be delivered and/or set by a UKA licensed coach (Athletics Coach/Level 2+) or leader and delivered in accordance with the [UKA Coaching Code of Practice](#).

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 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.

Athletes should make sure that if they are coached by an independent coach that they are following the necessary rules put in place.

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.

Competition Specific Guidance

- Competition specific guidance for all events – track, jumps, throws etc is available to download from the **scottishathletics** fixture page.

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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

  