

A practical guide for clubs and groups
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 clubs take to ensure a safe return to athletics activity.



PHASE 3

Be aware guidance can change quickly and more restrictive rules may be applied in the future, so please refer to the [scottishathletics](https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk) website 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 sport specific activity can be undertaken by children and young people (u18) from 13th July with no physical distancing required on the field of play.
3. Enables groups of 15 from 5 households, including family and friends, to meet outside with physical distancing.
4. Gyms (including indoor sport spaces) will not open before 31st July.
5. 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/
6. Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be adhered to. Guidance is available at [Staying Safe and Protecting Others: Travel](#)

This practical guide for clubs builds on the guidance issued in phase 2 of the exit plan framework. This document should be read in conjunction with the relevant Scottish Government guidance. Links to specific Scottish Government guidance are included where necessary.

Phase 3 is a return to sport. The information herein provides athletics specific advice to assist clubs to comply with government guidance during all their activities.

Our measures and procedures are under constant review and updated as advice from government, health authorities and the national agency for sport evolves in line with the gradual lifting of restrictions. They may be withdrawn or amended at short notice and it is advised to check our website regularly to ensure you are working in line with the most up to date advice.

1. Club Activity

Club activities can resume in phase 3 in line with Scottish Government and scottishathletics guidance.

- Clubs can continue implementing their reopening plan using outdoor spaces.
- The focus should be on delivering the organised activity with as few participants as possible interacting with each other and for the minimum amount of time, whilst still allowing the activity to be run effectively.
- The focus of activity at this stage is a return to training.
- Internal (not licenced) competitions should only be undertaken locally and informally at your own club/venue where household, physical distancing and hygiene measures are in place. All licenced athletics events are cancelled until 31st July.
- Travel to a competition out with your normal club/venue of play is not permitted.
- Clubs should be aware that the easing of restrictions does not mean that all facilities will open immediately. Owners and operators will require time to consider all the implications of opening facilities 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.
- Groups of 15 people from 5 households can get together in an outdoor space with physical distancing maintained. Please note there is an extended household rule (see [Scottish Government guidance](#)).
- Further guidance on health, safety & hygiene can be found at the following links:
 - [Health Protection Scotland: General guidance for non-healthcare settings](#)
 - [UK Government / HPE: Cleaning in a non-healthcare setting](#)
 - [Health Protection Scotland: Hand hygiene techniques](#)
- Workforce - clubs and venue operators must ensure that relevant workplace guidance is followed for contractors and staff and ensure existing health and safety advice is maintained and aligned. This should be detailed in the risk assessment.
- Where an employee is providing an activity, relevant work placed risk assessments and consultation should take place in advance of any activity being undertaken. See the Businesses, workplaces and self -employed people section at [Scottish Govt: Covid-19](#)

2. Safeguarding

Children and young people:

As club activity resumes in phase 3: -

- All clubs providing children's activity must abide by **scottishathletics** guidance and have a named 'Covid Coordinator' who will complete documented risk assessments and ensure all appropriate mitigations are put in place by the club before any children's outdoor activity is undertaken.
- 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.

3. Facilities

Scottish Government advises that the reopening of outdoor sports courts is permitted and that indoor gyms (including indoor athletics facilities) remain closed. It is at the facility operators discretion when their facilities reopen.

- 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.
- Limits on the number of participants accessing facilities should be risk assessed to ensure physical distancing can be maintained. This should take into consideration that at phase 3 you can meet with up to four other households (or extended households) at a time outdoors, and no more than 15 people in total at any time (variations for under 18s are outlined in section 5).
- Specific facility guidance for athletics can be found in the COVID-19 section on the [scottishathletics website](#). This guidance also refers to the [sportsScotland facilities guidance](#).
- Clubs must confirm with the facility operator what are the athletics facilities and local booking processes in place in phase 3.
- All indoor exercise and training areas remain closed. However, access through an indoor area can be provided if suitable risk assessments and safety measures are put in place.

4. Health & Safety Advice

Clubs should link with facility operators to ensure usual access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained. As there is no access to indoor facilities allowed consideration should be made to house first aid equipment externally. Please ensure the first aid equipment has been updated appropriately for the COVID pandemic and first aiders are aware of COVID-19 specific first aid advice <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>.

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 7 days) or are feeling unwell.
- Have been told to self-isolate as part of the contact tracing measures in place.
- Please reinforce good hygiene practices prior to, during, and after training as participants may be asymptomatic.
- 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.

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

5. Training groups and sizes

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

Age 11 and under

- 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 must continue to physically distance as per Scottish Government guidance (2m for time being) at all times.
- **scottishathletics** recommend a maximum group of 8 athletes for this age group.

Age 12-17 years

- For older children aged 12-17 a 'field of play bubble' can be created during organised sports activity that allows contact whilst the activity is taking place, in effect suspending physical distancing guidelines for the duration of the activity.
- Normal physical distancing guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place (see [Scottish Government guidance](#)).
- Coaches and other adults must continue to physically distance as per Scottish Government guidance (2m for time being) at all times.
- **scottishathletics** recommend a maximum group of 10 athletes for this age group.

Age 18+

- As of the 10th July the household numbers that can mix outdoors is 5 households (with up to 15 people).
- These guidelines remain in place for adult (18+) training groups and physical distancing must be maintained at all times. Please note that this guidance may be relaxed over the weeks ahead so please continue to follow 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.

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

6. Booking, arriving and etiquette

The club, via the Covid-19 Coordinator, should work with the facility operator to make sure a collaborated approach to facility reopening, access and use can be achieved.

- Clubs using an athletics facility 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.
- Online bookings should be taken if possible. If not, alternative measures should be put in place.
- Where possible and in line with Data Protection regulations, a register of users should be kept in case there is a need to track and trace.
- Clubs that own or lease their facility should limit capacity to reflect Scottish government guidelines related to group size and the number of households allowed to meet in phase 3.
- Clubs using public spaces should risk assess the training environment and activity to ensure that numbers attending are appropriate for maintaining physical distancing.
- Clubs should plan the allocation of athletes for a session in advance to avoid larger groups congregating before being split into smaller training groups.
- Ensure that sufficient COVID-19 information posters are clearly exhibited in all areas of the club/facilities <https://www.hse.gov.uk/>.
- Instruct all attendees to ensure their club has their up-to-date contact details (phone and email).
- Attendees should be instructed to arrive at the club location at a specific time.
- Attendees must always observe physical distancing.
- Attendees should be instructed to arrive in training kit.
- Attendees should be instructed to sanitise and/or wash their hands prior to attending the club, and regularly throughout training.
- Instruct attendees to enter and leave the area one at a time maintaining physical distancing.
- Any attendees repeatedly not following the club directives should be asked to leave training and familiarise themselves with the guidance prior to the next session.
- 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.

7. 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

- Follow the current Scottish Government advice on physical distancing. When the guidance is 2m a **one lane gap** on the track is not sufficient to meet the physical distancing requirements. On the field of play athletes under 18 can participate without the need for physical distancing.
- 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.
- Ideally athletes should run side by side leaving 2m between them if over the age of 18. Athletes running in single file must maintain a 5m distance if over the age of 18.

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

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 5 for the number of athletes/households that can jump during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 18+.
- 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 users. **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 session cleaning of the bed must be completed, and a minimum of 15-minute drying time must be allowed, before the next session starts.

Horizontal Jumps

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 5 for the number of athletes/households that can jump during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 18+.
- 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 session cleaning of the pit must be completed, and minimum of 15-minute drying time must be allowed, before the next session starts.

Throws

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 5 for the number of athletes/households that can throw during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 18+.
- 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: in phase 3, unless the guide is from the same household/extended household then guide running should not be carried out.

Off track coaching and leading including road running

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 5 for the number of athletes/households that can run during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 18+.
- 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.
- Ideally athletes should run side by side leaving 2m between them if over the age of 18. Athletes running in single file must maintain a 5m distance if over the age of 18.

Competition Specific Guidance

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

8. Contacts

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