



FENCING
I R E L A N D

Covid-19 Return to Fencing Guidelines

Step 3 - Reopen Clubs Information for Clubs

With Step 3 of the Fencing Ireland Return to Fencing Guidelines it will be possible to reopen fencing clubs, however this does not yet mean that clubs will be able to operate as they did before the Covid-19 quarantine began. That return to 'normality' may be a while away yet.

This document sets out the precautions that should be taken by clubs to minimise the risks of the possible spread of virus. These precautions are covered under the following headings:

- Social distancing
- Sterilisation and equipment
- Fencing activities
- Facilitating contact tracing

The guidelines provided in this document are provisional to allow clubs to plan their return on **29 June**. We expect more advice from the government/Sport Ireland before that return date and will send out updated guidelines when possible.

Social distancing:

Steps need to be taken to ensure social distancing procedures are followed during fencing sessions. While this is not possible the whole time during a fencing match, the risks of transmission of the covid-19 virus should be significantly limited by following the following guidelines:

- When attendees are not taking part in a drill, bout or activity, they should observe should observe the relevant and current social distancing measures advised by the government.
- The number of attendees in any session should be limited based on the size of the hall available and the planned activities in a session so as to allow for social distancing.
 - This applies to all attendees: coaches, fencers, parents, and others. Therefore, it is advisable to ask people who do not have to be present to not be there. This does not change the requirements for child protection issues, including the fact that there should be at least two Garda vetted adults present at any session for children.
- Where possible, attendees should be encouraged to change at home. When this is not possible, attendees should observe social distancing while using changing facilities. Access to those facilities should be limited to a reasonable number at any one time. This number will vary depending on the size of the changing facilities.
- The requirement for shaking hands after a match or drill has been suspended at all levels of fencing for the foreseeable future and should not be done at any time during a session.
- Enough space should be left between bags of personal gear to allow for fencers to observe social distancing when at their bags.
- A gap of at least 15 minutes should be scheduled between sessions to avoid contact between participants as they enter and exit the club.
 - Those attending sessions should be instructed not to arrive early to sessions and to leave promptly at the end of sessions. Congregating at the start or end of sessions is not permissible.
- We advise keeping windows/doors open where possible to aid with air circulation.
- There should be no sharing of food or drinks between participants. Participants should bring their own water bottle to sessions.

Sterilisation and equipment:

This will likely be the most onerous but also the most important section of these guidelines. Due to the nature of how the Covid-19 virus spreads, significant precautions will have to be taken with equipment.

Personal hygiene

- The club should provide wipes or sprays to allow for attendees to sterilise their hands when entering and leaving a session at the fencing club. All participants should do so before and after the session.
- All members are encouraged to adopt good respiratory hygiene, covering their nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze, or using a tissue which is immediately disposed of.

Equipment

- **Every possible and practical step should be taken to limit the sharing of equipment.** When at all possible, personal gear should be used before club gear.
- If weapons, or bodywires are shared in a session they should be thoroughly disinfected by the person who used them last. They should also be disinfected at the end of every session.
 - This disinfection can be achieved through the use of sprays and wipes. Fencing clubs may wish to acquire these materials as soon as possible to be prepared for the return.
- Masks, jackets, plastrons, and breeches **should not be shared** within one session and should be disinfected before being used at another session.
- Gloves should not be shared within a session and should not be used by another person at a different session unless they have been washed at a temperature of at least 60°C between the sessions.

Fencing activities:

While we aim to get back to as many elements of fencing as possible, there will still be some advisable restrictions on activities carried out in training.

- At this stage it is possible to return to fencing matches in training.
- When and where possible (and weather permitting), activities which do not necessarily need to take place in a sports hall, such as warm ups, should take place outdoors.
- Where possible footwork drills/games/exercises should be done individually, rather than in pairs or larger groups.
- Care should be taken when choosing drills to not structure any sessions in a way that will create an unnecessary amount of proximity between fencers; that is, drilling on situations such as 'close quarters'/'infigting' should not be done for the time being.
- If it is not possible for a referee to maintain social distance when refereeing then bouts should be conducted without referees.

Facilitating contact tracing:

In the event that a participant in a club session later test positive for the Covid-19 virus, they may have to undergo contact tracing. To this end we asking all clubs to maintain an **attendance sheet** at every session. Where possible these attendance sheets should be **electronic**. These attendance sheets should record the name, email address, and phone number of each participant.

In accordance with GDPR requirements, information should be available to all members as to the purpose of collecting this data as well as what the data may be used for. The member should record their agreement for those uses when filling out the sheet. Furthermore, these records should be destroyed after the expiration of the need for COVID-19 protocols or one year, whichever is the sooner.

Setting up and maintaining an electronic attendance sheet online should be free and relatively simple with products such as google forms. If you require any advice or help in doing so, feel free to contact development@irishfencing.net.