



Scottish
Swimming

Technical Officials

Back to the Water

COVID-19 Guidance

Phase 3

Updated 15th December 2020

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Section 1 - Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The following guidance has been developed in co-operation with the Home Countries and industry partners. The document aims to support Technical Officials when returning to events and will also help pool operators and aquatics clubs to work collaboratively to ensure Technical Officials return safely. This document provides guidance on reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission within the swimming pool environment.

The guidance highlights the continued requirement for safe physical distancing and enhanced hygiene regimes and considers how this will impact on the different officiating/discipline environments. As with all environments there is risk of COVID-19 transmission in aquatic settings that requires control measures to be implemented. Operators and event organisers must create their own risk assessments per event before implementing any activities.

This guidance document should be read alongside [Scottish Swimming Back to the water – Return to Competition Overview](#). Additional Guidance for Club training activity is contained within [Scottish Swimming Club Training Back to the Water COVID-19 Guidance](#) and Club Management is contained within [Scottish Swimming Club Management Back to the Water COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Due to the changing landscape as a result of COVID-19, Scottish Swimming in conjunction with National Committees and the 4 SASA Districts, will conduct a review of its event and competition structure including meet licensing and officiating. Consultation with key stakeholders including clubs, coaches, officials and facility operators will be a priority.

1.1 Guiding principles

The information contained within this document and that of the [Scottish Swimming Club Training Guidance](#) and [Scottish Swimming Club Management Guidance](#) is based on the following overarching guiding principles:

- **Safety first** – the safety of anyone involved in our sports and activities is paramount and will be put first in all considerations. Clubs should emphasise to members that during this period of time everyone has a personal responsibility to keep themselves safe.
- **Consistent** – our guidance is across multiple activities and many stakeholders, we will seek to make it consistent and aligned to avoid creating conflict or confusion.
- **Robust** – we will ensure that our guidance is developed by experts in the sport/activity/field and then reviewed internally and by a medical practitioner to ensure it is as robust as possible.
- **Evolving** – we will provide initial guidance but understand that not all factors are currently known and that circumstances will change, to this end we will develop and improve guidance as appropriate and based on practical experience when activity recommences in the water.

1.2 Be prepared for change

It has become clear that the aquatic landscape that we knew pre COVID-19 will be vastly different on our return. Now that pool operators can open facilities, it is not likely that all pools will open their doors for operation straight away and the return to competitions is still some time away.

- Many pools may open with reduced pool hours
- Whilst a leisure centre may open there will be a phased return to certain activities
- Pool operators may open pools within certain geographical areas piecemeal rather than en masse
- Some pools may not reopen at all

- Competitions will not return for some time
- The level & format of competitions along with number of technical officials and set up for competitions may look very different

In short there could be fewer opportunities, and we cannot expect clubs to step back to where they left off. This is something all clubs will need to consider.

Clubs have an important role to play in regards to managing expectations of their athletes, coaches, parents, technical officials and volunteers as the club returns to the pool.

Section 2 – Technical Officials Guidance

2.1 COVID-19 Team

As a requirement of **sportscotland**, each club must have a dedicated officer or team responsible for COVID-19, making sure that from the club's perspective they are up to date with Scottish Swimming and Scottish Government guidance and recommendations. This person/team will also have a key responsibility to liaise with the pool operator and be aware of the rules and guidance set by the facility, manage the COVID-19 Liaison Officers and ensure the club have the necessary processes and a relevant risk assessment in place.

There should be a COVID-19 Liaison Officer at every club session. A COVID-19 Liaison Officer is responsible for the monitoring of physical distancing and wellbeing, reporting back to the COVID-19 lead/team after each session identifying good practice together with any adverse findings. For all events/competitions a COVID-19 Officer should be appointed by the host organisation and should be available for the duration of the event/competition.

As a Technical Official if you have any concerns or observe anything that needs corrected or improved with regards to COVID-19 procedures then notify the COVID-19 Officer, Meet Director/Convenor or lead official as appropriate who will be able to assist.

2.2 GDPR (Privacy notice updates)

With a return to the pool environment, clubs are required to collect new personal information from members in relation to COVID-19 including explicit consent due to processing health information. Therefore in line with GDPR, clubs should update their privacy notice and distribute to all members including Technical Officials highlighting the changes with the members receiving a copy prior to returning to the pool.

2.3 Physical distancing, reducing the risk of transmission and Technical Official considerations

- Technical Officials must comply with physical distancing guidelines at all times
- It is not compulsory for Technical Officials to return to an event/competition and all have the option to opt-in or opt-out at any time
- Face coverings should be worn at all times while within the facility. For more information please see section 2.10
- When entering the facility, follow the pool operator's guidance on direction of travel, physical distancing and other risk control measure they have in place
- Use hand sanitiser/wash stations wherever made available. Gloves are not mandatory as the WHO advice is that it is preferable not to wear gloves but to regularly wash your hands

- Spend as little time as possible in the changing rooms, following the operator’s guidance on maintaining safe levels of distance. Technical officials should arrive pool ready where at all possible, limiting the time in changing rooms. Remember a change of footwear for poolside. Lockers may be available for storing clothes, valuables etc but please check with club/pool operator in advance of arriving at the venue
- Scottish Swimming recognises that there will be different considerations/challenges for each venue and for each discipline at a venue. It would be good practice for the lead referee/official to liaise with the event/competition organising committee/COVID-19 team to establish if there are any additional venue requirements or practicalities that need to be included within briefings or the way Technical Officials are required to operate during the event
- Briefings should be kept to a minimum to avoid congestion at the venue and where possible information should be available before arriving at the venue. This will vary across disciplines depending on the level of interaction required. If there is a health and/or safety concern then the event organiser should not hesitate to undertake a briefing. As well as lead officials, club staff should regularly reiterate safety and physical distancing information, for example at the start of sessions and through swift intervention if anyone in the session is breaching guidelines
- Technical Officials should bring sufficient fluids for the session in their own clearly marked bottles and any necessary food in clearly marked containers so as not to require vending machines or water fountains, which are unlikely to be available in many facilities
- Technical Officials should bring their own personal equipment such as stopwatches, clipboards, pens etc. For more information please see section 2.11
- All scheduled timings must be adhered to enabling arrivals and departures to take place effectively without overloading the capacity of the facility/pool
- No formal presentation ceremonies should take place during or after the competition/event and the focus should be on reducing numbers in attendance at any one time
- The number of Technical Officials should be kept to the minimum operating requirements. The focus should be on delivering the competition/event with as few participants as possible interacting with each other and for the minimum amount of time, whilst still allowing the competition/event to be run effectively
- Technical Officials should limit their interactions with athletes and team staff during events/competitions as far as practically possible
- A familiarisation video of the pool/event environment, housed on the club’s website or available to Technical Officials in advance would be beneficial where possible
- A refresher guide containing FINA rules and Technical Official duties for swimming can be found [HERE](#)

2.4 ‘At risk’ groups

Technical Officials who are categorised clinically vulnerable (Extremely High Risk or High Risk) of developing complications from COVID-19 by the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland can take part in some activities now pools are open, should they choose to.

Technical Officials in these groups should follow the appropriate medical information provided to them by their GP or local care team. It is very important individuals follow the general advice on physical distancing. More information and guidance can be found on the [NHS Inform website](#). Clubs should update risk assessments accordingly and work with the pool operator to consider how best individuals in higher risk groups can be involved.

2.5 Health Screen Survey

One of the measures in place to help the containment of the virus, ensuring a safe environment for all participants is the identification of any potential cases at the earliest opportunity to avoid any contacts/spread. The research to date for COVID-19 suggests that transmission appears to be during the symptomatic phase, and as such, identifying those with symptoms and encouraging them to self-isolate should reduce risk significantly.

The Health Screen Survey should be completed by all Technical Officials once before returning to the pool environment and returned to the club as per their instructions. The form will need to be completed again if returning after a period of illness or change in circumstances.

If attending events hosted by external clubs, Districts or Scottish Swimming, completing a Health Screen Survey may be required for that event/competition. Forms and further direction around completing and returning should be available from the host organisation before arrival at the venue.

Do not go to a venue if you currently have any illness symptoms or have been in contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 10 days.

For reference the main symptoms for COVID-19 are currently:

- A new continuous cough
- A high temperature or fever
- Loss of taste or smell

For a full list of symptoms and for more information: [NHS Inform website](#)

2.6 Self-Declaration form

Scottish Swimming accepts that it is not possible for any sport to eliminate the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 virus completely and will work with all stakeholders to minimise risk; this concept must be fully understood and accepted by all Scottish Swimming members who wish to return to the pool environment and resume aquatic activities.

The purpose of the self-declaration form is to ensure everyone has considered the relevant risks and the required protocols and behaviours required to return to the water environment as safely as possible. Technical Officials are only required to complete this form once and must return to the club COVID-19 team as per their instructions before being able to restart club duties.

If attending events hosted by external clubs, Districts or Scottish Swimming, completing a Self-Declaration form may be required for that event/competition. Forms and further direction around completing and returning should be available from the host organisation before arrival at the venue.

2.7 Illness at Venue procedure

The following best practice guidance outlines the process that should be followed if a Technical Official becomes unwell with COVID-19 Symptoms at the venue. Clubs should work with facility management to establish the necessary procedures at that specific venue for dealing with a person feeling unwell, to incorporate this into the club processes.

- If a Technical Official becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms during a session, they should be removed from the session as quickly and as safely as possible. Clubs should work with the facility to identify an isolation location to keep the potentially infected individual if it is not possible for them to leave immediately. The supporting individuals should remain physically distanced and wear a face covering and other PPE as appropriate.
- If the person requires first aid, that should be delivered in accordance with venue guidance and processes along with the appropriate PPE. This ensures the supporting individual is significantly less likely to be considered a close contact.
- If under 18 - The COVID-19 Officer should inform the parent/guardian that the young official has been removed from the session and requires collection from the venue. If 18 & Over – Working with the facility staff, the COVID-19 team should support the member until they have left the facility safely. Anyone who is supporting the ill individual in close proximity indoors should wear a face covering and other PPE as appropriate.
- The Technical Official should return home and contact NHS Scotland for the next steps as appropriate.
- If the individual returns a positive COVID-19 test result – the NHS (Test & Protect Team) will be in touch to advise next steps. It is the NHS' responsibility to advise club members, do not share the positive test confirmation with any other club members, the NHS will follow their own processes.
- Before returning to the pool environment, the individual should complete a health screening form.

2.8 Test and Protect

[Test and Protect](#), is Scotland's way of putting into practice NHS Scotland's test, trace, isolate and support strategy.

The gathering of contact information from anyone attending sport/leisure activities or facilities in a secure and safe manner, will assist NHS Scotland's Test and Protect service to identify any clusters of cases, contact those who may have been exposed to the virus, and request them to take appropriate steps to prevent potential onward spread.

In order to support Test and Protect sports facility operators are required to collect the name, contact number, date of visit, time of arrival, and where possible the departure time of all those attending facilities or activities. It is important that sport facility operators and clubs cooperate fully, as it will be crucial to national efforts to suppress the virus.

Sports facility operators will store information securely for 21 days and share it with public health officers when requested. A leaflet providing information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland is also available [HERE](#).

2.9 Risk assessment

As part of the process for clubs returning to training in the pool environment a risk assessment is required to be in place. Clubs are encouraged to work with the pool operator to ensure that the venue specific information is included. The following areas should be considered for inclusion in the risk assessment (not an exhaustive list):

- Carpark (drop-off and pick-up), Facility entrance, circulation areas and exit routes
- Changing rooms, Toilets, Equipment & Hygiene measures
- Athletes & Team Staff considerations
- Poolside & During activity
- Health screening & Test & Protect

In order for competition, timed events etc should take place the current risk assessment should be updated to include Technical Officials and other event volunteers, competition activity and any additional equipment requirements. Clubs should work with the pool operator to ensure numbers within the facility during competition sessions are within safe operating numbers and that appropriate physical distancing, hygiene and staffing levels are in place.

2.10 Hygiene considerations (Face coverings & hand washing)

Guidance from **sportscotland** and the Scottish Government in relation to wearing face coverings during delivery of indoor sport sessions has been updated. Scottish Swimming have updated the guidance to include the following:

Best practice is for Technical Officials to wear a face covering at all times whilst indoors except where an exemption applies (*for instance, if you have a disability or health condition*).

Consideration for the wellbeing of Technical Officials is important and there may be times where Technical Officials are concerned about wearing a face covering for a lengthy period of time within the pool hall environment.

The wearing of face coverings is the default position when delivering sport and physical activity indoors; this includes the competition environment. Notwithstanding this and subject to an appropriate risk assessment it may, at times, be reasonable for a technical official to remove their face covering whilst working within the competition environment i.e. the Referee & Starter when starting a race.

Further considerations in order to maximise safe communication with others:

- Maintain a strict 2m physical distance and wear a face covering when communicating to others
- Projecting your voice across the pool area should be avoided where at all possible
- Use of portable electronic speaker equipment – please consider pool operating procedures and equipment and personal hygiene as part of this process
- The use of non-verbal communication such as hand signals

The priority should at all times be on ensuring the safety of the Technical officials, athletes and team staff and minimising the risk of virus transmission as much as possible.

A face covering should be worn at all times when in the general circulation areas of the facility e.g. reception, toilets, changing areas. In addition, a face covering should be worn when communicating with other Technical Officials, team staff, COVID-19 Officer or facility staff. Face coverings do not need to be worn in a sports facility hospitality environment i.e. café or restaurant when seated but are required when standing or moving around the area.

If you are not wearing face coverings and need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve. Dispose of your tissue into an appropriate bin supplied at the venue or place in a plastic bag and take home. Wash your hands afterwards for 20 seconds. Avoid touching your face and ensure to clean your hands with at least 70% alcohol gel when you finish participating.

Thorough hand washing with soap and/or hand-sanitiser, should be **regularly** undertaken by all during an event.

2.11 Equipment considerations

- Technical Officials should bring their own personal equipment such as stopwatches, whistles, clipboards, pens etc and should be clearly labelled where possible
- Only take the minimum amount of equipment that you need to participate
- Personal equipment should be cleaned with anti-viral wipes or solution before and after use
- Sharing of equipment is not permitted and equipment should not be left at the facility. Equipment that is left at a facility overnight or post event/competition may be removed and destroyed
- Do not share food or drink with others
- Any facility/club owned competition/event equipment that is issued to Technical Officials should be operated by 1 person only in each lane per session and be sanitised before, during and after each session such as stopwatches, back-up buttons, lap cards, scoring handsets and backstroke ledges
- Facility equipment that requires to be cleaned can be by simply and effectively rinsing equipment in the pool such as balls and cones
- Facility equipment that cannot be sanitised in the pool should be appropriately cleaned between sessions. Touch points of free and fixed equipment, such as handrails, chairs and poolside equipment, starting blocks, music systems, score cards, timing and scoring systems and goals should be cleaned after every session or more frequently if considered necessary
- Equipment such as starting handsets should only be used by one Technical Official per session and should be cleaned with anti-viral wipes or solution before and after use. The Technical Official should wear a face covering at all times except when starting a race. The use of whistles and shouting across the pool should be kept to a minimum where at all possible
- The amount of paperwork being handled/processed/stored during the event/competition by Technical Officials and Team Staff, for example withdrawal forms, start lists, results and team declarations should be minimised and electronic options should be explored where at all possible. Thorough hand washing with soap and/or hand-sanitiser, should be **regularly** undertaken by all during an event/competition

Section 3 – FACTS Guidance

3.0 FACTS Guidance

Please follow the FACTS Guidance given below from the Scottish Government

It's everyone's responsibility

During Phase 3, the various changes that are due to come into effect will result in larger numbers of people moving around and coming together across a variety of settings and sectors, both indoors and outdoors. This will give the virus more opportunities to spread. There is a risk of outbreaks and while we should strive to avoid them, we must also prepare for them and our Test & Protect system will help us to contain them. Staying safe and keeping others safe is as important as ever which is why, for example, we have made face coverings mandatory on public transport and in shops. And it is especially important to be considerate of people whose health conditions mean that they haven't been able to enjoy the easing of restrictions that the rest of the population has benefited from.

To prevent spread of the virus we should all follow the FACTS. It is the sum of our individual actions, our collective endeavour, that is suppressing the virus.

FACTS:

- Face coverings.
- Avoid crowded places.
- Clean hands regularly.
- Two metre distance.
- Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms.



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

CORONAVIRUS
STAY SAFE
PROTECT OTHERS
SAVE LIVES

NHS
SCOTLAND

Section 4 - Disclaimer

4.0 Disclaimer

When referring to any documents and associated attachments in this guidance, please note the following:

1. Reliance upon the guidance or use of the content of this website will constitute your acceptance of this disclaimer.
2. The term guidance should be taken to imply the standards and best practice solutions that are acceptable to Scottish Swimming.
3. The documents and any associated drawing material are intended for information only.

4. The content of this guidance is considered by Scottish Swimming to be correct at the time of publication. Amendments, alterations and updates of documents and drawings may take place from time to time and clubs should review at the time of use to ensure the most up to-date versions are being referred to and satisfy themselves that there has been no change in position.
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9. The content of this guidance does not constitute specific advice to clubs; this is a guide and the information should help clubs make their own decisions in due course. We recommend that you obtain professional specialist technical and legal advice before taking, or refraining from, any action on the basis of information contained in this note.
10. Clubs should continue to check information published by the Scottish Government and **sportscotland** after reading this guidance.

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