



Golf and Living with COVID-19
in the Republic of Ireland





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The following guidance applies to all golf club activities in accordance with the Republic of Ireland's government plan *COVID-19: Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting*.

The phased and gradual reopening of society is currently happening and from October 22 a number of restrictions will be lifted and replaced by guidance and advice to enable us to work together to protect ourselves to the fullest extent possible.

Despite the removal of a number of formal restrictions, it is recommended that all club officials and members familiarise themselves with the best practice guidance in this document and continue to play their part in ensuring our sport remains open and accessible on an ongoing basis.

General Guidance For Golf Clubs

Best practice measures Golf Clubs should consider adopting/continuing are:

Off Course Measures

- Face coverings **MUST** still be worn in indoor retail settings including pro shops.
- Tee times should continue to be booked in advance online or over the telephone. Encourage members to download the Government COVID-19 Tracker App
- Ensure hand sanitizer is available in prominent locations around the Golf Club and Golf Course.
- Ensure indoor spaces are well ventilated. Further expanded details on ventilation can be found [HERE](#).
- Ensure high communal touch points such as computer terminals are regularly cleaned and sanitised. Ensure locker rooms and toilet facilities are regularly cleaned and sanitised.
- Ensure risk assessments are updated when COVID-19 preventative measures are changed or updated.
- Consider if activities or events can be held outdoors or remotely.
- Retain the Club Covid Officer role to ensure best practice measures are being adopted where feasible.
- Consider retaining the pod system for any group activity and ensure participants names are recorded and kept for a period of 6 weeks. Please note the changes to contract tracing and testing for children aged 3-13 years, which can be found [HERE](#).



MOVING FORWARD

Since the emergence of COVID-19, Golf Clubs have developed and implemented a wide range of protocols and protective measures to limit the transmission of virus and ensure the safety of participants, volunteers, staff and spectators.

As we enter this new phase of the COVID-19 recovery, Sport Ireland and the Expert Group on Sport have provided advice stating that it would be prudent, particularly over the Winter period, that sporting organisations including Golf Clubs, maintain the various governance and oversight structures that were put in place during the pandemic.

Golf Course Measures:

- [CLICK HERE](#) for measures which can be taken for activities accepted for handicap purposes.
- Clubs can choose starting intervals on their timesheets however are strongly advised to consider The R&A Pace of Play manual on starting intervals and maintain as wide a starting interval as possible.
- Where golf buggies are available, they should continue to be sanitised between group usage. Where buggies are being shared, the use of appropriate face coverings is encouraged.
- On Course furniture, bins and divot bags can all be reintroduced to the course, they should be regularly cleaned and sanitised.
- Golf Clubs may reintroduce standard flagsticks and hole depths, removing modifications previously introduced. Where a Golf Club removes modifications, the standard rules of golf for the flagstick should be reintroduced (see Rules 13.2 and 13.3 in particular). Where a Golf Club reintroduces conventional flagsticks, a strong and renewed emphasis on hand-washing both before and after play must be reinforced. Hand sanitisers should be available at entry and exit points to the course. Only one player should handle the flagstick on each hole. Should a Golf Club wish to continue to persist with COVID-related modifications, this would be permissible as The R&A are continuing at this time to make the COVID-19 Rules of Golf available.
- Bunker rakes may be reintroduced to the course. Where golf clubs reintroduce bunker rakes, the application of a local rule permitted placing within a bunker is no longer permitted. Should a Golf Club wish to continue with bunker rakes removed, they may do so and may continue to apply such a local rule for handicapping purposes. Only one player should handle the rake where more than one player's ball is played from a bunker.



General Guidance For Golfers

As we enter this new phase of the recovery, we will need to continue to monitor the ongoing risk from COVID-19 and take steps individually and collectively in our everyday lives to keep this risk under control.

Best practice measures all players should adhere to are:

- If you have a cold or any symptoms of COVID-19 you should stay away from the golf course and Clubhouse and follow public health guidance available [HERE](#)
- Ensure you use hand sanitiser after each hole following handling of the flagstick and/or rake.
- Ensure that you have enough golf balls, markers, tees to avoid having to exchange equipment with others. Where there is any sharing of equipment, players are advised to use hand sanitizer between users.
- Download the Government COVID-19 Tracker App

Other Resources:

- Guidance on playing rounds and submitting Acceptable Scores for handicapping purposes [HERE](#)
- FAQs - Flagsticks and Hole Depth Guidance [HERE](#)
- Sport Ireland Return Guidance October 2021 [HERE](#)
- gov.ie - Public health measures that will come into place in October [HERE](#)

