



# A Practical Guide for Clubs **Returning to Athletics** following the Covid-19 Restrictions during **Phase 3** of the Roadmap for Reopening Society





# Phase 3

**Return to Athletics**  
**Always follow the Government Guidelines of**  
**Good Hand Hygiene – Respiratory Etiquette – Social Distancing**  
**Limiting our social interactions is crucial to preventing the spread of**  
**the virus. We must continue to act responsibly and work together.**

The guidelines in this document relate to Phase 3 of the Irish Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business.

## **Key Notes for this phase:**

1. Permits sporting activity in outdoor public sports amenities for all ages.
2. Permits people to engage in outdoor sporting and fitness activities, either individually or in a group.
3. Permits individuals to travel anywhere on the island of Ireland.
4. If you feel unwell do not present to the Club.
5. If you are recovering from Covid19 seek medical advice prior to returning to train.
6. Permits outdoor social gathering for groups of up to 200 people and indoor gatherings of up to 50 people. Note these numbers include all people present at any gathering including athletes, coaches, officials and spectators.

## **Safe every step of the way**

- |                      |                         |                             |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Safety Officer    | 4. Check-in Protocol    | 7. Running/Jumping/Throwing |
| 2. Club Access       | 5. Clubhouse Facilities | 8. Coaching                 |
| 3. Booking & Arrival | 6. Track/Field          | 9. Getting Home Safely      |



We know that athletics provides great mental and physical health benefits for our society. We have a duty of care to ensure that our athletics clubs ensure that we operate within a safe environment.

This practical guide, prepared by our team in consultation with medical experts and in line with Government Guidelines, outlines the robust measures Athletics Ireland strongly recommend clubs to implement and maintain to help safeguard all members during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will allow all of us to get back to training safely, improving the wellbeing of members across the country.

The measures, which relate to Phase 3 of the Roadmap for Reopening Irish Society and Business, cover each step of the journey from home to the club gate and back home again.

These measures should be in place seven days a week and until further notice.

Our measures and procedures are under constant review and updated as advice from government, health authorities and governing bodies evolves in line with the gradual lifting of social restrictions.

## **Educated Members and Robust Procedures**

### **I. Safety Officer**

Clubs must appoint an assigned Lead Covid Safety Officer responsible for managing issues and queries relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. This Officer should:

- Ensure indoor facilities are risk assessed and cleaned to a high standard.
- Plan the Club phase 3 return and risk assessment with the club committee.
- Should check with their insurers if any amendments to their policies are required to cover Covid19 issues.
- Ensure they review these AI protocols and that the club can comply before reopening their club.
- Ensure that the club and its members adhere to HSE / Public Health advice in all cases.
- Ensure that sufficient HSE Covid-19 information Posters are in place.
- Operate a booking system for all training, note AI have developed a bespoke booking app for our members. This will help with contact tracing if necessary. Ensure athletes understand the need for social distancing while entering and exiting the club.
- Ensure that the club maintains accurate records of who is training and when. This should include all persons and not just the one making the booking. This must be carried out for all sessions, and in the case that a parent/guardian is present in the club that must also be recorded. This will help with contact tracing if necessary.
- Be responsible for informing all members of the Covid-19 guidelines and insist on full cooperation.
- Ensure that the contact details for all members are up to date as this will assist with contact tracing should it be necessary.
- Listen to feedback and contact Athletics Ireland if there are issues not covered under these protocols.
- Ensure all athletes and coaches carry hand sanitizer and antiseptic wipes at all times.



## 2. Club Access

Access to the clubhouse should be limited to small numbers.

Club facilities should only be accessed by members.

Toilets should be open and cleaned regularly as per Club risk assessments.

To access the club property in this phase of the reopening, an athlete should:

- A parent/guardian should accompany any athlete under 18 years.
- Not have been out of the country in the last 14 days.
- Not have been around someone with symptoms of Covid-19 in the last 14 days.
- Not be in a period of self-isolation and/or cocooning under the current Health Policy Rules.
- Not be displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
- Have a pre-reserved training time.

## 3. Booking and Arrival

- Booking a time in advance is required via website or app is ideal and the AI Club booking system is available to all Clubs free of charge. This will assist should contact tracing be required subsequently.
- All athletes should ensure their club has their up-to-date contact details (phone and email).
- All athletes, and not just the athlete making the booking, should be included in the booking notes. If there is a change to who is training, it is advisable to make sure the booking is updated.
- Athletes should travel to the club alone, or only with a member of the same household.
- Ample car parking spaces should be available to ensure social distancing. If athletes must park next to another car, they should wait for the other person to exit or enter before doing so themselves.
- Athletes should arrive at the club entrance no more than 10 minutes prior to training time. It is important that athletes maintain social distancing and wait in a pre-designated waiting area that allows for social distancing.
- Athletes should observe social distancing at all times and resist the temptation to mingle.
- Athletes should arrive in training kit and change footwear at the car or at home.
- Athletes should sanitize their hands prior to attending the club.

## 4. Check-in Protocol

- Two-metre queue markers should be in place at any single-entry point.
- Advise all athletes to complete the covid health screening questionnaire prior to training.

## 5. Clubhouse Facilities

- Clubhouse access is for members only/authorized users and should be limited.
- Toilets should be opened in this phase and cleaned regularly.
- Changing rooms and function rooms where relevant can open during this Phase of reopening.
- Athletes must provide their own equipment where possible.



## 6. Track/Field

- Training groups should be controlled and managed to ensure social distancing is maintained as much as possible. More than one group can train onsite with appropriate social distancing e.g. long jump group and track group.
- Athletes should enter the area one at a time as and when directed.
- Entrances / Gates to clubs should remain open, if safe to do so, perhaps tied back to prevent use of handles.
- Rubbish bins should be removed, and all items should be taken home afterwards.
- Any athletes(s) repeatedly not following the club directives should be asked to leave the club.
- Any spectators present during this phase should remain socially distanced at all times.
- Parents supervising children should be limited to one and maintain ample distance from the training activity if staying on site.

## 7. Running/Jumping/Throwing

- Physical distancing should be observed throughout the period of training if possible.
- Athletes must refrain from handshakes and high fives.
- Equipment such as towels, food, and drink must not be exchanged between athletes.
- Athletes should avoid touching their face after handling equipment.
- Athletes should bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer and antiseptic wipes to keep with them at all times. This is to prevent the virus spreading if present.
- Athletes should remain apart from other athletes when taking a break.



## 8. On the Track/Field – Coaching

- Coaches should prepare and present a Risk Assessment document and get approval to coach from the Lead Club Safety Officer.
- Coaching sessions should be booked and recorded.
- Coaches must brief their athletes and/or their parents of the protocols that should be followed in advance of the session.
- Coaching must only be provided to club members or approved users.
- Coaches must ensure an athlete has registered their contact details with the club.
- Coaches should limit the use of equipment such as cones, hurdles etc.
- Do not let athletes manipulate the practice equipment. Coaches should take charge of picking up the equipment.
- Coaches to wear latex gloves if handling any equipment is required.
- Users of athletics tracks and similar facilities adhering to the basics of track etiquette and groups cooperating to avoid situations where social distancing could be compromised.
- All track lanes can now be used. However, if possible, try to maintain social distances through the strategies below.
- For endurance sessions:
  - Athletes running single file unless there is an empty space where they can ideally leave greater than 2m between them.
  - Athletes ideally running with greater than 2m between themselves and the next runner. This might, for example, mean overtaking in lane 3 to pass an athlete running in lane one on a track.
  - Athletes starting intervals in approximate order of ability with the fastest athlete starting first to minimize overtaking.

## 9. Getting Home Safely

- Once training has finished athletes must leave the premises promptly, sanitizing their hands on the way out.
- Clubs must make provision for thorough cleaning of all accessible areas and ensuring that all “touch areas” are cleaned thoroughly daily as per the Club risk assessment.
- If an athlete becomes unwell after training, they should first contact their GP and read the HSE guidelines and then inform their club. The club should contact the HSE and follow the advice provided to them on the next steps.



**Athletic Association of Ireland,  
Unit 19, Northwood Court,  
Northwood Business Campus,  
Santry, Dublin 9.**

Email: [admin@athleticsireland.ie](mailto:admin@athleticsireland.ie)  
[www.athleticsireland.ie](http://www.athleticsireland.ie)

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