



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





Phase I

Return to Restricted Training Always follow the Government Guidelines of Good Hand Hygiene – Respiratory Etiquette – Social Distancing

The guidelines in this document relate to Phase 1 of the Irish Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business.

This phase:

1. Permits sporting activity in open outdoor public sports amenities where social distancing can be maintained
2. Permits people to engage in outdoor sporting and fitness activities, either individually or in very small groups (maximum 4 people), where social distancing can be maintained and where there is no contact
3. Permits those individuals living within a 5 km radius of their club to attend

Safe every step of the way

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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 1 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**



1. Safety Officer

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

- Ensure indoor facilities are not utilized during this phase of reopening.
- Plan the club return to operation 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 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. 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

In the initial period following a club's reopening, access to the clubhouse should be limited to committee members only and only for emergency access by athletes.

Club facilities should only be accessed by members.

Children under 13 years should not attend the club during phase 1.

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

- Be a current member & a minimum of 13 years of age.
- A parent/guardian must 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.
- Live within a 5km radius of the club.
- Have a pre-reserved training time.
- Be under 70 years of Age.



3. Booking and Arrival

- Booking a time in advance is required, preferably via a booking system, website, app, or phone. 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 5 minutes prior to the reserved 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.
- Athletes should ensure that they utilize toilet facilities in their own home prior to arriving at the club as club toilets will not be accessible.

4. Check-in Protocol

- Two-metre queue markers should be in place at any single-entry point.

5. Clubhouse Facilities

- Clubhouse access for members should only be in emergencies.
- Toilets should not be opened in this phase.
- Changing rooms, function rooms and where relevant, the club bar will remain closed 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 at all times.
- 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.
- There should be no spectators present during this phase of reopening.
- Parents supervising children should be limited to one and maintain ample distance from the training activity.

7. Running/Jumping/Throwing

- Physical distancing should be observed throughout the period of training.
- 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 ideally 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 must 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 Club Safety Officer.
- Only coaching of up to three athletes should take place during this phase of the reopening, the only exception being where athletes are from the same household.
- 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. This might include limiting the total number of people on the track at any one time and working together to organise how the space is used. For example, an endurance group using lanes 1-3 while a sprints group used 5-8.
- For endurance sessions:
 - Athletes running single file unless there is an empty space where they can leave 2m between them.
 - Athletes running with 2m between them and the next runner, including when overtaking. 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 minimise 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.
- If an athlete becomes unwell after training, they should first contact their GP/HSE and then inform their club. The club should contact the HSE and follow the advice provided to them on the next steps.



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