



# COVID-19

Phase 3 (ROI) / Step 4 (NI)

## Safe Return to Playing Directives

# A GUIDE FOR CLUBS



# RETURN TO PLAY - A GUIDE FOR CLUBS

## PHASE 3 (ROI) / STEP 4 (NI)

Sport provides great mental and physical health benefits for our society, and cricket is no exception. However, we all have a duty of care to ensure that our cricket clubs operate within a safe environment.

This practical guide for clubs has been developed in consultation with medical experts and in line with both ROI and NI Executive Government Guidelines. It outlines the robust measures Cricket Ireland and the Provincial Unions 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 playing safely, improving the wellbeing of members across Ireland.

The guidelines in this document relate to Phase 3 of the Irish Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Step 4 of the Northern Ireland Executive Approach to Decision Making.

The key to success will be the collective approach to compliance with the protocols, and there is no obligation for clubs to re-open if they feel they cannot meet their health and safety obligations. Competition should be on an opt-in basis with participants taking personal responsibility to decide whether they are happy to return.

***As always, follow the Government Guidelines of:  
Good Hand Hygiene - Respiratory Etiquette - Social Distancing.***

The infographic consists of six circular icons arranged in two rows of three, each with a corresponding text label below it. The top row includes: 1. An icon of hands being washed with water droplets, labeled 'Wash your hands'. 2. An icon of a person coughing into their elbow, labeled 'Cover mouth if coughing or sneezing'. 3. An icon of a hand touching a face with a diagonal line through it, labeled 'Avoid touching your face'. The bottom row includes: 4. An icon of a spray bottle, labeled 'Keep surfaces clean'. 5. An icon of two hands shaking, labeled 'Stop shaking hands and hugging'. 6. An icon of two people standing with a double-headed arrow between them labeled '2m', labeled 'Keep a safe distance'.

## Safe Return to Playing Directives – A Guide for Clubs

### Safe every step of the way:

There are several risks specific to the sport of Cricket which must be considered alongside the general physical exercise guidance issued by national governments. Cricket is a non-contact team sport and so the risks and exposure to COVID-19 may differ from full contact team sports. In particular:

- Cricket requires players to be in close proximity at times over long durations (T20: 3+ hrs, 50 Over: 7+ hours) and involves the use of shared facilities.
- Should a team member or opponent develop any COVID-19 symptoms or be found to develop an infection, participants will require isolation and possible testing as they are most likely to have been in close contact.
- Although Cricket is not a contact sport, the cricket ball is a potential transmission medium and rules should be applied around the management of the ball, in line with ICC directives (e.g. no use of saliva to shine the ball).
- On-field behaviour that includes celebrations with body contact, and shared use of drink bottles, towels and equipment can pose a risk in cricket and should be strongly discouraged. Players should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own items (sunglasses, cap, jumpers, towels etc.) and instructed against handing over any items to umpires or teammates.
- Participants, in particular umpires, scorers, match referees and support staff, may be considered to be vulnerable individuals that are at higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19. This includes older individuals (approx. 60+) and people of any age with underlying medical conditions such as cardiac, kidney, diabetes, obesity, weak innate immunity, etc.
- Cricket is officiated by umpires on the field of play and their health and well-being needs to be taken into full consideration as they spend the greatest amount of time in close proximity to players.

Due to the risks outlined above, T20 shall be the longest format of cricket played at club level until further notice. This decision is underpinned by the belief, led by the research, that shorter duration activity provides less risk than longer duration activity.

Government guidelines in both Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland recommend 2 metres social distancing. There has been easing to this guidance in Northern Ireland down to 1 metre in instances where 2 metres is not possible.

Government guidelines will continue to be reviewed throughout the Return to Play implementation phase and our protocols will be updated accordingly.

### The following measures must be in place seven days a week and until further notice:

- |                               |                                    |                               |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1. Club C-19 Committee</b> | <b>4. Protocols for Match Days</b> | <b>7. Off-field</b>           |
| <b>2. Club/Venue Access</b>   | <b>5. Clubhouse Facilities</b>     | <b>8. Getting Home Safely</b> |
| <b>3. Booking and Arrival</b> | <b>6. On the Field of Play</b>     |                               |

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

The following information outlines the specific requirements relating to each measure.

## 1. Club COVID-19 Committee

Your Club COVID-19 Committee must remain in operation throughout the Return to Play implementation phases and must maintain the protocols as outlined in the Safe Return to Training Protocols (SRTTP).

## 2. Club/Venue Access

- Protocols for cleaning clubhouse facilities should be in place prior to opening and during operating hours.
- Access to the clubhouse should be restricted and use should be in line with government guidance.
- It is recommended that changing rooms remain closed to users.
- Toilets must be open for use and the club must adhere to strict cleaning protocols and utmost care must take place when using the toilet facilities.
- A sanitation procedure for the club/venue and its facilities must be in place between use/bookings.
- Children who are playing cricket can be dropped to games.
- Children who are spectators should always be supervised by a parent/guardian.
- The COVID-19 Safety Officer or a representative of the COVID-19 Safety Committee (or an appropriately trained club representative responsible for adherence to these protocols) must be on-site during the hours that the outdoor facilities are open for use.
- Closed signs should be displayed when facilities are not open (including where a club/venue does not wish to or is not ready to reopen) to deter use by general public, particularly where there is open access.
- Club/venue bars that are open must operate within the government guidelines for hospitality.

### To access club/venue facilities, an individual/groups should:

- Be a current member of the club/visiting member of another club.
- Be a parent/guardian accompanying a child/children.
- Be a player, team official, match official or operations staff.
- 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 HSE (ROI)/HSC (NI) rules.
- Not be displaying COVID-19 symptoms.

If you are over 70 or medically vulnerable, please use your judgement to decide how best to apply the health guidance as provided by your government and whether or not you should be in attendance at a club facility.

### 3. Booking and Arrival

All booking and arrival protocols for training and arriving on site from the SRTTP will remain in place and must be adhered to.

All players, match officials and spectators must be checked-in prior to or on arrival on site, this is to support the management with contact tracing, should it be necessary.

### 4. Protocols for Match Days

- The home club/team must make sure that the facilities are clean, in line with facility preparation and maintenance procedures outlined above.
- All players/scorers are to report to a team manager/captain or appropriate representative who must report to their Club CSO (or can report directly to their CSO) that they do not have COVID-19 symptoms before they leave the house to travel to the game.
- A comprehensive effort should be made by every participating team to ensure that their team is COVID-19 free.
- The visiting team's CSO must confirm with the home CSO that their team is safe to travel and proceed with the game on the morning of that game.
- Umpires must confirm with the home club's CSO prior to arrival that they do not have COVID-19 symptoms before they leave the house to travel.
- Players are to travel in their kit and bring their own sunscreen, water and provisions.
- The home Club CSO or an appropriate club representative is to be available to advise any visiting team of hygiene procedures and locations of sanitisation stations and to answer any questions regarding the protocols at that specific facility.
- All individuals are to practice hygiene protocols and wash their hands immediately on arrival.
- Social distancing should still be maintained throughout.
- Players should use their own warm-up equipment and restrict sharing of equipment.
- Clubs should communicate their protocols in relation to spectators to their members and the opposition club, and ensure that they have a system in place for contact tracing of spectators.

### 5. Clubhouse Facilities

- Clubhouse access should be limited and it is recommended that its indoor facilities are only used in case of emergency.
- In the event of a medical emergency call the Emergency Services.

- First Aid should only be administered by an appropriately trained individual. First aiders should use a level of judgement that does not put themselves at risk of coming into contact with COVID-19 or put themselves in any other danger. When possible, PPE covering the hands, face and eyes should be worn. Information on First Aid during COVID-19 is available here **NI information link:** <https://www.resus.org.uk/covid-19-resources/covid-19-resources-general-public/resuscitation-council-uk-statement-covid-19/> **ROI information link:** [https://hse.drsteevenslibrary.ie/ld.php?content\\_id=32851327](https://hse.drsteevenslibrary.ie/ld.php?content_id=32851327)
- Changing rooms and all other Clubhouse communal areas such as showers, tearooms etc. should remain heavily restricted/closed in the initial return to minimise risk. Clubs must adhere to strict cleaning protocols and touch points should be wiped down on a regular basis. Social distancing must always be maintained.
- Toilet facilities must be open on match days. Clubs must adhere to strict cleaning protocols and utmost care must take place when using the toilet facilities.
- Disposal of cleaning materials/wipes and other materials must be done so in a safe manner. If biohazard waste bags are not available all materials must be double bagged and sealed for disposal.
- All players/coaches/match officials/individuals must take their own rubbish home with them when leaving the facilities.
- Careful consideration should be given to people management (players, coaches and officials) in the event of wet weather. Social distancing must always be maintained. If players/coaches or officials are seeking shelter consideration should be given to the numbers that can be accommodated safely indoors. Alternative options could be that participants return to their own cars, or having their own wet weather gear.
- Some grounds may be able to provide tents or marquees where players and match officials may sit or take shelter from the weather, however social distancing must be observed at all times.

## 6. On the Field of Play

- Normal greeting and convention of handshakes must be dispensed with including at the pre-match toss, or at the conclusion of the match.
- Prior to the toss the team sheets should be visibly displayed for opposing captains, umpires and scorers. Every attempt to limit sharing/touching team sheets should be made.
- At the toss only the umpire should use and touch the coin. The away captain should call as usual from a distance.
- Access to the field of play should be coordinated to maintain social distance. Where possible, there should be two separate points of entry for each team.
- Players must not share any items of equipment such as gloves, helmets or pads, including short leg pads.
- Fielders must always stand 2 metres away from each other, including slip fielders.
- Minimise contact with the ball throughout the game and encourage balls to be returned directly to the bowler rather than passing it around the field.
- The use of saliva or sweat in order to work on or manage the ball is prohibited.
- Bowlers should consider adopting a process to manage his/her items (caps, sunglasses, sweaters).
- Umpires should allow bowlers time to remove items of clothing and apparel from the pitch – it should not impinge the over rate.

- Batters must social distance 2m at all times, including when meeting between overs and between wickets.
- Batters must run either side of the wicket to avoid any physical contact.
- Batters must step away from their wicket in between balls if the wicket-keeper is standing-up to help reduce the amount of time in close proximity.
- Regular hand sanitising after contact with the ball should take place, hand sanitiser can be placed around the boundary or wipes carried on person.
- Do not touch eyes, nose, and mouth after making contact with the ball.
- Umpires may choose to wear face coverings, though the practicalities of being an umpire, and communicating on a regular basis may result in the misuse of face coverings e.g. regular touching.
- Umpires must have sanitiser and alcohol wipes on their person for their own use and regularly sanitise.
- Players and umpires should maintain social distancing on the field of play and that includes no handing over of player items (cap, towels, sunglasses, jumpers) to the umpire or teammates.
- Players should also avoid any unnecessary body contact on the field of play.
- Wicket-keepers should walk away from the stumps between balls to maximise social distancing.
- Spitting is prohibited.
- On pitch sanctions should be in place for use of saliva, spitting or contravening social distancing protocols – with a team warning, final warning, 5 penalty runs, and if behaviour persists – the player can be asked to leave the field of play, and cannot be replaced.
- All match officials including scorers must always maintain the 2 metres social distancing protocol.
- Scorers must be provided a safe and sanitised area where they can score and maintain social distancing.
- DLS sheets should be printed at the interval in the usual way and should be visibly displayed for opposing captains, umpires and scorers. Every attempt to limit sharing/touching team sheets should be made.
- Spectators are to be encouraged not to field a ball that is hit for a boundary. The ball should be collected by a member of the fielding team.

### **In between innings:**

- Players and Match Officials must wash their hands.
- Tea rooms must not be utilised between innings.
- Players/Match Officials must bring their own food/drinks to consume.
- Food and drink must not be shared.
- Social distancing must be maintained at all times.

## 7. Off-field

- All participants must minimise the use of communal facilities.
- Players should shower at home.
- Social distancing must be maintained at all times and doors to communal facilities (i.e. main entrance door to toilet area) should be left open where possible, whilst ensuring appropriate safeguarding measures are upheld, to avoid contact with door handles.
- In relation to spectators, clubs must consider restrictions and additional safety measures that will need to be implemented.
- It is the role of the CSO to ensure that the number of players and spectators on-site does not exceed the recommended government guidance.
- Spectators must not field a ball that is hit for a boundary. The ball must be collected by a member of the fielding team.
- Club bars that are open must operate within the government guidelines for hospitality.
- Members and spectators have a responsibility to maintain social distancing and act in accordance with health advice at all times.

## 8. Getting Home Safely

- Once the match has finished players/officials must promptly wash their hands, if possible, or sanitise their hands on the way off the field using sanitiser provided.
- If players/officials are remaining on club premises after the match they have a responsibility to act in accordance with all social distancing and health advice.
- The CSO must ensure that members/visitors are maintaining and adhering to social distancing rules.
- Clubs must make provision for a thorough cleaning of accessible areas and ensure that all “touch areas” are cleaned thoroughly and often.
- If any player/coach/member or visitor becomes unwell after being at the facility they must first contact their GP/HSE (ROI)/HSC (NI) and then inform their club. The club must contact the HSE (ROI)/HSC (NI) and follow the advice provided to them on the next steps. They must also inform their local Provincial Union and Cricket Ireland of the suspected or positive case.