



Water Safety Ireland

Return to Lifesaving Sport

A Guide for Water Safety Area Committees &
Training Centres

Water Safety Ireland Sports Commission

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Purpose

These Return to lifesaving sport protocols have been designed to support water safety area committees (WSAC), training centres, coaches, competitors and parents to put measures in place that will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 while participating in lifesaving sport training following the temporary suspension of all activities during the worst phases of the current pandemic. These protocols have been designed for use following the easing of current restrictions to allow underage athletes return to training.

These protocols are to be used by all water safety area committees to adapt their current procedures and practices to comply fully with the COVID-19 related public health protection measures identified as necessary by the HSE.

It sets out in very clear terms for all parties the steps that they must take before recommencing training sessions or allowing the use of committee owned equipment. These protocols have been developed following a review of the Government & HSE guidelines and incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures WSAC's and competitors need to address may also change. Therefore, it should be noted that the attached details are non-exhaustive and are also subject to change. This is a living document and all parties should however keep up to date with the latest measures introduced by Government and any advice issued as a result.

Adherence to this protocol will only be achieved if all parties have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this protocol in each training venue. A collaborative approach to the implementation of the protocol is essential to achieve success and maximum buy-in.

Unannounced spot checks on training session will be carried out by a Water Safety Ireland officials and any breaches of these protocols will result in the immediate stoppage of all training sessions in the county for the remainder of the season.

Roles & Responsibilities

Water Safety Area Committee

- WSAC's planning to recommence training sessions or allowing members to use lifesaving sport equipment, must forward to sport@iws.ie a written plan (SOP) how these protocols will be implemented locally, to be approved by the sports commission prior to commencing.
- Each WSAC must appoint an assigned safety officer responsible for managing issues and queries relating to the Covid19 pandemic and ensuring the protocols are followed.

Safety Officer

- Plan the recommencement of lifesaving sport in co-operation with the WSAC, The Sports Officer and Head Coach.
- Ensure they review these protocols in detail and that the WSAC/Training centre can comply before commencing activities.
- Ensure all members and parents are fully aware of and adhere to HSE/Public Health advice.
- Ensure that sufficient HSE Covid-19 information posters are in place in any buildings/storage used.
- Ensure there is hand sanitiser & disinfectant spray available at all times.
- If informed of any possible contact during a session of a person suspected or positively diagnosed with Covid-19, to work with the HSE and provide all the details required for contact tracing.
- **Ensure everyone attending the session resides within the government guidelines at that time.**

Sports Officer

- Co-operate with safety officer and ensure all guidelines and protocols are in place before organising a training session
- Co-ordinate with all coaches & assistant coaches to agree on number of coaches and assistants to be present at training session in order to calculate the number of participants allowed to attend.
- Operate a fair booking system to allow participants to book a place at the training session and so as to control the number of participants allowed to attend. Ensure members are aware that they cannot attend without booking a place

- Ensure all contact details for members and guardians are correct and up to date. This is vital for contact tracing if necessary.
- Ensure a record of everyone present before, during or after the session is recorded, this includes any parent/guardians that is present for some reason. This will help with contact tracing if necessary.
- Ensure all participant are aware to clearly mark all their own equipment, clothing, water bottles etc. and do not share these with others.
- If informed by anyone about developing symptoms or having tested positive either during or after a session that you inform the safety officer and ensure a record of all training sessions attended by the person is supplied to the safety officer.

Coaches

- To attend all sessions that you have agreed to and if this is not possible to ensure to notify the sports officer at the earliest moment possible.
- Ensure all your participants are aware of and have complied with the protocols
- Brief all participants on the session plan and how each activity will take place under the new guidelines
- Ensure the session is designed to allow for safe social distancing.
- To monitor all participants and be aware of any who develop any possible symptoms during the session.
- **Ensure everyone attending the session resides within the government guidelines at that time.**

Athletes

- Follow all the protocols, guidelines and instructions given to you
- During activities to be conscious of others around you and maintain the social distancing
- Clearly identify your own equipment, clothing, water bottles etc and do not share.
- Refrain from body contact such as handshakes, high fives, or hugs with fellow participants
- Athletes should ideally bring a small bottle of hand sanitiser to have with them during the session
- Athletes must remain apart from other athletes during breaks
- **Ensure everyone attending the session resides within the government guidelines at that time.**

Everyone Attending the Session

- Be a current member or parent/guardian of a participant.
- Ensure you are fully aware of these protocols and any additional protocols implemented locally.
- Ensure you follow the HSE & Government guidelines at all times
- Only travel to the session with persons from your own household.
- Only attend sessions that you have pre-booked a place or have been organised to volunteer at by the sports officer
- Only arrive 10mins prior to the session to prepare and leave promptly after the session has finished, do not loiter around to chat.
- Ensure that a record of your attendance has been taken at the start of the session from the designated recorder and that your contact details are correct
- Ensure you remain the required social distancing distance (currently 2 Metres) from everyone else in attendance at all times.
- **Not have been out of the country in the last 14 days.**
- Not have been in close contact with someone with symptoms of Covid-19 in the last 14 days
- Not be displaying any of the symptoms of Covid-19
- Not be in a period of self-isolation and/or cocooning under the current health policy rules
- If you become unwell or start to display symptoms of Covid-19 during a session that you immediately inform the sports officer or designated recorder and leave the venue, contacting your GP straight away.
- If you start to display symptoms of Covid-19 or test positive for it within 14 days after attending any training sessions that you inform the sports officer of this and details about any training sessions you attended in the previous 14 days.
- **Ensure everyone attending the session resides within the government guidelines at that time.**

General Protocols

Equipment Storage Facilities/Buildings/Changing Facilities

Use of any facilities is currently not permitted, and when allowed, use is only permitted under the following guidelines

- Only members are allowed to enter
- Numbers are to be restricted to allow for social distancing
- Ensure all areas are regularly cleaned and sanitised pay particular attention to places where hands come into contact.
- Ensure hand sanitiser is readily available & Covid-19 signage/posters or displayed
- Any food or beverage preparation is forbidden unless carried out in a licenced restaurant/café by a professional. (i.e. no Tea & Biscuits)

Equipment

Only privately owned equipment to be used by the owners, and not to be shared with others. Use of area committee/training centre owned equipment, when allowed, will only be under the following guidelines.

- All equipment required for the session is to be cleaned and sanitiser prior, during and after the session.
- Where possible boards/skis/tubes/fins should be assigned to one participant for the duration of the session.
- Where equipment sharing is necessary the equipment must be fully sanitised with disinfectant between each use.
- Storage and removal from storage of equipment should be done one person at a time

Training Sessions

- Numbers are to be limited and grouped to the age groups and the ratios below, with the groups to remain the same throughout the session and if possible, for all sessions going forward. **(There are to be no exceptions to max numbers for any reason)**

	Ratio	Group Size
	15:1	15 participants in one pod

*

- **More than** one group can train at the same time in the same venue so long as an appropriate distance is allowed between the groups to ensure no cross over (ideally 10 metres between each groups area) and start finish times of the sessions are staggered.
- Where additional assistants are required for safety reasons in the water these assistants are to remain separate from the groups and refrain from any interaction as much as possible unless required for safety reasons.
- The starts of any event in the water or land should be staggered by ability with the most competent going first, to avoid the need to overtake and to allow for the 2-metre social distancing during the event.
- When finishing an event, the participants should remove themselves from the finishing area promptly to allow space for the next person to cross the line.
- The use of team events, rescues, flags, and sprints in a training session are not allowed, with training only in individual swimming, board, ski & Jogging/running in single file or 2metres apart horizontally at all times allowed.
- Sea training should not take place during large swells or unsafe conditions to avoid the requirement of a contact rescue should something go wrong.
- Less competent swimmers should swim with a rescue tube at all times for added safety.

Further Information

- Health & Safety Authority: www.hsa.ie
- Health Service Executive: www.hse.ie
- Irish Government: www.gov.ie
- World Health Organisation (WHO): www.who.int