



FAI SAFER RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

ADULT AMATEUR & UNDERAGE FOOTBALL
INCLUDING UNDERAGE NATIONAL LEAGUES



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1 - INTRODUCTION

- This Protocol must be followed in conjunction with the updated FAI Safer Return to Training Protocol
- The principles of risk mitigation are identical for training and for playing, please refer to the updated FAI Safer Return to Training Protocol
- The primary aim is to reduce the risk of transmissibility of the COVID-19 virus to as low a level as possible
- In so doing, we will protect the Health and Safety of our players, coaches, match officials, parents, guardians, volunteers, administrators and spectators
- This Protocol must be utilised in line with all other FAI policy documents including FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy



2 - KEY POINTS

Monday, June 29th

- Clubs permitted to return to full contact training from this date, including training games between teams from the same club, in accordance with Updated FAI Safer Return to Training Protocol 2nd Edition

Saturday, July 11th

- Clubs permitted to return to playing friendly games from this date, in accordance with FAI Safer Return to Play Protocol

Saturday, July 18th

- Clubs permitted to return to playing competitive matches from this date, in accordance with FAI Safer Return to Play Protocol

Friday, August 21st

- No spectators are permitted at any match under the jurisdiction of the FAI

Thursday, September 17th

- FAI adopts new Government guidelines for sport under the 'Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19' programme and updates FAI Safer Return to Training and FAI Safer Return to Play Protocols



3 - BEFORE THE GAME

- A Risk Assessment of the venue must be carried out - [FAI Risk Assessment Template](#)
- All equipment - including goalposts - must be sanitised before and after every game.
- Do not attend the game venue if you are unwell, stay at home and contact your GP if you have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19
- The symptoms include:
 1. Temperature of 38C or greater
 2. Sudden onset of coughing or shortness of breath
 3. Sudden loss of the sense of taste or smell



4 - ARRIVING FOR THE GAME

- Teams should arrive as close to kick-off time as is feasible
- All players should travel to games in line with HSE Guidelines - [HSE Guidelines on Travel](#)
- Travel in your gear
- Bring your own labelled food and water in a sealed plastic bag
- On arrival, observe and obey the COVID-19 signage
- Players and Coaches should observe 2 metres social distancing where possible (warm-ups, meetings, team-talks)
- No hand greetings are permitted (handshakes, fist pumps, high fives)
- A parent or guardian is allowed to accompany any player under the age of 18 to a match and may remain at the venue for the duration of the match
- Any parent or guardian attending a game must strictly observe 2 metres social distancing at all times
- Attendances at all matches outside Dublin must adhere to the new Level 2 Government guidelines published on Tuesday, September 15th, as follows:
 - Up to 100 spectators outdoors and 50 spectators indoors in addition to all those essential to the staging of the fixture including players, coaches, match officials, home team Compliance Officer, medical support staff, grounds maintenance staff, club Children's Officer, club Liaison Officer/representative for each team, FAI representative, League representative, tournament organiser, accredited media
 - Up to 200 for outdoor stadiums or other fixed outdoor venues with a minimum accredited capacity of 5,000 in addition to all those essential to the staging of the fixture as listed above
 - Attendances at matches in Dublin are limited at up to 100 spectators outdoors and 50 spectators indoors for all stadia until further notice as per current Government guidelines



5 - WARM-UP FOR THE GAME

- Observe social distancing at all times where possible (pre-match activities)
- Practice good coughing and sneezing etiquette
- No hand greetings are permitted (handshakes, fist pumps, high fives)
- Only consume liquids and food from your own labelled supplies
- Use hand sanitizer before and after you have completed the warm-up
- No spitting is permitted
- Pre-game team meetings must take place on the pitch and must not last more than 10 minutes



6 - PRE KICK-OFF PROTOCOL

- The COVID-19 Compliance Officer - or a designated club member - should act as the first point of contact for the Match Officials upon arrival
- The coordination of pre-match protocol i.e. team sheet, equipment check, coin toss should be discussed and agreed upon with the Match Officials at that point



7 - DURING THE GAME

- Players and Match Officials should adhere to social distancing of 2 metres where possible (breaks in play)
- Practice good coughing and sneezing etiquette
- Use hand sanitizer at half-time and before the commencement of the second half
- No hand greetings are permitted (handshakes, fist pumps, high fives, goal celebrations)
- No spitting is permitted
- Substitutes must adhere to 2 metres social distancing during warm-ups
- Substitutes must adhere to 2 metres social distancing on the bench



8 - PLAYER/MATCH OFFICIAL WELFARE

- A Coach or Club Physiotherapist can attend to an injured Player or Match Official on the pitch
- They should wear a face mask and gloves
- A designated room – where applicable – can be used for treating an injured player
- A changing room may be used
- This room must be cleaned thoroughly before and after each match
- Touch points should be wiped down after each individual treatment session
- Physiotherapists must wear PPE - face mask, gloves and apron for prolonged treatment sessions
- These sessions must last no longer than 15 minutes
- A player/Match Official suspected of a new onset of COVID-19 must be given a face mask and be isolated from the rest of the attendees, pending contact being made with a parent/guardian (underage player) or GP (adult player)
- If a player is deemed to be very unwell, an ambulance may be called to transfer them to an emergency department



9 - AFTER THE GAME

- Players and Match Officials must adhere to social distancing of 2 metres at the final whistle and when exiting pitch and venue
- No hand greetings are permitted (handshakes, fist pumps, high fives)
- Practice good coughing and sneezing etiquette
- No spitting is permitted
- Post-game team meetings must be held outdoors and must not last more than 10 minutes
- Use hand sanitizer after the game
- Wash your hands when you get home



10 - TOILET FACILITIES

- The use of toilet facilities is permitted
- The toilet facilities must be thoroughly cleaned before and after each game
- The touch points must be cleaned after each individual use
- Adequate quantities of soap, sanitizer and paper towels must be made available
- Paper towels must be disposed of carefully after each use



11 - CHANGING ROOMS

- Changing rooms can be used but subject to 2 metres social distancing
- They must be cleaned thoroughly before and after each use
- Touch points should be wiped down after each use
- Strict 2 metres social distancing must be adhered to within the changing rooms
- If 2 metres social distancing cannot be adhered to, changing rooms **must not** be used
- Shower facilities **must not** be used until further notice



12 - CONTACT TRACING

- Contact tracing is a key component to all activities around the game
- The home team COVID-19 Compliance Officer must keep a register of ALL attendees, with the exception of the away team's details
- The away team must supply a list of all those travelling to their own COVID-19 Compliance Officer for contact tracing purposes
- The away team COVID-19 Compliance Officer must keep this list on record – there is no requirement to share this with the home team COVID-19 Compliance Officer
- Each club is responsible for providing its own COVID-19 Compliance Officer with a list of attendees for every game, home or away
- This will include name and contact details
- This register should be kept electronically and be updated continually

YOU MUST

- STAY AT HOME IF YOU ARE UNWELL AND CONTACT YOUR GP IF NECESSARY
 - ADHERE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING OF 2 METRES
 - PRACTICE GOOD HAND HYGIENE, COUGHING AND SNEEZING ETIQUETTE
 - ENSURE THE COVID-19 COMPLIANCE OFFICER HAS YOUR UP TO DATE CONTACT DETAILS
- All enquiries can be emailed to covidchecklist@fai.ie



13 - ACTIONS AROUND A SUSPECTED CASE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- **Has the player travelled with other players or staff members to games and training over the past 14 days?**
 - If the answer is Yes - The players and those he/she travelled with should stand down until test results are known and public health have completed their contact tracing process
 - If the answer is No - There is no requirement for anyone other than the player to stand down
- **Has the player socialised with other squad members over the past 14 days?**
 - If the answer is Yes - The players and those he/she travelled with should stand down until test results are known and public health have completed their contact tracing process
 - If the answer is No - There is no requirement for anyone other than the player to stand down
- **Has the player been in a dressing room, meeting room or team bus for 15 minutes or more with the full squad over the past 14 days?**
 - If the answer is Yes - The players and those he/she travelled with should stand down until test results are known and public health have completed their contact tracing process
 - If the answer is No - There is no requirement for anyone other than the player to stand down



14 - CONTACT DEFINITION

Close Contact V Casual Contact

- A close contact is deemed to have occurred when a person is in face to face contact with a positive or suspected case (result of test awaited) for more than 15 minutes, inside a 2-metre distance
- Close contacts need to self-isolate for 14 days pending contact and subsequent testing by Public Health
- Close contacts in the context of training and playing are most likely to occur in the following circumstances:
 - Shared car journeys
 - Shared dressing rooms
- Contacts on the field of play (training or playing) are considered casual contacts
- Casual contacts are not required to restrict their movements or self-isolate

Please send any queries to covidchecklist@fai.ie

