



**Coronavirus (Covid-19) Guidance Document for
GAA Clubs**

Date: 13th March 2020

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Introduction

The spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19) is a considerable public health concern and we wish to provide assurance to all our stakeholders that we are mindful of such concerns and are committed to adhering to the advice and instructions of the health authorities in this regard.

The Government of Ireland has elevated Ireland's response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak to the Delay Phase.

Effective from March 13th GAA club and county activity in Ireland and Britain is called off until the 29th March inclusive. All games, training and team gatherings at all ages and all grades are, therefore, suspended.

The Association shall continue to monitor and review this decision and its impact on our operations in the intervening period in close liaison with the health authorities as we have done throughout this challenging period.

The situation presents challenges and difficulties for all facets of our society from which our GAA clubs, officers, volunteers, members, players, supporters, employees and indeed the wider public are not immune. We wish to reiterate that maintaining the health and safety of our members, volunteers, players, supporters, employees and the wider public going forward shall continue to be of the utmost importance.

The Association is committed to providing useful and appropriate advice and support to our clubs, which includes some general information outlined in this document. Above all, clubs are asked to familiarise themselves with the advice and instructions of the health authorities and to adhere to these measures at all times.

The guidance provided in this document is based upon advice and guidance from the HSE. The GAA has decided to apply these measures and standards to all GAA units throughout the island of Ireland and in Britain

If you have any queries in relation to any aspect of the below or require any support, please do not hesitate to contact: communications@gaa.ie

Operating Guidance for GAA Clubs

1. Club games, training and team events

All GAA Club games, training and team events at all ages and grades are postponed until after the 29th of March inclusive.

The decision shall be monitored on an ongoing basis as the situation evolves over the forthcoming period. Further instructions will be issued before March 29th.

2. GAA Injury Benefit Fund and insurance cover

GAA Injury Benefit Fund cover and Public Liability insurance cover is suspended from 13th March – 29th March inclusive, in respect of any playing or training activity undertaken by GAA Clubs or members or undertaken on club property.

Should an incident arise during this current period and, upon investigation, it is determined that a club acted in conflict with the advice of health authorities, cover will not be provided by the Liability Insurance.

3. Club meetings

Club meetings conducted in person are not prohibited but are discouraged.

Wherever possible, club meetings should be conducted via video conference or phone.

Where it is essential to conduct a meeting in person then such gatherings should be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Adhere to the advice available from the health authorities;
- Provide instructions and health and safety guidance in advance to all attendees;
- Avoid shaking hands and maintain distancing within the meeting venue as far as possible and communicate this approach to attendees before and during the meeting;
- Ensure surfaces are wiped down and cleaned in advance and after the meeting;
- Ensure no attendees have travelled to an affected area or been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus within the past 14 days prior to the meeting. Any individuals who fall into such category should be directed not to attend the meeting in person. Alternative measures may be put in place – videoconferencing – for such individuals;
- Ensure that all attendees record their name and contact phone number and provide same to the meeting facilitator.

The facilitator of a meeting has a particular responsibility to ensure that the meeting is conducted in accordance with the above guidelines and the advice of health authorities and that all attendees are advised of same.

Clubs may use their official GAA email accounts to set up an online Meeting / Skype call. Details on how to do this are available via the following LINKs:

How to Set up in Outlook:

https://support.office.com/en-ie/article/set-up-an-online-meeting-in-outlook-b8305620-d16e-4667-989d-4a977aad6556#OS_Type=Windows

How to Set Up in Web / Office 365:

https://support.office.com/en-ie/article/set-up-an-online-meeting-in-outlook-b8305620-d16e-4667-989d-4a977aad6556#OS_Type=Web

4. GAA Officer Training events

All official officer training workshops scheduled through the Club Leadership Development Programme are deferred until further notice.

All club planning workshops should also be deferred until further notice.

All club coaching workshops should also be deferred until further notice.

5. Clubhouse facilities

GAA premises and property may remain open at the discretion of a club executive.

In such cases relevant health and safety and Coronavirus guidance should be prominently displayed on club property

Club premises must be kept cleaned and all surfaces are wiped down and cleaned regularly.

6. GAA Club bars

Club bars and social centres may continue to operate but must adhere to the restrictions around gatherings of more than 100 people. Clubs should also promote social distancing.

7. Social gatherings and events

Club Events should be cancelled or postponed if the expected attendance will exceed the permitted numbers per current advises. (max. 100 for indoor event – max. 500 for outdoor event).

Where events proceed, the club must record all attendees and their contact information.

8. GAA Club gym facilities

Club gyms are to be closed and access suspended.

9. Informal/Unorganised use of other GAA Club facilities and pitches

The Club may continue to facilitate normal community and recreational use of its pitches and playing areas by members.

10. Use of GAA clubhouse facilities by third parties

Clubs should request regular third-party users of club property to review their activities in line with current advises from health authorities;

11. GAA membership and registration

Clubs can continue to register their players and members electronically using the GAA Management System via the following Link: <https://people.gaa.ie/admin/login.jsp>

12. GAA Clubs and the wider community

GAA clubs may still have a role to play as a focal point in the community and we encourage clubs to consider how you may be of assistance on a wider societal base. This may involve, subject to health authority guidelines, a co-ordinated approach to helping older members of the community or making facilities available to the health authorities or other entities after consultation with the GAA at central level.

13. Further advice

The latest advice from the Health Service Executive (Republic of Ireland) is available on its website which can be accessed via the following [LINK](#):

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>

The latest advice from the Public Health Authority (Northern Ireland) is available via the following Link on its website which can be accessed via the following [LINK](#):

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus#situation-in-northern-ireland>

Hand sanitisers and disinfectant wipes should be placed at designated areas within the GAA Club and its facilities. Disinfectant and Cleaning products should also be placed in kitchen and toilet areas.

Arrangements should be made to increase the frequency of cleaning within the GAA Club and its facilities, in particular common areas such as toilets, lifts and kitchens.

Posters providing instructions on hygiene practices and protecting health should be placed at designated areas within the GAA Club and its facilities. Sample posters are provided as attachment/appendices.

The GAA Club should endeavour to ensure that all officers, volunteers, members, players, supporters, employees and visitors to the club are informed about suitable hygiene practices and the measures adopted by the club to protect the health and safety of all stakeholders.

Club officers have a particular responsibility to familiarise themselves with hygiene practices and health and safety measures and to provide leadership in this regard.

Medical and Transmission Information Regarding Coronavirus

What is Coronavirus (Covid-19)?

Coronavirus (Covid-19) is a new respiratory illness that has not previously been seen in humans, which can affect your lungs and airways.

This type of coronavirus is also known as 2019-nCov or novel coronavirus.

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- shortness of breath
- breathing difficulties
- fever (high temperature)

Coronavirus can also cause more severe illness including:

- pneumonia
- severe acute respiratory syndrome
- kidney failure

When to call a doctor?

For most people who have the above symptoms now, it is more likely to be an infection that is not coronavirus.

You only need to phone a doctor if you have symptoms and any of the following apply to you:

- they are the type of symptoms you would usually contact a GP about, or
- you have travelled from an affected area, or
- you are a close contact of a confirmed case in Ireland - if you are, the local health authorities will contact you.

What is close contact?

This is only a guide but close contact can mean:

- spending more than 15 minutes face-to-face contact within 2 metres of an infected person
- spending more than 2 hours in a closed space with the case;
- living in the same house or shared accommodation as an infected person

Anyone with symptoms of coronavirus who has been in close contact with a confirmed case in the last 14 days should:

- isolate themselves from other people - this means going into a different, well-ventilated room alone, with a phone
- phone their GP, or emergency department
- in a medical emergency (if you have severe symptoms) phone 999

When do I need to be tested for coronavirus?

You will need to be tested for coronavirus if you have symptoms and have in the last 14 days been:

- in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus
- to a place where there is spread of coronavirus

Your doctor may also suggest you are tested for coronavirus if you have a severe lung infection.

If your doctor thinks that you need a test for coronavirus, they will tell you where the test will be done. They will also tell you when to expect your results.

How is coronavirus spread?

Coronavirus is spread in sneeze or cough droplets.

You could get the virus if you:

- come into close contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing or sneezing.
- touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on.

What are at-risk groups?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus. Health authorities and scientists are still learning how it works.

There are some groups of people who may be more at risk of serious illness if they catch coronavirus. But we do not think these groups have a higher risk of catching coronavirus. This is similar to other infections such as flu.

It is likely you are more at risk of serious illness if you catch coronavirus and you are one of the following:

- 60 years of age and over.
- Have a long-term medical condition – for example, heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer or high blood pressure.
- Pregnant

If you are in an at-risk group take extra care to protect yourself from coronavirus. We expect there to be community spread of the virus soon. Think about how you can avoid crowded spaces, especially indoors. Indoor spaces are less well ventilated. The virus is more likely to spread in smaller and more crowded spaces.

You may be caring for a person in an at-risk group. If you are, take extra care to protect yourself and the person you care for from coronavirus.

Pregnancy and coronavirus

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus. We are still learning how it works. But other lung viruses can cause severe illness in pregnant women. This is why pregnant women should take extra care to prevent infection. This is similar for other infections, such as flu.

Wash your hands properly and often to stop viruses like coronavirus spreading. Don't touch your face. You should also avoid people who are unwell.

Immunosuppressed people

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus. We are still learning how it works. But if you are immunosuppressed (have a weak immune system) you may be more likely to get infection. There are many things that can cause a weak immune system, including:

- cancer treatment
- treatment for autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis (MS) and inflammatory bowel diseases
- HIV
- having an organ transplant or a bone-marrow transplant
- Other lung viruses can cause severe illness in people who have a weak immune system. This is likely to be the same for coronavirus. This is why you should take extra care to prevent infection if you have a weak immune system. This is similar for other infections, such as flu.

Wash your hands properly and often to stop viruses like coronavirus spreading. Don't touch your face. You should also avoid people who are unwell.

Phone your doctor if you have any symptoms of coronavirus and are concerned.

Continue to attend for any planned treatment, unless you have been told not to. If you have been in close contact with someone with coronavirus, phone the hospital before your appointment.

Smoking and coronavirus

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an acute respiratory infection. Respiratory infections are serious infections that affect normal breathing. A wide range of bacteria and viruses cause these infections.

Smoking affects the immune system in the airways, lung tissue and throughout the body. This reduces your natural protection against infections, like coronavirus.

This means that if you smoke:

- you have an increased risk of getting acute respiratory infections
- you have a greater risk of the infection lasting longer
- you have a greater risk of the infection being more serious than it would be for someone who does not smoke
- Second-hand smoke has similar effects. Children who are exposed to smoke are at increased risk of acute respiratory infections.

Stopping smoking reduces your risk of smoking-related illness. Reducing exposure to second-hand smoke is also important, especially for children.

Guidance on Protection and Hygiene

It is crucial that everyone reviews and adheres to the guidance provided by the health authorities on preventing the spread of the coronavirus and protecting oneself and others.

Everyone has a responsibility to be vigilant and have due regard for protecting their own health and safety and that of others.

According to the health authorities, in order to protect oneself and others from the coronavirus, individually and collectively we must seek to prevent the spread of the virus by adopting the following hygiene practices:

How is Coronavirus Spread?

Coronavirus is spread in sneeze or cough droplets. To infect you, it has to get from an infected person's nose or mouth into your eyes, nose or mouth. This can be direct or indirect (on hands, objects, surfaces).

Hygiene Practices – Do's and Don'ts

DO

Wash your hands properly and frequently, and at minimum:

- after coughing or sneezing;
- before and after eating;
- before and after preparing food;
- if you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing);
- after being on public transport or in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd);
- if you have handled animals or animal waste;
- before having a cigarette or vaping;
- if your hands are dirty;
- after toilet use;

Cover mouth when coughing and sneezing:

- cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissues;
- if you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your arm or sleeve (not hand);
- put used tissues into a sealed bin;
- wash your hands.

Use disinfectant to wipe down and clean surfaces. Simple household disinfectants can kill the virus on surfaces.

DON'T

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups

Gloves

Do not wear gloves instead of washing your hands. The virus gets on them in the same way it gets on your hands and other surfaces. Also, your hands can get contaminated when you take them off.

Face Masks

The health authorities have advised that using masks is of benefit in specific circumstances only and is unlikely to be of benefit to you if you are not sick.

Sick people will be advised by their doctor when to use a Face Mask. Healthcare workers need masks and other personal protective equipment to protect them from infection during their work.

Self-Isolation and Self-Quarantine

In order to help stop the spread of the virus, you may be asked by a GP or public health official to self-isolate or self-quarantine with other people.

Self-isolation means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people. You may need to do this if you have symptoms of coronavirus. This is to stop other people from getting it. A public health doctor will ask you to self-isolate if they think you may have coronavirus. This could be before you get tested for coronavirus or while you wait for test results.

Keep away from older people, anyone with long-term medical conditions and pregnant women. It's OK for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food or supplies. Tell them to leave these items outside your door.

If you feel someone must visit you, discuss it with your public health doctor first and adhere to their guidance.

Details about self-isolation and what to do and what to avoid if you are required to self-isolate or care for someone who is self-isolating are available via the following [LINK](#):

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/self-isolation-and-limited-social-interaction.html>

Self-Quarantine is avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. You may need to do this if you are a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus. This is to stop other people from getting it, if you develop symptoms.

Details and instructions in relation to limiting social interaction and what to do and what to avoid if you are required to limit social interaction are available via the following [LINK](#):

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/self-isolation-and-limited-social-interaction.html#limit-social-interactions>

Conclusion

GAA Clubs, officers, members, volunteers, players, supporters and employees should note that the situation is quite fluid and may evolve rapidly, with the advice and instructions from the health authorities changing accordingly. We shall keep abreast of developments on an ongoing basis and shall adhere to the advice of the health authorities and to keep all GAA stakeholders advised of same.

We would request that all GAA stakeholders themselves endeavour to keep abreast of the most up to date advice available from the health authorities by consulting the following websites:

Health Service Executive (HSE):

<https://www2.healthauthorities.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>

Public Health Authority (PHA):

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus#situation-in-northern-ireland>

If a GAA Club has any queries or concerns in relation to any aspect of this guidance document, please contact: communications@gaa.ie

Additionally, if a GAA Club has any concerns in relation to the Coronavirus or requires advice in relation to same, he/she should contact the health authorities via the following number(s):

HSE

Callsave: 1850 24 1850

Phone: 041-6850300

Monday to Friday: 8am - 8pm

Saturday and Sunday: 10am - 5pm

PHA

Phone: 0300 555 0114