

RETURN TO FENCING GUIDELINES



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MAY 2020



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OVERVIEW

USA Fencing (USFA) has prepared these Return to Club Fencing Guidelines for division leaders, club owners and administrators, fencers and their families, to provide guidance as fencing club activities begin to recommence across the United States.

USFA resumed its sanctioning of club activities on May 1, 2020 for clubs in locations where clubs are permitted to operate or reopen by local and state laws, regulations, executive orders and other legal mandates regarding COVID-19. **USFA's sanction, and thus its insurance coverage, will apply only to areas in which clubs can be open legally.** It has been and will remain the responsibility of each club to stay abreast of and comply with the state, local and other legal requirements governing its own location. USA Fencing cannot, as a practical matter, oversee member clubs' compliance with applicable laws, which vary widely from place to place. Nor is it within our competence to provide legal advice.

The following are recommendations, not mandates. They are based in significant part upon current guidelines promulgated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the USOPC and other publicly available resources. The knowledge surrounding COVID-19 is constantly changing and clubs' circumstances may differ depending on their geographic locations, facilities, memberships and other factors. Accordingly, USFA encourages clubs and participants to implement the following measures, to the extent reasonably possible, as minimum precautions.

At present, there is no way to completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 infection. Additional precautions might be appropriate to the extent indicated by a club's specific circumstances and by its administrators' best judgment. On the other hand, some measures may not be practicable for some clubs, depending on their specific circumstances.

The recommendations in this document are not intended and should not be taken to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment, nor do USFA or any of its divisions assume any liability or responsibility for the efficacy of the recommendations provided herein.



RISK CATEGORIES

These guidelines apply to in-person club activities that take place during Phases 3 and/or 4 as generally defined by the USOPC and modified slightly here to accommodate fencing-specific concerns.

PHASE 3 – Public health authorities allow small group activities (for example, less than 10 people) at clubs.

PHASE 4 – Public health authorities impose no limitations on group size at clubs. This assumes **PHASES 1** and **2** – in which individuals were required to shelter in place and/or clubs were required to remain fully closed – have passed in your club's location.

GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUALS

Adhere to applicable federal, state and local guidelines before, during and after participating in club activity. And:

BEFORE ACTIVITIES

- Self-monitor and be symptom free for at least 14 days prior to any in-person club activity. (See USOPC Self-Monitoring Instructions, below).
- Stay home if you have had close sustained contact in last 14 days with anyone who was sick or known or believed to have COVID-19.
- Stay home if you are sick or do not feel well.
- Provide a note from doctor stating that you are cleared to participate in club activities if you have had a case of COVID-19.
- Wash and sanitize your hands often.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes or mouth with unclean hands.
- Practice social distancing where appropriate.
- Wear a face mask to reduce exposure to airborne contaminated particles and reduce exposure to others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow if you cough or sneeze.



GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUALS

DURING ACTIVITIES

- Refrain from attending any activity if experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Comply with all safety measures applicable to or prescribed by the club.
- Come to the club already dressed in freshly washed workout clothing. Clothing should be suitable for public display and to wear under fencing uniforms, such that uniforms can be put on at the club without the need for private changing rooms. Uniforms should be taken home and washed after practice, not left in the club.
- During Phase 3, do not share equipment such as weapons, body cords, fencing masks, gloves or uniforms, with others. During Phase 4 – share weapons and body cords only after disinfecting, and disinfect it again before it is returned. Do not share masks, gloves, uniforms.
- Wear a surgical or cloth mask covering nose and mouth, even under fencing masks.
- Practice social distancing as directed and to the extent possible.
- Wash and sanitize your hands often.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes or mouth with unclean hands.
- Refrain from contacting other participants and attendees (hand shakes, body contact, etc.).
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow if you cough or sneeze.
- Bring and use hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes.
- Bring your own water and, if desired, energy bars. No other food or drink should be allowed.

AFTER ACTIVITIES

- Wash and sanitize your hands often.
- Do not touch your face, eyes or mouth with unclean hands.
- Monitor your health and report any symptoms.
- Practice social distancing.
- Wear a face mask when possible to reduce exposure to airborne contaminated particles.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow if you cough or sneeze.
- Wash and sanitize all gear, uniforms and apparel used during the activity.



GUIDELINES FOR CLUBS & COACHES

Adhere to all federal, state and local guidelines applicable to club activities. And:

BEFORE ACTIVITIES

- Create and display signage clearly outlining the club's COVID-19 policies; post those policies on the club's website, if it has one.
- Establish and enforce social distancing protocols.
- Limit the number of persons in the club, exclude non-athletes to the extent possible.
- Disinfect the venue and all equipment where the club activities will take place.
- Remove or require the removal of all uniforms and other clothing from the club when they are not in use. Loaner or rental uniforms and masks should be signed out to respective athletes, to be taken home after each use. Uniforms should be washed before each subsequent use, as described above.
- Equipment stored in lockers should be limited to weapons, masks, gloves and fencing shoes. Use of locker rooms for changing or showering should be avoided.
- Verify that athletes, coaches and staff are symptom free and, to the extent reasonably possible, COVID-19 free. Upon athletes' arrival to train, coaches or staff should ask each athlete if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, ask if the athlete has been in contact with anyone suspected of having COVID-19, and take their temperature using a no-touch device. Consider whether and how to document such findings in a hygienic manner.
 - If the athlete has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, they should be sent home and requested to contact their healthcare provider
 - An athlete who has exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 or been in close contact with someone else who exhibited such symptoms should not return to practice until 14 days have elapsed without symptoms, or until a formal letter of clearance from a healthcare provider is provided to club administration.
 - If an athlete tests positive for COVID-19 or has been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, the club should notify other fencers and parents present at the practice about a possible exposure.
 - The coach should NOT share the sick athlete's name with other fencers and parents to protect the privacy of the athlete and that of their family.
 - Exposed individuals should consult their own healthcare providers.
- All persons must wear surgical or cloth masks covering nose and mouth while present in the club.
- Provide hand washing or sanitizing stations throughout the venue.
- Disable water fountains at the venue, except for the no-touch varieties for filling water bottles.



GUIDELINES FOR CLUBS & COACHES

DURING ACTIVITIES

- Continue to clean and disinfect the venue and equipment periodically where the club activities take place.
- All athletes and coaches must wear surgical or cloth masks covering nose and mouth (even under fencing masks).
- Phase 3 – Modify drills, lessons other activities to be consistent with required and otherwise reasonable distancing requirements; limit or eliminate bouting and group meetings, and eliminate handshakes and all activities that require or permit direct contact between athletes and between athletes and coaches.
- Phase 3 – Class sizes and number of persons in club should be limited to comply with applicable restrictions. Consider “flighting” sessions such that one training group exits the club 20-30 minutes before the next group arrives, to allow for interim cleaning. Consider assigning participants to the same training group and/or same training partners\ every session to minimize the risk of widespread transmission.
- Phase 4 – Activities including bouting and physical contact can resume without social distancing (possibly subject to other requirements). Class sizes and attendance in club need not be restricted.
- Regularly sanitize surfaces likely to be touched or otherwise infected during the club activity, including strips, reels and scoring machines.
- Avoid having participants stretch, sit or recline on or around fencing strips, where viruses exhaled during training activities might settle.
- Remove anyone from a club activity immediately if they exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms, following the steps outlined in the preceding section.

AFTER ACTIVITIES

- Sanitize all surfaces and equipment that were used during club activities.
- Be sure all uniforms are removed from club and only appropriate equipment is stored in lockers.



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.usafencing.org/coronavirus

This graphic provided courtesy of the
United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee

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SELF-MONITORING INSTRUCTIONS

**Twice daily, check for the following signs
or symptoms of respiratory infection:**



Fever
(> 100.4)



Cough



Shortness
of breath

Other symptoms to pay attention to include:

Sore throat

Congestion

Headache

Muscle and Joint Pain

Chills

Nausea or Vomiting

Diarrhea



If you develop any of these symptoms, please contact
your healthcare provider to discuss how to proceed.

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DISCLAIMER

These guidelines are provided for general informational purposes only and are not intended as, nor should be relied upon as, specific medical or legal advice. All clubs and participants are strongly encouraged to consult with qualified medical personnel and/or public health officials. Also, consult applicable federal, state and local laws, orders and/or guidelines. USFA and its divisions make no warranties or representations as to the completeness, reliability, and accuracy of the information contained herein.



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