



# Mandatory Standards for Sport Activities

## Introduction & Applicability

The following standards are issued under the Public Health Act Chapter 465 of the Laws of Malta. They apply to all sport activities in Malta during the COVID-19 pandemic, applicable from 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2021.

The COVID-19 situation in Malta in March 2021 was such that we experienced a substantial surge in cases, leading to targeted actions and a ban on riskier activities implemented in an evidence-based manner with the aim of decreasing the risks of contagion. This is also in the light of more transmissible variants which are spreading in the community being responsible for the majority of the positive cases.

The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer one comes to other people, the amount of time spent near them, and the number of people one comes near to. Physical distancing measures and masks help mitigate this risk.

With the constantly evolving situation with respect to COVID-19 in the community, implementation of COVID-19 restrictions, as well as their gradual relaxation require athletes, staff and other persons concerned to work together to adapt and promote safe sports practices consistent with advice from public health authorities. As COVID-19 restrictions are gradually relaxed or imposed as the epidemiological situation allows, organisation of sports and sports venues will be required to comply with social distancing and correct hygiene measures that are critical to the success of the transition. Athletes and staff must prevent the transmission of COVID-19 while training and in when allowed, competition, consistent with updated advice from the public health authorities. The health and safety of the athletes and staff involved is paramount, and the following standards and guidelines are centred on ensuring that this is in no way compromised. The standards and guidelines themselves are subject to change based on the evolving local scenario and are in no way intended to supersede the general guidelines issued by Public Health.

Athletes, coaches, staff, and others must prepare for the possibility that there will be cases of COVID-19 at the sports venue and be ready to respond immediately, appropriately, effectively, and efficiently, and consistent with specific recommendations from public health authorities to help mitigate against any spread.

## Route of transmission of SARS-Cov-2

The main route of transmission of SARS-Cov-2 is through respiratory droplets either by inhalation or deposition on mucosa. Another less likely route is through contact with contaminated objects (fomites), due to persistence of the virus on surfaces (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), 2020).



## Exercise and SARS-Cov-2

The pattern of breathing during strenuous exercise changes such that there is an increase in both the volumes of air that is breathed in and out, and of the number of breaths taken per unit time. As the rate of breathing increases, the potential of spraying out infected droplets from someone who unknowingly has COVID-19 is higher than under normal circumstances, and the greater the distance such droplets can travel, thus the spread might be even more.

Research also suggests that due to strenuous exercise, as one breathes deeper, athletes exposed to virus particles would be more likely to inhale such particles and direct them to the lower areas of the lung. Intense physical exercise in densely populated sports facilities has been related to increased risk for infection.

## Incubation period

The average incubation period of Sars-Cov-2 is between 5 to 6 days, with a range of 2 to 14 days. The virus can also survive in the environment for up to 3 hours in aerosols, 4 hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to 3 days on plastic and stainless steel (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), 2020).

The standards regulating the return to sport in Malta as part of the COVID-19 transition are intended for sporting associations, clubs, other entities, and athletes. They are based on international guidelines and scientific literature and are in accordance with the guidance issued by the Public Health Authorities. They are intended to make sport as safe as possible and are adapted as necessary in accordance with the local current situation, allowing for athletes from a wide number of sports to practice their sport, however with mitigation measures in place under controlled conditions.

## General Principles

### **Athletes**

The standards specify requirements in terms of social distancing, personal hygiene, and behaviour. This is a reminder of their social responsibility in terms of all Public Health directives. Athletes should strongly consider returning to sport in a way which minimises the risk of injury, keeping in mind that returning to sport after a period of home exercise will need to start with training at a lower intensity than maximum, in accordance with the guidance issued by their coaching staff and physical trainers. Athletes are reminded that adherence to hygiene principles issued by Public Health in terms of life outside sports is imperative. This includes amongst other things, minimizing receiving visitors at home, regular disinfection of surfaces and shopping etc, and most importantly, prudence when participating in social activities.

### **Medical Staff**

Medical staff providing care at any facilities are reminded of the risks associated with COVID-19 and are directed to the latest guidelines issued by the European Resuscitation Council. This is deemed essential reading for anyone providing first aid or other medical care at sporting venues.



## **Use of Masks**

According to Legal Notice 402 of 2020 – The Mandatory Use of Medical or Cloth Masks Regulations 2020, ‘any person shall, outside his residence, both when going to an indoor place and outdoors, wear a medical or cloth mask or visor in a proper manner covering the nose, mouth and chin of the person’.

Thus, masks or visors are required to be worn at all times other than when partaking in high intensity physical activity. Vigorous activity requires a large amount of effort and causes rapid breathing, sweating and a substantial increase in heart rate. In general, if one is doing vigorous-intensity activity, he/she will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Examples of vigorous physical activity can be found in Annex B.

Masks are required to be worn if a sport which does not involve high intensity physical activity is practiced in close vicinity of other people or indoors. Masks should NOT be used when practicing strenuous or vigorous exercise.

A face mask should cover mouth AND nose and be worn close to the face. The mask should not be touched or moved with the hand from outside. If the mask is damp or contaminated with secretions, it must be changed, disposing of the used mask immediately, followed by hand disinfection. If a reusable mask is worn, it should be washed at 60°C afterwards and disposed of after the number of recommended washes.

## **Return to Sport - What Sports are Permitted?**

In principle and when feasible, measures are lifted in a controlled, slow, and stepwise manner. In view of this, and provided that the COVID-19 situation in Malta remains under control, the standards for sports, issued in liaison with SportMalta, allow for such stepwise and gradual opening up of sporting activities. This started with only non-contact sport training, moving on to contact sport training, as well as allowing for the resumption of competition, with no spectators. One must keep in mind that transitioning may be bi-directional, with measures being stepped up again should this be necessary, depending on the local epidemiological situation. Where possible, use of outdoor spaces are preferable over indoor spaces for the practice of sports.

### **10<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

- Outdoor and indoor non-contact sport training recommenced. No organized competition, leagues, or events.
- High level and elite sport can start with no spectators.

### **24<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

- Outdoor and indoor contact sport training can recommence for those aged 17 and over, with no spectators.
- Organized competition, leagues and events for non-contact sports can recommence with no spectators.

### **7<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

- Organized competition, leagues and events for contact sports can recommence, with no spectators, for those aged 17 and over.
- No spectators for any type of sport, both training and competition.

### **28<sup>th</sup> of June 2021**

- Recreational and amateur level sports/physical activity can continue with contact, in a manner that does not attract any spectators.



- Outdoor and indoor, non-contact and contact sport training and competitions, can recommence for under 17s, strictly with no spectators

#### **5<sup>th</sup> of July 2021**

- The attendance of spectators at league matches, time trials and higher level sport competitions and events shall be regulated and controlled in accordance with the standards issued by the Superintendent of Public Health related to controlled events taking place in enclosed spaces.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> of October 2021**

- The attendance of spectators at any sport event, including league matches, time trials, sport competitions and scheduled training sessions organised by entities registered with SportMalta, shall be regulated and controlled in accordance with the Standards for safer organised controlled events taking place in an enclosed area.

## **Keeping Sport safe by limiting social interactions**

### **Keeping sport apart from social activities**

The importance of exercise and sport is well known. Sport shapes the body, making it strong and active, and helps to develop both mental and physical toughness. Sport also encourages friendliness and the development of team spirit.

Since COVID-19 has hit, life has changed, with numerous measures implemented in various sectors to keep activities as safe as possible. Sport is one of them, but to be able to retain sport as a safer part of one's daily life, athletes must at this time appreciate the intrinsic importance of keeping the practice of sport separate from sport as a social activity. Risk is cumulative - to be able to keep organised sport permissible and safe, all involved should be aware of their ongoing risks. Following standards and guidelines while training or competing helps to keep the sport as safe as possible, taking into consideration the parameters around the sporting activity, however the organisation of and attending social activities with teammates and sports buddies increases risks and potential exposure and should be avoided.

### **The 'bubble' concept**

As is now well known, the risk of person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV2, the virus responsible for causing COVID-19, is cumulative. The longer and the closer the exposure, the higher the risk; likewise, the more persons one is exposed to, the higher the risk.

Limiting the number of persons, one is exposed to, is a way of balancing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 with the need for social interaction, and other daily healthy lifestyle requirements, allowing somewhat limited interactions to help life to go on, as well as contributing towards the coping with the stress of the pandemic. Limiting the group of persons that one is exposed to, especially for longer periods of time, helps to contain infection risk. This is the bubble concept.

### **Career development and Team Sports**

In the career development of many sports, athletes progress through levels often delineated by age groups. It is common that some promising athletes also train at more than one of these age group levels, and thus form part of more than one team. While the bubble concept helps in the containment of risk, mixing of 'bubbles' effectively defies risk containment, thus increasing risks of exposure. Such athletes need to choose to limit the



club/age-group team, they form part of to just two clubs or teams to keep risks lower and contained. Additionally, athletes who form part of one or more national teams may train and compete in any such national teams.



## Mandatory Standards for Sport Activities

The Superintendent of Public Health hereby orders that all sport activities shall be held in accordance with the following standards:

**Section A:** Mandatory Standards for recreational and amateur level sport/physical activity

**Section B:** Mandatory Standards for Organised Sport taking place in a sport venue / facility

**Section B1:** Non-Contact Sport

**Section B2:** Contact Sport

**Section C:** Mandatory Standards restricted to High Level and Elite Sport

**Section D:** Mandatory Standards for Sport Venues

**Section E:** Mandatory Standards for Organised Sport Competitions, Leagues or Events

**Section E1:** Non-Contact Sport Competitions

**Section E2:** Contact Sport Competitions

**Section E3:** International Sport Competitions, Leagues or Events organized in Malta

**Annex A:** Requirements for Specific Sports in addition to General Standards

**Annex B:** Vigorous/High Intensity Physical Activity

**Annex C:** Procedure for requesting approval for elite / high level athletes to partake in Sport under Section C of the Mandatory Standards for Sport Activities

**Annex D:** Procedure for requesting approval of Sports Competitions, Leagues and Events

## Section A: Mandatory Standards for recreational and amateur level sport/physical activity

- Any recreational physical activity and sporting activity for the purpose of exercise and keeping fit can be carried out in groups doing the activity together, in accordance with the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments, unless the groups of persons all come from the same household. Thus, no more than 6 persons can carry out a recreational sports activity /physical activity together.
- Recreational sport and physical activity is permitted in group sizes which must be in accordance with the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments.
- Indoor sporting and physical activity in private residential properties must also abide by the Groups of Persons in Residential Properties Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments.
- Masks are to be worn at all times except during high intensity physical activity (Annex B).
- Sporting and physical activity must not be done in such a way as to have or attract any spectators and all persons partaking in such recreational/ amateur level sports/ physical activity are responsible to ensure that persons must not gather to watch the activities
- At least 2 persons of a group who carry out a recreational sports activity/physical activity together, must be assigned as contact persons who must keep contact details of all persons in the group.
- All recreational physical and sporting activities must comply with any other legislation at all times.



### **In the case of Fitness Sessions:**

- Fitness is permitted in groups of persons in accordance with the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments, both indoors and outdoors.
- Sessions may only be held in defined areas allowing for a minimum of 6 square metres for each person. A maximum of two groups of 6 persons may undertake fitness together (total of 12 persons) as long as each group of 6 persons keeps to their clearly defined and marked area, (which should be marked with cones/bottles/bags/other) and with at least 3 metres between the two areas.
- Social distancing of 2.5m applies between persons. Equipment and mats should be thoroughly disinfected prior to and after use, no sharing of personal equipment.
- Each person should bring their own towels and other equipment where possible.
- Each person is to remain in the same area, with no changing of positions in relation to other participants.
- Circuit sessions are strictly not allowed.
- Indoor fitness must also comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Gymnasium and Fitness Centres

## **Section B: Mandatory Standards for Organised Sport taking place in a sport venue / facility**

### **General Conditions applicable for all sport taking place in a sport venue/facility**

- Athletes may train in groups as specified in Section B1 or B2 depending on the sport. Composition of groups and teams is to remain the same as much as possible, limiting crossovers. Maintaining the principle of cohorting is imperative when it comes to team and contact sports.
- The maximum capacity in terms of total numbers allowed in any sports facility/venue at any one time should amount to not more than 1 person per 20 square metres of usable training space.
- When not in play, the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments are applicable and it is the responsibility of each individual to observe these regulations in all venues/facilities.
- Coaches are required to keep a distance of 2m from athletes and are also required to wear a facemask if they are not fully vaccinated.
- No sharing of personal or intimate equipment is allowed. Other equipment that must be shared or rented must be disinfected thoroughly before and after each use.
- Masks are to be always worn except during high intensity physical activity.
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off in accordance with the requirement of 20 square metres per person forming part of the group.
- Water dispensers are not allowed.
- The utilization of changing rooms or showers is strictly prohibited.
- All group and team members including players/athletes/coaches/team staff/committee members are prohibited from any direct contact with other members of a group or team as a means of celebration or encouragement at any point in time.



- Access to sports venues and stadiums should be limited solely to athletes, venue, and coaching staff. Each individual involved is also responsible to observe the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments.
- Spectators attending any sport event, including scheduled training sessions organised by entities registered with SportMalta, must remain in the spectator area, and their attendance is regulated and controlled in accordance with the Standards for safer organised controlled events taking place in an enclosed area. This means that attendance must be with prior booking/reservation/tickets/registration and that admittance is exclusively on presentation of a valid vaccination certificate.
- Organisers of sports activities are responsible to ensure that spectators do not congregate in public places.
- All associations and clubs are to appoint a COVID-19 Liaison officer and inform SportMalta of the name and contact details of such person.
- Teams or training groups posing for photos should not have contact between persons.

### **B1) Mandatory Standards for Organised Non-Contact Sport taking place in a sport venue/facility**

- Athletes must train in groups of no more than that specified in the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments, plus an additional 2 persons, and may be overseen by 1 coach.
- Spatial separation of athletes should be kept to a minimum of 2m for training of all outdoor sports and 2.5m for all indoor sports.

### **B2) Mandatory Standards for Organised Contact Sport Training taking place in a sport venue/facility**

- Sports classified as contact sports may be practiced, training may include contact between athletes forming part of a group, limited to 66% of the duration of each training session.
- Athletes over the age of 12 years may train in groups of no more than that specified in the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments, plus an additional 2 persons, and may be overseen by 1 coach.
- Athletes under the age of 12 years may train in groups of no more than that specified in the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments forming a group training together at any time and may be overseen by 1 coach.
- A log of each training session is required to be kept by the coach
- During non-contact proportion of training session (minimum 33% of duration of training session), spatial separation of athletes should be kept to a minimum of 2m for training of all outdoor sports and 2.5m for all indoor sports.
- Maintaining the principle of cohorting of teams is imperative. Composition of teams is to remain the same as much as possible, limiting crossovers between teams and training groups.

Contact Sports are sports in which the participants necessarily come into bodily contact with one another and where physical contact between players is accepted as part of normal play:

- Baseball
- Cricket



- Canoe Polo
- Horse Polo
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Football
- Handball
- Netball
- Rugby
- Waterpolo
- Combat Sports including Boxing, Judo, Karate, all other Martial Arts and Wrestling
- Dance Sport
- Squash (doubles)

## Section C: Mandatory Standards solely for High Level and Elite Sport

These standards apply only to high level and elite sport as determined by the Superintendent of Public Health in consultation with SportMalta. This includes individual athletes and teams who are known by and represent associations that are registered with SportMalta. Such athletes/teams must have represented Malta since March 2019 or are already registered to represent Malta during 2021 in further high-level international competitions or fall within top-division league of a sport and who follow strict regular training regimens. These include athletes whose have participated/will participate in events at Olympic, World, Commonwealth, or European levels and in the Games of the Small States of Europe (March 2019 – Dec 2021), or were/are part of the top-division league of a sport since March 2019.

Eligible athletes/teams must request and be granted approval by SportMalta to be able to partake in sport under this section. Refer to Annex C for approval request procedures.

- Athletes may train in groups of no more than that specified in the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021, and any of its amendments, plus an additional 4 persons, forming a group training together at any time. A *maximum* of 10 persons can train together as part of a mini-bubble, with no more than a maximum of 3 mini-bubbles (if from the same team) being able to follow the same training in the same venue/facility at any time.
- Each bubble/group can be overseen by no more than 3 coaches.
- During non-contact training, spatial separation of athletes should be kept to a minimum of 2m for training of all outdoor sports and 2.5m for all indoor sports.
- When not in play, the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments are applicable and it is the responsibility of each individual to observe these regulations in all venues/facilities.
- Athletes are to stick to training in groups of the same individuals within their mini-bubble throughout all their training sessions, and not switch groups or mini-bubbles for any reason.
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off.



- The maximum capacity of number of persons that any sports facility / venue can hold at any one time is 1 person per 15 square metres of usable training / competition space.
- Coaches are required to keep a minimum distance of 2m from athletes.
- Team Contact sports may be practiced with strict cohorting of teams. This is also applicable for different age group teams. During training, the time period during which close contact may occur should be strictly limited to 75% of each training session, and a log of each training session is required to be kept by the coach.
- Access to sports venues and stadiums should be limited solely to athletes, venue, and coaching staff. Each individual involved is also responsible to observe the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments.
- Spectators attending any sport event, including scheduled training sessions organised by entities registered with SportMalta, must remain in the spectator area, and their attendance is regulated and controlled in accordance with the Standards for safer organised controlled events taking place in an enclosed area. This means that attendance must be with prior booking/reservation/tickets/registration and that admittance is exclusively on presentation of a valid vaccination certificate.
- Organisers of sports activities are responsible to ensure that spectators do not congregate in public places.
- No sharing of personal or intimate equipment is allowed. Other equipment that must be shared or rented must be disinfected thoroughly after each use.
- Water dispensers are not allowed.
- Teams or training groups posing for photos should not have contact between persons.

**In the case of high level and elite contact team sports only, the following additional standards also apply:**

- Team Contact sports must observe strict cohorting of teams.
- Contact limited to 75% of duration of training session. Otherwise, spatial separation of athletes should be kept to a minimum of 2 outdoors, and 2.5m indoors.
- A log of each training session is required to be kept by the coach
- When not in play, social distancing between athletes to be maintained at all times.
- Showers and changing are not allowed to be used.
- Ball used for play to be disinfected prior to use and every 20 minutes.

## **Section D: Mandatory Standards for Sport Venues**

- All persons (athletes and staff using any SportMalta and other sports facilities) should be informed of compliance with the basic hygiene measures (hand disinfection, coughing and sneezing etiquette, social distancing, face masks etc.) in accordance with Public Health direction, and the relevant hygiene officer.
- Inform athletes and staff with access to the venue/facilities about the definition of "infection symptoms" and what to do in case of occurrence.
- Designated entry attendant regulates access to the venue, which should be limited to venue staff, athletes, and coaching staff.
- Screening of body temperature to be done for all persons entering the venue, with the entry attendant reserving the right to ask about Health status.
- Keep hand disinfectant (minimum 70% alcohol) available at each entry and exit point as well as in front of or in each room and on training grounds if possible.



- Regular surface disinfection is imperative.
- Leave doors/gates/windows as open as possible and avoid touching the door handles.
- Markings for queuing 2m apart at entrance wherever necessary.
- Licensed restaurants/snack-bars on the premises must abide by the Standards for Restaurants, Pools & Hotel Accommodation.
- Exclusive use of individual drink bottles, absolutely no shared bottles or cups allowed.
- Showers and changing rooms must be kept closed and may not be used (Showering may be a possible conductor of viruses / aerosol generator). No hair dryers are allowed.
- In toilet facilities provide paper towels – no air flow dryers or revolving cloth towels.
- Toilets to be disinfected every hour.
- Medical staff to work with mask or visor, regular hand disinfection and disposable gloves and are responsible for hygiene in the medical premises- for use in emergency only.
- Persons who have contact with several athletes should pay particular attention to hygiene and protective measures.
- Personnel requirements
  - Venue hygiene officer
  - Adequate cleaning personnel
  - Entry attendant /accreditation system/regulation service
  - Stadium infrastructure requirements
  - Separate doping control rooms (if necessary)
  - Isolation room (in event of suspected case)
- Material requirements
  - Hand disinfectants and appropriate dispensers
  - Materials for surface cleaning and disinfection
  - Facemasks or visors
  - Personal bottles for drinks
- Use of outdoor areas will continue to be preferred over indoor clubhouses and other general areas
- The individual arrival of athletes in their own car should be strongly recommended, if possible, with not more than two athletes per car.
- Facemasks should be worn (obligatory) up until the point at which practicing high intensity sport commences.
- Arrival to venues should be staggered if possible.
- Congregation in common areas is prohibited and social distancing must be practiced at all times.
- There are to be no handshakes, no team photographs or other unnecessary contact.
- IMPORTANT: Exemplary individual behaviour with regards to hygiene and isolation measures both inside and outside the venue is a must, this includes an absolute ban on spitting or clearing of phlegm during the sport itself.

## Section E: Organized Sport Competitions, Leagues or Events

### General: Standards applicable for all organized competitions, leagues or events, including friendlies

- Only competitions, leagues and events of a competitive nature endorsed by SportMalta are allowed to be organized, in sport venues registered with SportMalta. Festivals and open day style events with the aim of attracting persons to sport are not permitted at



this time. Sport competitions/leagues/events including games/matches must be scheduled in advance and can only be organised by an association/federation/club/organiser registered with SportMalta.. Scheduled sport competitions/leagues/events including games/matches must be notified to SportMalta in advance requesting approval for the competition/league/event to be held.

- Friendly competitions/matches can only be organised with the approval of SportMalta in sport venues whose associations are registered with SportMalta. The list of recognized sport venues can be found on the SportMalta website <http://sportmalta.mt/assistance-schemes/resources/>
- Barricaded off areas may be used as temporary sport venues for the purpose of sport competition, only with the prior approval of SportMalta. Temporary sport areas must be cordoned off with barricades and with a minimum surrounding secure area of 5m to avoid external mass gatherings.
- The maximum capacity of number of persons that any sports facility / venue/ area can hold at any one time is 1 person per 20 square metres of usable training / competition space.
- Organisers of competitions, leagues or events must keep a logbook of persons entering the venue.
- No sharing of personal or intimate equipment is allowed. Other equipment that must be shared must be disinfected thoroughly after each use.
- When not in play, the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments are applicable and it is the responsibility of each individual to observe these regulations in all venues/facilities.
- Officials must wear masks at all times unless they are required to blow a whistle, and may only gather in groups in accordance with the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments,
- Individual athletes and teams must be designated with areas to leave their belongings and where they should stay when not warming up/competing.
- Athletes not warming up/competing are to wear a mask.
- Access to sports venues and stadiums should be limited solely to athletes, venue, and coaching staff. Each individual involved is also responsible to observe the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments.
- Spectators attending any sport event, including league matches, time trials, and sport competitions organised by entities registered with SportMalta, must remain in the spectator area, and their attendance is regulated and controlled in accordance with the Standards for safer organized controlled events taking place in an enclosed area. This means that attendance must be with prior booking/reservation/tickets/registration and that admittance is exclusively on presentation of a valid vaccination certificate.
- Organisers of sports activities are responsible to ensure that spectators do not congregate in public places.
- All relevant protocols, including arrangements to ensure that no spectators can congregate in public places in relation to the competition/league/event must be presented upon application for approval for the event, with any relevant diagrams of the event venue/surrounding areas.
- Sport competition, league or events award ceremonies may only be held following the competition at the sport venue/facility, awarding 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places, with only 1 team



representative in the case of teams. Social distancing to be maintained at all times, medals not to be placed over athletes' heads, no handshakes between persons.

Associations, Federations and Clubs registered with SportMalta must request and be granted approval by SportMalta to be able to organize sport competitions, leagues, or events. Refer to Annex D for approval request procedures.

### **E1) Non-Contact Sport Competitions, Leagues or Events**

- Organized competitions, leagues or events can bring together no more than 100 persons at any one-time including officials.
- Spatial separation of athletes and officials applies. Persons/athletes from the same team or group areas should be segregated in allocated marked capacity areas, according to mandatory square metre rule, with adequate passageway between areas.
- For sport competitions that could involve a mass start, such as road running, cycling, and open water swimming, starts must be staggered in waves not exceeding 6 persons, must still observe social distancing. Waves must not exceed 6 persons, and there must be at least 30 seconds between each wave. Individual staggered starts are highly recommended.
- Sports competitions which have various age groups and disciplines should be planned in a staggered manner to keep the time each athlete is there to a minimum.
- For sport competitions that are held in public spaces/roads, start and finish areas must be cordoned off with barricades and a minimum surrounding secure area of 5-10 m to avoid external mass gatherings.

### **E2) Contact Sport Competitions, Leagues or Events**

- Organized competitions, leagues or events can bring together no more than 100 persons at any one-time including officials withing a competition venue, in the case of individual contact sports.
- Spatial separation of athletes and officials applies, with individuals segregated in marked capacity areas, according to mandatory square metre rule. Spatial separation of athletes and officials applies, with individuals segregated in marked capacity areas, according to mandatory square metre rule.
- Organized team sport competitions, leagues or events can bring together no more than 2 teams who will compete against each other at any one time, within the competition venue. Teams shall be segregated in marked capacity areas, according to mandatory square metre regulations, in mini bubbles.
- Contact team sport competition competitions, leagues, or events, including games/matches are to be scheduled in such a way that on any given day, any one team only plays against one other team, and each team may only play again after the elapse of a minimum period of 24 hours following the last game/match/competition.
- Contact between teams in team contact sport competition must be limited to competition time only, with strict social distancing and team cohorting observed while not in play.
- All members of a team including players/athletes/coaches/team staff/committee members are prohibited from any direct contact with other members of the team as a



means of celebration during and after any competition/league/event including a game/match.

***E3) International Sport Competitions, Leagues or Events organized in Malta***

- All teams must follow the 'bubble' concept both at the sport venue/facility and in hotels, limiting the number of persons each is exposed to.
- All athletes are required to be in possession of a negative PCR Covid-19 swab test, which should be done within 72 hours prior to day 1 of competition.
- An accreditation system is to be used to ensure that only accredited persons (athletes/coaches/team staff/officials) are allowed to enter the venue. Name, surname, and telephone number of each accredited person must be recorded.
- Organisers of competitions, leagues or events must keep a logbook of persons entering the venue.
- Teams requiring transportation, this should be organised taking into consideration the bubble concept, using smaller vehicles or one vehicle per team, and in line with the Standards for Transport Service Providers and for Passengers using Transport Services.
- Regular testing and other requirements may be required at the discretion of the Superintendent of Public Health.



## Annex A: Requirements for Specific Sports in addition to General Standards

### ***Athletics***

- Minimum 2m spacing between lanes.
- Avoiding running in other athletes' slipstreams is strongly recommended
- Drink stations not allowed (athletes to bring their own bottles)
- Disinfection necessary for high jump & pole and all apparatus in track and field events, and relay baton

### ***Archery***

- No sharing of equipment unless disinfected after each use
- 1 person per lane, minimum of 2m spacing between lanes

### ***Badminton***

- No sharing of racquets.
- Shuttlecock should be marked with an X or an O and each set only be touched by one player

### ***Baseball***

- Social distancing of 2m to be observed, where possible
- Ball and bat to be disinfected before every pitch

### ***Basketball***

- Ball to be disinfected between plays or every 20 minutes
- Social distancing of 2m to be observed, where possible
- Contact training for high level or elite sport allowed up to 60% of each session, otherwise minimum social distancing of 2m to be observed.
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off.

### ***Beach volley***

- Ball to be disinfected between each play
- Social distancing of 2 to be observed

### ***Billiards, Pool and Snooker***

- No sharing of equipment unless disinfected after each use
- Distance of at least 2.5m to be maintained
- Regular wiping of equipment between play
- Tables must be minimum of 2.5m apart
- Facemask or visor should be worn if possible

### ***BMX***

- Distance of at least 2m to be maintained
- Avoiding riding in other athletes' slipstreams

### ***Board games***

- Social distancing of 2m where possible
- Facemasks or visors to be worn

### ***Bowls and Bocci***

- No sharing of equipment unless disinfected after each use
- Distance of at least 2m to be maintained
- Regular wiping of bowls between play



### **Canoe**

- Minimum 2m distance between canoes

### **Canoe Polo**

- Social distancing of 2m to be observed, where possible
- No sharing of equipment
- Chlorinated pool water is to be kept above 0.5mg/l Free Chlorine

### **Canoe Polo (sea only)**

- Social distancing of 2m to be observed, where possible
- No sharing of equipment
- Chlorinated pool water is to be kept above 0.5mg/l Free Chlorine

### **Car, Motor Racing & Karting**

- No sharing of personal equipment such as helmets
- Helmet should be worn by drivers when driving, otherwise drivers to wear face mask at all times.
- Support team must observe social distancing of 2m, maximum of 6 persons per group/team allowed, wearing masks at all times.
- Support team areas to be clearly delineated and cordoned off in line with the square metre rule, ensuring adequate passageway between areas.

### **Climbing**

- Social distancing of 2m to be maintained where possible
- Groups of climbers in accordance with the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments.
- No sharing of personal equipment
- Regular disinfection of equipment

### **Combat Sports (all disciplines including Judo, Karate, Boxing, Wrestling)**

- No sharing of personal equipment
- Any apparatus/mats to be disinfected after use by each individual,
- Apparatus must be thoroughly disinfected between use and if possible to be used outdoors.
- Percentage duration of contact training in each session is limited as specified in the applicable section otherwise minimum distancing of 2.5m applies.

### **Cricket**

- Social distancing of 2m to be observed, where possible
- Use of saliva to shine the ball is prohibited
- Ball to be disinfected prior to use and every 20min, and recommended to be disinfected before every pitch
- No sharing of equipment

### **Cycling**

- Bicycles should not be shared unless disinfected after each use
- 2m distance to be kept
- Avoiding cycling in other athletes' slipstream

### **Darts**

- No sharing of equipment unless disinfected after each use
- Distance of at least 2.5m to be maintained
- Regular wiping of equipment between play
- Boards must be minimum of 2.5m apart
- Facemask or visor recommended to be worn if playing indoors



- Not allowed in premises closed by means of the 'Closure of Places open to the Public Order'

### ***Dressage***

- Only individual saddles and other equipment to be used
- Minimum distance of 2m to be kept
- Avoiding riding in another rider's slipstream

### ***Fencing***

- Social distancing of 2m applies
- Any equipment should be thoroughly disinfected prior to and after use, no sharing of personal equipment

### ***Fitness***

- Sessions must be held in defined areas (both indoors and outdoors) allowing for a minimum of 6 square metres for each person. A maximum of two groups of 6 persons may undertake fitness together (total of 12 persons) as long as each group of 6 keeps to their clearly defined and marked area, (which should be marked with cones/bottles/bags/other) and with at least 3 metres between areas.
- Each participant is to remain in the same area, with no changing of positions in relation to the room/area used and other participants
- Any equipment and mats should be thoroughly disinfected prior to and after use, no sharing of personal equipment. Participants should bring their own towels and other equipment where possible
- Circuit sessions are strictly not allowed
- Bodyweight exercises are encouraged

### ***Fishing***

- Minimum distance of 2m to be kept between individuals

### ***Football***

- Ball recommended to be disinfected between plays or every 20 minutes
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off, respecting the square metre rule.

### ***Golf***

- Minimum distance of 2m to be kept between individuals
- Sharing of balls and other equipment is allowed only with disinfection between use as appropriate

### ***Gymnastics***

- Social distancing of 2.5m applies, where possible
- Any equipment should be thoroughly disinfected prior to and after use, no sharing of personal equipment

### ***Handball***

- Ball to be disinfected between plays
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off, respecting the square metre rule.

### ***Hockey***

- Ball to be disinfected between plays or every 20 minutes
- No sharing of equipment
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off, respecting the square metre rule.



### **Horse Polo**

- Social distancing of 2m to be observed, where possible

### **Horse Racing**

- Sulkies and other equipment such as helmets, goggles, whips, and body protectors shall not be shared between drivers.
- 2m distance shall be kept
- Avoid riding in slipstream.
- Keep open and safe distance from any horse side by side
- Facemask or visor to be worn by all handlers

### **Kendo**

- Social distancing of 2m applies, while geared up, otherwise 2.5m.
- Any equipment should be thoroughly disinfected prior to and after use, no sharing of personal equipment

### **Model Aircrafts**

- 2m distance to be kept
- Use of facemask or visor is encouraged

### **Netball**

- Ball to be disinfected between plays

### **Rowing**

- No team member mixing/crossovers
- Social distancing of 2m applies

### **Rugby**

- Ball recommended to be disinfected between plays or every 20 minutes
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off, respecting the square metre rule.

### **Sailing (at sea)**

- All classes of boat allowed, including model boats
- No sharing of personal equipment. Shared dinghies to be thoroughly disinfected before/after each use.
- Maximum crew on keel boats: the number of persons on board must be in accordance with either the Groups of Persons in Residential Properties Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments, or the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments, and may not exceed the maximum capacity as stipulated as per certification insurance/CE plate. This requirement is not applicable in the case of keelboats training for, and racing in, high level events for which the yacht is duly registered.
- 2m distancing applies to sailors on a boat
- No team member mixing/crossovers

### **Scuba Diving & Deep sea diving**

- No sharing of personal/intimate equipment or breathing apparatus.
- Thorough disinfection of all equipment prior to and after use is imperative. Equipment that is rented out must be disinfected, with each piece rented to/by only 1 user per day.
- Diver Groups allowed in accordance with the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments, unless the groups of persons all come from the same household



- Social distancing (2m) still applies while on boats, meaning vessel must be large enough to accommodate the divers, in accordance with the Standards for Transport Service Providers and for Passengers using Transport Services.

### ***Shooting***

- No sharing of personal equipment. Equipment is to be thoroughly disinfected prior to and after use,
- Use of facemask or visor is encouraged when possible (indoors)
- 2m social distancing where possible

### ***Skate Boarding***

- Maintain social distancing of 2m
- No skateboarding in another individual's slipstream
- Groups of skateboarders in accordance with the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments, unless the groups of persons all come from the same household.

### ***Squash***

- No sharing of racquets.
- Balls to be disinfected every 20 minutes and in between sets

### ***Surfing (at sea)***

- Minimum distance of 2m to be kept where possible
- Avoid surfing in another individual's slipstream.

### ***Swimming***

- Maximum number of swimmers per 25m lane: 6
- Swimmers must start from opposite ends every alternate lane.
- Starting times staggered to avoid congregation of athletes at end of pool
- Chlorinated water is to be kept above 0.5mg/l Free Chlorine
- Pools to abide by Obligatory Conditions and Guidelines issued for outdoor & indoor pools.
- Maximum capacity must be in-line with these conditions as well as the area conditions set out for pools.

### ***Synchronised Swimming***

- As per swimming guidelines above
- Non-contact group routines of up to 6 persons allowed.
- Social distancing of 2m to be maintained at all times

### ***Tennis and Padel***

- Social distancing of 2 m is still applicable
- No sharing of personal equipment
- Balls may be marked with an X or a O indicating which individual(s) is/are allowed to handle them

### ***Table Tennis***

- Singles only
- Equipment to be disinfected prior to and after use, no sharing.
- Balls to be disinfected in between games and at least every 20 minutes
- Tables must be minimum of 2.5m apart

### ***Triathlon***

- 2m distance to be kept where possible
- Avoiding cycling in other athletes' slipstream
- No drink stations (athletes to bring their own bottles)



### ***Volleyball***

- Permissible only in a sport venue
- Ball to be disinfected between plays or every 20 minutes
- Social distancing of 2m to be observed, where possible
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off, respecting the square metre rule.

### ***Table Football***

- Equipment to be disinfected prior to and after use
- Balls to be disinfected every 20 minutes
- Facemasks or visors should be worn where possible

### ***Ten pin Bowling***

- Equipment to be disinfected prior to and after use, no sharing.
- Team play with no team mixing recommended
- Social distancing of 2.5m
- Facemasks or visors to be worn

### ***Waterpolo***

- Ball to be disinfected in between sets, or every 15 minutes
- Training areas for each group are to be clearly delineated, marked and cordoned off, respecting the square metre rule.
- Chlorinated pool water is to be kept above 0.5mg/l Free Chlorine
- Pools also to abide by Obligatory Conditions and Guidelines issued for outdoor & indoor pools. Maximum capacity must be in line with these conditions as well as the area conditions set out for pools.

### ***Weightlifting/powerlifting***

- Social distancing of 2.5m applies
- Any equipment should be thoroughly disinfected prior to and after use, no sharing of personal equipment



## **Annex B: Vigorous/High Intensity Physical Activity**

***Vigorous activity requires a large amount of effort and causes rapid breathing, sweating and a substantial increase in heart rate. In general, if one is doing vigorous-intensity activity, he/she will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Examples of vigorous physical activity include:***

- Jogging or running
- Swimming at a steady pace
- Cycling at a steady pace or on uphill terrain
- Tennis
- Squash
- Sports, like football, rugby, basketball, netball, handball, hockey, waterpolo and beach volley
- High Impact Aerobics
- Gymnastics
- Aerobic dancing
- Horseback riding
- Playing polo
- Spinning
- Cross fit training
- Boxing
- Wrestling

## Annex C: Procedure for requesting approval for elite / high level athletes to partake in Sport under Section C of the Mandatory Standards for Sport Activities

The definition of high level and elite sport is determined by the Superintendent of Public Health in consultation with SportMalta. Approval is required for sport activities under Section C above and may only be sought by sport associations that are registered with SportMalta

Sport Associations may seek approval by sending an email to [covid19.sport@sportmalta.org.mt](mailto:covid19.sport@sportmalta.org.mt)  
Requests are to be made separately for each individual athlete / for each team.

Sport Discipline:	
Individual / Team Sport:	Team Name
Name & Surname	Include names of all athletes that form part of a team
Event(s) in which athlete or team represented Malta in since March 2019	
Level of named event(s)	GSSE/European/World/Commonwealth/Olympic
Event for which athlete or team is due (registered) to represent Malta in until Dec 2021	
Level of named event(s)	GSSE/European/World/Commonwealth/Olympic
Classification within top division league since March 2019	
Training location	
COVID Liaison offer for Association / Club responsible for athlete/team training	

A copy of an approval provided by SportMalta must be kept by the coach/athlete on site for all sessions and must be made available as necessary.

Athletes are to have their ID card available at all times should this be required for verification purposes.

SportMalta must be informed of any planned match/game/event among high level/elite athletes. The health authorities reserve the right to specify any further procedures should these be deemed necessary.

## Annex D: Procedure for requesting approval of Sports Competitions, Leagues and Events

Only competitions, leagues and events of a competitive nature endorsed by SportMalta are allowed, may be organized for registered athletes only. Sport competitions/leagues/events including games/matches must be scheduled in advance and can only be organised by an association/federation/club registered with SportMalta, for registered athletes only.

Approval is required for the organisation of Sports Competition, Leagues and Events, and may only be sought by sport associations/federations/clubs that are registered with SportMalta.

The health authorities reserve the right to specify any further procedures should these be deemed necessary.

Sport Associations may seek approval by sending an email to:

[covid19.sport@sportmalta.org.mt](mailto:covid19.sport@sportmalta.org.mt)

Requests are to be made separately for each competition, league or event.

Sport /Sport Discipline/s:	
Category of event:	E1 / E2
International event (E3)	Y/N
Association/Federation/Club/Organiser	Association/Federation/Club Name/Organiser
Name of Sport competition/ league/event	
Proposed dates / schedule	
Proposed venue/location of Sport competition/league/event	
Is the Sport Venue/location a registered venue with SportMalta	Y/N
Request for approval of Temporary Sport Venue	Y/N
Expected number of participants (if event is split or staggered, please provide details of different groups and or sub-events)	
Required number of officials	
In the case of matches/games: details of competing teams	Team names
COVID Liaison offer for Organising Authority responsible for event	

A copy of an approval provided by SportMalta must be kept by the organising authority on site and must be made available, as necessary.

Athletes are to have their ID card available at all times should this be required for verification purposes.