

COVID-19 Return to Play Guidelines - Victoria

INTRODUCTION

Golf Australia is the governing body for golf in Australia and in conjunction with Golf Victoria provides the following Return to Sport Plan for all golf clubs and facilities in Victoria to utilise. Golf Australia understands that some clubs/facilities have created internal resource documents to assist this process and seeks to provide, through this document, further detail that can be utilised by clubs/facilities to finalise their return to play plans under the updated government guidelines.

This plan addresses how golf clubs and facilities in Victoria can successfully manage operations under the loosening of Victorian government restrictions which will take effect from Wednesday, May 13.

The nature of our sport is that it is played over vast spaces of land in comparatively small groups. We are in the privileged position of being able to resume operations ahead of many other sports. That being said, Golf Australia and our clubs/facilities must ensure that steps to modify both play and behaviour to ensure that the risk of transmission is minimised are in place.

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OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

The following are the principles in which these guidelines have been developed on, and how clubs and facilities should act in this crisis.

1. That the return to sport in these times is a privilege and not a right
2. Participants need to minimise their time at the venue
3. Participants need to minimise contact with other people at the venue, fellow participants, and staff alike
4. Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that congregation of people are not permitted at your facility in alignment with the outdoor mass gathering ban of not more than 20 people in any one place
5. We all have a responsibility to do everything possible to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus and to ensure that we act appropriately during this crisis.

METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE & MITCHELL SHIRE (RESTRICTED AREA) RESTRICTIONS

On Tuesday 7th July the Victorian Government announced that from 11.59pm on Wednesday the 8th of July, that Metropolitan Melbourne & the Mitchell Shire (Restricted Area) will return to stage 3 restrictions.

Golf Operations

Golf will be a permitted activity under the directions with the following conditions.

- Travel in or out of the restricted area for the purpose of playing golf is not permitted.
- Within the restricted area;
 - Groups will be limited to two people unless they all reside in the same household. For the avoidance of doubt, groups of three or four will only be allowed if all members of the group reside in the same household. Groups of three where two people reside in the same household, and one does not, are not allowed.
 - It is vital that participants arrive at the facility immediately prior to their pre-booked tee time and depart immediately after completion of their round
 - No hire equipment, including golf clubs, pull buggies, or golf carts, may be made available for hire under any circumstances
 - Club/facility driving ranges, putting greens and chipping areas cannot operate unless a distance of at least 100 metres between groups of 2 can be maintained. Please note, we are continuing to advocate for this restriction to change per the above.
 - Club competitions should not be conducted, but handicapping of scores through non-contact means is allowed
 - 1 to 1 coaching can continue in a non-contact, socially distanced setting
 - Indoor coaching is not permitted

Clubhouse Operations

Within the restricted area, clubhouses must close for dine in service. Clubs & facilities may trade for takeaway service provided they can meet all physical distancing conditions in doing so.

Golf Service Centres/Pro Shops must limit the number of people within the facility to comply with the requirement for patrons to keep a minimum of 1.5 metres apart.

For further information, please see the DHHS website [HERE](#)

Further Advice

[Click here](#) for the DHHS advice on coronavirus restrictions.

The relevant directions for clubs/facilities within a restricted area are:

- Area Directions (No 3)
- Stay at Home Directions (Restricted Areas)
- Restricted Activity (Restricted Areas)

OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA RESTRICTIONS

From July 9, Clubs & Facilities have an obligation to check identification of members, guests and visitors, and refuse service to someone whose primary residence is within the restricted area or metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire.

Golf Operations

Based on the Victorian Government announcement loosening COVID-19 restrictions within Victoria, Golf Australia provides the following recommendations.

Please note, this information should be read in conjunction with Play Management guidelines that are located at <https://www.golf.org.au/club-guidance-managing-play-in-the-covid-19-environment>.

- There must be a bookings process for all attendance at the club or facility. There should be no 'roll-up play'. Reasons for this are two-fold;
 - It is a requirement of the State Government directive that the operator of a facility must keep the following details of people who attend the facility; name, phone number and time of visit
 - To minimise congregations around entry and exit points, proshops and tee blocks.
- Golf can be played in groups of four
- Club competitions can be run, including internal team events & club championships, ie 4-ball matches. If a Club Chooses to run these events, then it must follow the guidelines for gatherings by prohibiting spectators.
- Avoid shotgun starts
- Carts must only have one occupant unless they reside in the same household
- Consideration should be given to submission of scorecards via non-contact measures as outlined below:
 - MMS, App, E-Mail, Phone call

General hygiene principles required, including cleaning of facilities

Golf Australia has previously communicated to clubs that their staff and volunteers should exhibit a heightened awareness of personal hygiene as has been encouraged by state and federal health departments and they should display a heightened regard for the sanitation of surfaces, of which their cleaning chemical provider will be able to provide guidance on.

Golf Australia has provided Club & Facilities with specific easy to implement changes to regular operations to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These include:

- Placing social distancing signage around the clubhouse along with hand sanitisers
- Sanitise motorised carts, rental clubs, push buggy and sand bucket handles and air compressor handles before and after use on all occasions.
- Sanitise all greenkeeping machinery before and after use on all occasions
- Removal of rakes from bunkers
- Encourage golfers to wear their glove when removing the flag stick. Refer temporary modification of the rules section which gives clubs the choice to adopt policies around flagsticks and bunkers.

- Remove cash transactions and encourage 'Pay-Wave' transactions where no contact is required
- Remove small pins from practice putting greens
- No dollar bets
- No hand shaking

Please note, especially with regards to sanitation of motorised carts and rental clubs, that if clubs/facilities are not confident in ensuring adherence to COVID-19 hygiene principles then consideration should be given to not offering these options to players.

Management of people who present who are unwell, experiencing any cold, flu or fever type symptoms

As per health guidelines Golf Australia continues to recommend to clubs/facilities to advise their members and guests if they are experiencing any cold, flu or fever type symptoms they must not visit the golf facility. Additionally, we recommend that these persons should seek to get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

Access and egress protocols

Players should arrive at your facility no more than 10 minutes prior to their tee time. Upon arrival, players should head directly to the Pro Shop or check-in area, whilst adhering to density protocols. If the pro shop is part of the licenced area, then it is recommended that entry be limited to the doorway. Scorecards, if in use, should be collected and players should head directly to the tee.

At the conclusion of the round, players should immediately return to their car and depart the facility. Unless utilising a food and beverage service (following prescribed gathering guidelines), at no stage should players remain at the facility. Clubs/facilities should ensure that there are no mass gathering opportunities available to players in any area of your facility.

Requirements of non-sporting attendees such as parents

Per published Australian Institute of Sport Principles, community sport and recreation activities should limit those present to the minimum required to support the participants (e.g. one parent or carer per child if necessary), who are to keep away from all participants and observe social distancing guidelines of 1.5 metres per person.

Clubhouse Operations

From June 1, Clubs will be able to open their Clubhouse for dine-in service, provided they adhere to strict conditions. A range of resources on the matter exist on the Victorian DHHS & Business Victoria Websites.

[DHHS Restaurant & Café Advice](#)
[Victorian Government Guidelines for Hospitality Businesses](#)
[Business Victoria Resources](#)

Change rooms / Toilets

Change room facilities and indoor toilets can be used, with a maximum of 20 people only, with a limit of one person per four square metres.

Golf Australia recommends that items such as shoe cleaners, sun creams, hairbrushes and combs, hair gel and hair dryers from locker rooms should be removed.

Where possible, leave doors ajar so the need to push doors open or turn door knobs is removed. Per above, it is important that clubs/facilities are comfortable in managing these restrictions.

Greenkeeping operations

Clubs/facilities should continue to consider the use of split shifts for greenkeeping operations.

Practice Facilities – Driving Ranges & Practice Greens

Attention must be given to these areas to ensure that 20 person group limits and density requirements are adhered to at times. Clubs and facilities should clearly delineate spaces on your range and practice greens which will ensure social distancing is adhered to.

Clubs and Facilities must implement policies and procedures that ensure they remain compliant to the government directives. If you club or facility is intending to open your practice facilities, a booking process is recommended to ensure the data capture and social distancing requirements are adhered to.

Further Advice

[Click here](#) for the DHHS advice on coronavirus restrictions.

The relevant directions for clubs/facilities outside of a restricted area are:

- Restricted Activities (No 12)
- Stay Safe (No 4)

TEMPORARY MODIFICATIONS TO THE RULES OF GOLF

On 19/3/2020, the R&A announced a series of temporary measures to combat the hygiene implications associated with some of the requirements of the Rules of Golf. These temporary measures allow the Rules of Golf, and Model Local Rules, to be modified as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

This information can be accessed at <https://www.golf.org.au/club-guidance-managing-play-in-the-covid-19-environment> and it is recommended that clubs/facilities familiarise themselves with these modifications.

When considering these new options, clubs should be mindful of the following:

- In order to take advantage of these new Local Rule options, your club will need to announce which options it is bringing into effect for play at your facility – these options do not automatically come into effect at your facility as a result of the R&A announcement.
- Scores returned from competitions with any of the new Local Rules in effect must be processed through GOLF Link unless your club has been instructed otherwise by Golf Australia or your State Association.
- These Local Rule options are temporary and are related to COVID-19 concerns. They will be available to clubs until Golf Australia advises otherwise.

Kind Regards,



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