

OPERATIONS GUIDANCE FOR TRACK AND FIELD COMPETITION



Updated 11th March 2021
Guidance can change

Introduction

This operations guide has been created to ensure that a safe return to competition can take place. It has seven key sections:

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England Athletics will provide guidance that interprets UK Government guidance relevant to the sport of athletics and running. Updates will be provided through the England Athletics website and social media channels.

Please note: UK Government guidance supersedes all advice given by England Athletics. It must be always followed. We recommend that you always stay up to date with the latest UK Government guidance and any subsequent guidance England Athletics produce.

The safety and wellbeing of all athletes, runners, coaches, officials and the wider community is at the heart of any guidance that England Athletics is distributing. **It is important to say that any return to activity must take account of local conditions and any risk assessment for normal activities should be undertaken as well as ensuring that all UK Government guidance around COVID-19 is considered.**

It is the responsibility of each athlete, runner, coach, club, and venue to make that assessment based on their local environment. Risk assessment must consider mitigations and plans for when activities do not go as expected. Planning scenarios around, for example, an injury occurring to an athlete and the need to support that athlete while social distancing should be undertaken (see section 6a)

Section 1: Your Health

It is of paramount importance that all those operating within athletics and running environments – including competition personnel, coaches and leaders, athletes and runners – monitor themselves for any signs of Coronavirus, as well as general health.

- Please follow advice from the NHS and/or medical practitioner in all cases.
- Athletes and officials in the higher risk groups should follow any medical guidance they have been given about ensuring good health and welfare. If they have further concerns, please consult with your medical or national organisations for support and best practice.
- For those who are showing symptoms please see the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>
- Prior to the event everyone associated with a competition should monitor themselves for any signs of Covid-19, as well as general health. Everyone should follow the advice of their GP or medical practitioner in all cases. Anyone showing signs of ill health or Covid-19 **should not attend** the competition, in any capacity.
- For those returning to activity after a Covid infection please see 'Your Covid Recovery' <https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk>
- You might feel relieved and excited that lockdown is easing, meaning you can return to some of your usual activities in athletics and running. But you might also find yourself feeling less positive about the changes and may move through a range of difficult thoughts and feelings. Our partner Mind have produced some guidance here <https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-policy-work/sport-physical-activity-and-mental-health/get-active-feel-good/individuals-return-to-play/>

Section 2: Athletes

Checklist for Competition

- Check and follow the latest UK Government guidance.
- Check with the competition provider for their competition policy.
- Prearrange with the competition provider for your coach to attend if you wish
- Young athletes (u18) should seek permission from their parent or carer to compete
- Follow the venue guidance.
- Follow event specific guidance (see appendix 6b).
- Follow public health guidance.
- Carry hand sanitiser with you.
- Maintain social distancing (appropriate to the activity).
- Take part if fit and healthy to do so.
- Let your club and/or coach know if you are returning to activity from a COVID-19 infection.
- Ensure you have enough food and hydration for the competition.
- No socialising before and after the session.
- Do not take part if showing symptoms are isolating.

Disability athletes and runners

- Disabled athletes requiring support are permitted to bring one carer with them to the competition. This could include athletes with an intellectual impairment, athletes needing support tying shoelaces, changing, stretching etc. Coaches should maintain social distancing guidance.
- Athlete Assistance: Athletes in the following classes are permitted assistance on the Field of Play - RR1-3, T/F11-12, F31-33 & F51-54 (Must provide their own Bib). Athletes in other classes requiring assistance must submit an Assistance Form.
- Athletes will be permitted to use their personal throwing frames and straps, RaceRunning Frames and Racing Wheelchairs. Hygiene guidance should be followed at all times.
- Wheelchair Racing: Athletes should be permitted additional time / laps pre-race to warmup and set compensators. This should be in the lane they are racing in. Chairs may be checked by officials using rulers and asking athletes to demonstrate working steerer / brake
- Seated Throws: Extra time should be allowed for throwing frames to be moved and secured in place, whilst socially distancing. All seated throwers (F31-34 / F51-F57) permitted assistance for implement retrieval. An additional assistant may be permitted onto the FOP to support tie-downs. Frames may be measured using rulers (not touching).
- Refer to guidance on Guide Dog welfare via Guide Dogs UK.
- Guide Runners: competing up to the defined distance in track races can occur with a guide runner provided
 - i) Both guide and runner should understand the risk associated with competing
 - ii) Contact details should be held by both parties to ensure track and trace can be followed
 - iii) Ideally, where possible, both parties should be from within the same household or support bubble. However, if this is not possible then the same runner/ guide pairing should be maintained.
 - iv) Running tethers to be cleaned thoroughly between uses and hands washed before/after activity.
 - v) Guide runners should be especially mindful that a significant proportion of visually impaired people also have underlying health conditions so could be at additional risk. Our friends at British Blind Sport are currently working on some resources to support visually impaired people to stay physically active at home. Visit britishblindsport.org.uk

Section 3: Competition providers checklist

KEEPING UP TO DATE

- Check the latest UK Government guidance, especially concerning social distancing, hygiene and any guidance specific to athletics.
- Check the latest England Athletics guidance.
- Check the event group checklist (See appendix 6b).
- Check with facility provider guidance.

BEFORE THE COMPETITION

- Apply for a Competition License. All competitions to have a valid track and field licence for results to appear on Power of 10. Licence applications opens on the 15th March 2021. [Click here to apply for a track and field licence.](#)
- Put in place a Covid secure environment, appoint a Covid coordinator, carry out a risk assessment and put in place an event management plan. (see section 3)
- Promote online entries prior to the event to ensure numbers and scheduling is managed.
- Ensure prior arrangements are made so that UK Government advice (for example, on social distancing) can be followed at the competition.
- Pre-event communication to all participants must include reminders not to attend the event if they have been unwell or are self-isolating in the last 14 days
- Remind the athletes, officials and volunteers to check on their physical and mental health and direct them to the resources on the EA website.
- If applicable ensure there is sufficient food and hydration.
- Be aware that changing facilities and toilets may not be open.

DURING THE COMPETITION

- Ensure there is adequate PPE on site (face masks/gloves) for those who need it due to their duties on site, may arrive without suitable PPE, or who may ask for it.
- Ensure you build time in the timetable to enable safe access and exit, social distancing and adequate cleaning to take place.
- Adapt competition layout to minimise the risk of social distancing measures being compromised – including with members of the public.
- Keep a register of everyone at the competition to facilitate possible test and trace requests.
- Events must be timetabled and planned according to pre-entries
- Enough time must be planned between heats/pools/events to ensure social distancing can be maintained throughout including any warmup periods.
- Do not congregate before or after an event, or at the finish line.
- Ensure all hygiene guidance on use of equipment and facilities is followed.

POST COMPETITION

- Post competition the venue must be returned to its original state, ensuring all venue equipment is thoroughly cleaned in line with the venue and government guidelines.
- A register of competitors, officials and all volunteers associated with the event must be kept for test and trace requirements. Data should be stored securely for 21 days.
- Each competitor must be briefed to ensure if they do test positive for COVID-19 within 48 hours of the competition UKA must be notified. Click [for the link to the report form](#)

Section 3: Competition Operations

COVID-Secure Environment

Track and Field competitions must operate within a Covid-Secure environment, according to NGB guidance until further updates.

The key requirements for a Covid-Secure Environment.

1. Ensure a Covid-19 Coordinator is in place
2. Ensure the venue/environment has a Covid action plan and risk assessment*
3. Ensure the competition complies with UK Government guidance around social distancing and hygiene before, during and after the activity. This would include careful planning to ensure all Covid requirements can be maintained, and venue numbers are not exceeded at any point of the event or at any site within the venue.
4. Ensure a clear communication plan is in place for all participants at and event and pre-event information is given to all groups where it is needed.
5. Competition providers must have a process in place for capturing contact details of all members/ participants who take part in every competition to facilitate possible track and trace requests**
6. Competition providers must ensure that adequate cleaning and sanitising provisions are in place so that everyone at the competition can maintain good hygiene.
7. Sessions that include children and young people under the age of 18 should be carefully planned to ensure oversight of the child.

*An action plan is a document that outlines the process you are following to make your competition Covid-secure and would detail information such as the owner (Covid-19 Co-ordinator), risk assessments, tracking protocol and communication plans with all members and participants. You will need to liaise with the facility provider.

UKA public liability cover will apply to competitions that are licensed and promoted by an affiliated Competition Provider. A licence will only be awarded if all Covid-19 regulations are applied to the competition.

COVID-19 Co-ordinator

Competition providers should appoint a designated Covid-19 Co-ordinator (preferably with experience in health and safety in a professional or volunteer setting) whose responsibilities are to work with the club committee to co-ordinate the duties in this checklist.

COVID-19 Co-ordinator: Role & Responsibilities

- Liaise with the facility manager in relation to all matters concerning Covid-19.
- Produce site-based risk assessments to ensure that the competition is compliant with the latest UK Government guidelines.
- Ensure all necessary levels of risk mitigation are in place prior to competition.
- Ensure the competition is prepared and has planned for circumstances of injuries or accidents occurring, with mitigating procedures and plans in place to resolve them while maintaining compliance with relevant UK Government guidance (e.g. social distancing measures).
- Ensure volunteers, officials, athletes and parents/guardians are adhering to the guidance.
- Ensure the competition complies with the facility restrictions and guidance.
- Ensure the competition has a process in place for capturing details of all members/participants who take part in every club session to facilitate possible track and trace requests.

The Covid-19 Co-ordinator role is not expected to take full responsibility for all health and safety, or risk assessment protocols implemented by the competition. It is the responsibility of the competition organiser to ensure protocols are implemented and reviewed across the competition with the Covid-19 Co-ordinator acting as the key point of contact for related matters.

The Meeting Manager must not have any other official duty at the competition, they must coordinate with the Covid-19 Coordinator or appropriate person to ensure that all social distancing guidance, hygiene guidance, and flow routes are maintained.

Covid Action Plan

Competition COVID-19 risk assessments and actions plans will be dependent upon each individual situation and local facility set up. In your action plan you will need to show your competitors and volunteers how the competition plan to manage the number of athletes and volunteers is going to be carried out. You will need to consider the following;

- Entry and registration systems.
- Site access, toilets and first aid when determining overall competition capacity.
- Arrival & Departure of athletes, spectators and volunteers / officials to avoid large groups congregating.
- Parent or Carer pick up and drops off points taking into parking and entrances/exits
- The process of registering athletes so that the requirements of test and trace is adhered too and good hygiene and social distancing is maintained particularly when distributing bibs
- Details of specific procedures relating to the use of equipment and facilities and appropriate hygiene guidance based on the COVID risk assessment (See section 6).
- Timetabling and call up schedule to enable social distancing and adequate cleaning to take place.
- Zoning certain track areas or competition /warm up / Cool down areas to ensure distinct groups can operate together within the guidelines.
- The restrictions for the use of indoor space for warm ups.
- The layout of call rooms is large enough to allow for social distancing.
- Minimising noise such as playing loud music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting. (This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission - particularly from aerosol and droplet transmission).
- Displaying results using of Open Track as Results board are not permitted.
- Spectating space, ensuring social distancing, is clearly marked, for parents or carers who need to stay at the competition for safeguarding reasons.
- Clear signage in place to help enforce social distancing, cleaning and hygiene measures. Signage templates can be found [here](#)
- All officials' licenses and DBS checks are up to date.

PLEASE NOTE: England Athletics is not imposing a limit to the number of participants that can be at a facility at any given time as part of a competition due to the different nature of facilities and will depend on the factors above.

Welcoming people back to your competitions

Good communication is key to supporting people back to competition. Whilst some will be excited and full of enthusiasm others may feel anxious and unsure about returning. Reassuring people and letting them know what is happening will be important in welcoming athletes and officials back.

4 Key messages to consider:

1. How do I enter and what do I need to know before I arrive at the competition?

- Share communication about event entry, registration, on the day event protocols like cleaning regimes etc. Tailor these to who you are contacting. Consider a virtual Officials briefing prior to the event day.

2. How will people be kept safe?

- Promote any procedures and practises you have introduced. Share your risk assessment and action plans.
- Ensure the Covid Coordinator is visible and contactable during the competition.

3. What is the latest guidance for the meeting and my actual event?

- Share any new advice from England Athletics, Sport England or direct from the UK Government and provide details how your club will follow them

4. How will the rules be enforced?

- Make people aware of how new rules will be enforced including how you will hold people to account if they break them. Make them aware before they arrive.

For more information on tips for how to communicate to athletes, officials and volunteers and for a template communications plan please go to the [Clubmatters](#)

Section 4: Officials

- Officials are essential for the delivery of licensed competitions. The safety and wellbeing of officials must be considered in the planning phase of any competition.
- The competition provider must contact the officials directly and only seek advice and assistance from the [Cofsec](#) or Tri – Regional contact if the number of Officials required for the competition cannot be met.
- Officials should be selected within proximity to the venue. Only once all avenues for suitably qualified Officials locally have been explored, can the competition provider expand the search further.
- Officials appointed in a role which will have face to face contact with other people, less than 2m, must wear appropriate PPE. This must be provided by the competition provider.
- Any official or volunteer who will work indoors must be provided with a face mask to wear for the duration of their activity at the competition.
- Officials and other volunteers should be informed of food and beverage arrangements prior to the event and informed if they need to provide their own.
- Any Official or Volunteer cleaning surfaces must be properly equipped. [Please see guidance HERE for cleaning in a non-healthcare setting.](#)

Section 6: Appendices

6a) England Athletics COVID-19 Risk Assessment

All competitions must complete a COVID-19 specific risk assessment. We have initially populated this template risk assessment for you by including a sample entry related to the spread of COVID-19 and to illustrate what is expected. Look at how this might apply to your competitions, continue by identifying the hazards that are the real priorities in your case and complete the table to suit your venue and activity. This template is to be used as a guide to complete a full risk assessment to enable you to carry out your activity safely.

Name of Competition and Venue								
Coach/Name of Risk Assessor:								
Date of Risk Assessment:								
What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Risk Rating	Controls Required	Risk Rating	Additional Controls	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus	Official, athlete or volunteer - Vulnerable groups - Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions. - Anyone else who physically comes in contact with other people in relation to your competition	M	Hand Washing Hand washing facilities in place (with soap and water). Stringent hand washing taking place. See hand washing guidance. Gel sanitisers in any area where washing facilities not readily available. Cleaning Frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches, reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods and any equipment. Session Planning Group session plans should aim to minimise the risk of athletes interacting with or impacting on social distancing of members of the public.	L	To help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) reminding everyone of the public health advice. Ensure any use of equipment is restricted to one athlete while being used and that thorough cleaning is carried out prior to and after any training session. Coaches or leaders and athletes or runners to be reminded on a regular basis to wash their hands for 20 seconds with water and soap and the importance of proper drying with disposable towels. Also reminded to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – Follow ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands.			

This is not an exhaustive list and we highly recommend that you complete a full risk assessment for your locations. This resource provides guidance and does not constitute formal professional advice. The information in this resource is based on advice provided by the Health and Safety Executive, but we recommend England Athletics coaches and clubs seek relevant expert advice in this subject area when required. [UKA Health and Safety guidance can be found here](#) and [UKA Risk Assessment guidance can be found here](#).

6b) Event Guidance

Event Guidance March 2021	
100m to 400m inc. hurdles and relays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean all touch points between events • Athletes own blocks or sanitised between each user • Hurdles can be used by a coach and athlete provided the equipment is thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session. • Relay batons sanitised before and after use. Athletes sanitise hands before and after relay training and competition. Suggest face masks for relay warm up, low level drills, where cannot socially distance. • Wheelchairs athletes own or sanitised between users • Athletes in lanes (step 1,2, & 3 8 athletes in lanes) • Minimise gathering before and after races
800m to 1500m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal racing format for middle distance events • Pacemakers allowed • Wheelchairs athletes own or sanitised between users • Minimise gathering before and after races
3000m to 10000m including Steeplechase and Walks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal racing format for longer distance events • Pacemakers allowed • Up to 20 individuals in longer events • Wheelchairs athletes own or sanitised between users • Minimise gathering before and after races • Steeplechase barriers, the water jump, and hurdles can be used by a coach and athlete provided the equipment is thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session.
High Jump & Pole Vault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mat is cleaned in line with manufacturers and UK Government guidance, before and after each group • Operators must contact the manufacturer of the jump's mats in use at their facility to confirm whether the proposed cleaning products can be used safely on their equipment. Disinfecting landing beds effectively against Coronavirus is the responsibility of the facility operator. The disinfectant used for this purpose must not damage or compromise the safety properties of the landing bed, or cause harm to staff, volunteers, or athletes. • If sharing, poles should be re-gripped before use and any part of the pole outside of the grip should be cleaned before use by another athlete. • Bars should be cleaned using an anti-viral spray or wipe before use and managed by dedicated individuals for a particular session – i.e. one athlete and the coach and cleaned between sessions.
Long & Triple Jump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landing pit is fully cleaned by turning and raking of the sand before and after each group, and rake between individual athlete/user. A venue operator may choose to use a high mist spray of sterilising fluid of a suitable concentration to neutralise the virus, this can be sprayed over the sand after use, as well as a turn and rake. Public Health England cleaning guidance is here. • Equipment such as rakes and measuring tapes should be managed by dedicated individuals for a particular session – i.e. one athlete or the coach and cleaned between one athlete's series of jumps or between sessions.
Throws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches and athletes should ensure all equipment is used by one athlete and then thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session. • Seated Throws: extra time should be allowed for throwing frames to be moved and secured in place, whilst socially distancing.

Section 7: Disclaimer

Please note that the subject matter covered in this guidance is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific legal advice. Individual circumstances will differ. The information contained in this guidance is given in good faith but any liability of England Athletics Limited or its professional advisors (including their respective members or employees) to you or any third party which may arise out of the reliance by you or any other party of the contents of this guidance is hereby excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. England Athletics Limited and its professional advisors accept no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned, whether caused by negligence or otherwise, to any person acting or refraining from actions as a result of any material in this guidance. We would strongly recommend that you consult professional advisors on specific issues before acting or refraining from action on any of the contents of this guidance.

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