

# OPERATIONS GUIDANCE FOR ATHLETICS & RUNNING TRAINING



Updated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

This guidance might be updated in due course

## Introduction

This operational guidance has been created to ensure that a safe return to athletics and running can take place. It has seven key sections:

1. Your Health
2. Athletes and Runners
3. Coaches and Leaders
4. Affiliated Clubs
5. Venues
6. Appendix (Event Group Information, Risk Assessments, Members with a positive Covid test)
7. Disclaimer

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, 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 club 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 runners 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/> (see flowchart in appendix 6c)
- 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 and Runners

### Checklist for returning to training

- Check and follow the latest UK Government guidance.
- Check with your club, coach or leader on their policy for club, coach, or leader activity.
- 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, coach or leader know if you are returning to activity from a COVID-19 infection.
- Ensure you have enough food and hydration for the session.
- No socialising before and after the session.
- Do not take part if showing symptoms are isolating.

### Disability athletes and runners

Disabled athletes and runners requiring support are permitted to bring one carer with them to training provided this person is part of their normal 'family' unit. This could include athletes with an intellectual impairment, athletes needing support tying shoelaces, changing, stretching etc. Coaches should maintain social distancing guidance.

- Guide running can take place with the following mitigations:
  - i) Both guide and runner should understand the risk associated with taking part in the activity.
  - ii) Activity should take place outdoors.
  - iii) Side-by-side running should be the preferred option.
  - iv) Contact details should be held by both parties to ensure track and trace can be followed if needed.
  - v) 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.
  - vi) Running tethers to be cleaned thoroughly between uses and hands washed before/after activity.
  - vii) 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](http://britishblindsport.org.uk)
- Para 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.
- For seated throws, extra time should be allowed for throwing frames to be moved and secured in place, while maintaining social distancing.
- Be aware that accessible toilets may not be open.
- Refer to guidance on Guide Dog welfare via Guide Dogs UK.

## Section 3: Coaches & Leaders

### Checklist for Coaches and Leaders

#### 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 on our website.
- Check with your athletics club on their policy for club activity.
- Check with facility provider guidance.
- Check the event group checklist (See appendix 6b).

#### BEFORE THE SESSION

- Check in with your athletes or runners on their physical and mental health so you can support them to return to activity safely.
- Follow appropriate hygiene measures, including washing your hands.
- Ensure prior arrangements are made so that UK Government advice (for example, on social distancing) can be followed at the facility.
- Carry out a risk assessment.
- Ensure there is sufficient food and hydration.
- Be aware that changing facilities and toilets may not be open.

#### DURING THE SESSION

- Ensure you build time in between sessions to enable social distancing and adequate cleaning to take place.
- In off-track environments, carefully consider any associated risks.
- Adapt training to minimise the risk of social distancing measures being compromised – including with members of the public.
- Do not coach or lead sessions with multiple groups across different areas of a facility or public space.
- Keep a register of participants to facilitate possible track and trace requests.
- Do not congregate before or after training.
- Ensure all hygiene guidance on use of equipment and facilities is followed.

#### Further considerations

**Coaching license** All coaches and leaders to have a valid UKA Coaching License and a deliver activity permitted within the license terms and conditions

#### Coaching young athletes (under 18s)

For coaching outside of a club or group environment, coaches must ensure they have the permission of the responsible parent or guardian to coach that athlete.

#### Coaching ratios

Our recommended coach / leader to athlete / runner ratio is 1:12 for all settings for all age groups. To be clear for coaches and leader activity, for every 12 runners or athletes in a group at any age group there needs to be at least one coach or leader in place.

## Section 4: Affiliated Clubs

### COVID-Secure Environment

We strongly recommend that affiliated clubs operate within a covid-Secure environment to enable club activity to take place safely. A Covid-secure environment can be any environment. It could be a track, indoor sports venue or an open space, such as a park, fell, trail or road.

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 each activity complies with UK Government guidance around social distancing before, during and after the activity.
4. All clubs, coaches and event providers must have 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\*\*
5. Clubs, coaches and event managers must ensure that adequate hygiene provisions are in place so that everyone at the session maintains good hygiene.
6. Sessions that include children and young people under the age of 18 should be meticulously planned to ensure their needs are catered for.

\*An action plan is a document that outlines the process you are following to make your venue and activity 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 participates.

\*\*This could be through existing club membership forms, the RunTogether platform, updates to booking forms or sign-in processes which we would advise all members complete on a regular basis anyway. As part of the club Covid-19 action plan you should ensure any member or participant who has attended a session and subsequently tested positive for Covid-19 is logged with Covid Coordinator

Please note, for a clubs insurance to be valid, the clubs needs to be affiliated to England Athletics.

## **COVID Co-ordinator**

Clubs should appoint a designated Covid 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 coordinate the duties in this checklist.

### **COVID-19 Co-ordinator: Role & Responsibilities**

- Liaise with the facility manager/landowner in relation to all matters concerning Covid-19.
- Produce site-based risk assessments to ensure that the club is compliant with the latest UK Government guidelines.
- Ensure all necessary levels of risk mitigation are in place prior to training.
- Ensure the club 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, coaches/leaders, athletes and parents/guardians are adhering to the
- guidance.
- Ensure the club complies with the facility restrictions and guidance.
- Ensure the club 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 club. It is the responsibility of the club committee and key officers/volunteers to ensure protocols are implemented and reviewed across the club with the Covid-19 Co-ordinator acting as the key point of contact for related matters.

## Covid Action Plan

Club COVID-19 risk assessments and actions plans will be dependent upon each individual club situation and local facility set up. In your action plan you will need reference procedures that show your members how the club plan to manage the number of training groups and number of athletes or runners. You will need to consider the following;

- Booking systems (if implemented).
- Site access, toilets and first aid when determining overall training session capacity.
- Arrival & Departure of club members to avoid large groups congregating.
- Parent or Carer pick up and drops off points taking into parking and entrances/exits
- Sign in on arrival to ensure the requirement of track and trace is adhered to.
- 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).
- Zoning certain track areas or training areas to ensure distinct groups can operate together within the guidelines.
- Any local guidance/considerations prior to travel/training when aiming to access trails and mountains or public for off track running.
- Time between sessions to enable social distancing and adequate cleaning to take place.
- Spectating space is clearly marked, for parents or carers who need to stay at a training session for safeguarding reasons.
- Clear signage in place at club training sessions to help enforce social distancing, cleaning and hygiene measures. Signage templates can be found [here](#)
- All coaches' licenses and DBS checks are up-to-date and ensure there is a process for signing off DBS check that is Covid-19 compliant.
- Coaches and leaders are not working with multiple groups across different areas of a facility.

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 club training session due to the diverse nature of training facilities and will depend on the factors above.

## Welcoming members back to your club

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

### 5 Key messages to consider:

1. What is happening within your club?

- Share communication about details like upcoming training sessions, including virtual ones, planning for competition and social events
- This may also include volunteering opportunities

2. How will club members be kept safe?

- Promote any procedures and practises you have introduced to keep safe. You might want to share your risk assessment and action plans.
- Ensure the club welfare officers are contactable during training sessions.

3. Latest Guidance

- 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 the rules will be enforced?

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

3. Why your club is still worth attending?

- Remind people why they love athletics and running and your club by sharing quotes from individuals and images of fun sessions or events

### Examples

The following examples show the kind of messages you can share. Feel free to edit the text and use them in your own communications.

- To help keep us all safe as we return to athletics and running, we've introduced a few new processes. Check out all the information on our website, or just get in touch!
- [Individual] told us they are really looking forward to [e.g. training in person again]. What are you looking forward to about being able to return to [your club's name] after lockdown?
- We want to give a huge thank you to [Individual e.g. volunteer] for their efforts to [e.g. get your clubs facility ready for return]. We really appreciate all your hard work!
- We have been missing spending time with everyone at [your Club's name], so we are going to host a virtual quiz for everyone! Head to our [e.g. Facebook page, website etc.] for the joining details!
- We are so grateful for the efforts of our volunteers during this period. We know not everyone will be able to return in person straightaway, so if you want to continue volunteering from home then just get in touch



**For more information** on tips for how to communicate to your club members and for a template communications plan please go to the [Clubmatters](#)

## Section 5: Venues

### Checklist for facility providers

#### BEFORE OPENING

- Ensure the track operator group (Committee, Facilities Owner, Manager) has completed all relevant plans, procedures and risk assessments, with Covid-19 restrictions added.
- Ensure compliance with venue insurance.
- Ensure deep cleans of all 'open' areas of the facility and equipment take place.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are fully briefed.

#### FACILITIES

- Ensure your clubhouse is only open in a limited way for operational reasons (e.g. to switch on floodlights, as a thoroughfare to access the track or for toilet access).
- Open toilet facilities if you wish, but ensure particular care is taken by those using and cleaning them. Ensure soap and hot water are provided.
- Ensure all fixed and movable equipment has a clear ongoing hygiene plan in place that outlines the pre- and post use cleaning of equipment.
- Ensure clear signage is in place around all equipment.
- Ensure all unnecessary equipment and items are removed from tracks.
- Ensure usual access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained (in some cases this may require access to the clubhouse) and a clear plan for dealing with an incident is available to all users
- Ensure hand sanitisers or wipes are available for use at entrance/exit to venue/ tracks area and in-use equipment.
- Ensure all common touchpoint surfaces (gates, door handles, handrails etc) are cleaned regularly, wearing disposable gloves.
- Ensure measures are in place to minimise encounters between people, including in car parks and at entrances (with clear signage in place).
- Consider marking social distancing at appropriate points, such as the entry gates.
- Encourage athletes to bring their own equipment where possible. Where shared equipment is used, it must be cleaned before and after use with a clear protocol, involving appropriate cleaning wipes and sprays being in place.
- Operate online booking for the track where at all possible, or alternatively phone bookings. Take online or card payments.
- If more than one unit is training on the track at any one point, ensure social distancing measures are not compromised.
- Communicate with your members/ customers clearly and regularly, making them aware in advance of the measures you are putting in place at your venue and the guidelines they are expected to follow.
- Ensure signage on guidelines for taking part safely and promoting hygiene measures is clearly displayed (and remain up-to-date).

- UK Government advice on cleaning can be found [here](#).

### **SAFE SPECTATING**

- Spectating should adhere to UK Government guidance on large events and be within the capacity of the venue.
- Parent/guardian supervision is permitted (one per athlete). Clubs may have welfare policies that stipulate parents/carers of young athletes being in attendance – which still stand in these circumstances.
- The venue should have a clear protocol in place to ensure parents/carers attending are fully aware of their responsibilities in order to comply with all measures put in place to ensure the venue is Covid secure.
- The venue/club should ensure details of parents/carers who are in attendance at a session are recorded in the same way as participants and that they abide by the club's procedures in relation to when not to attend and when to inform the club of any symptoms.

## Section 6: Appendix

### a) England Athletics COVID-19 Risk Assessment

We recommend that all clubs/coaches/venues 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 coaching sessions, 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 completing a full risk assessment to enable you to carry out your activity safely.

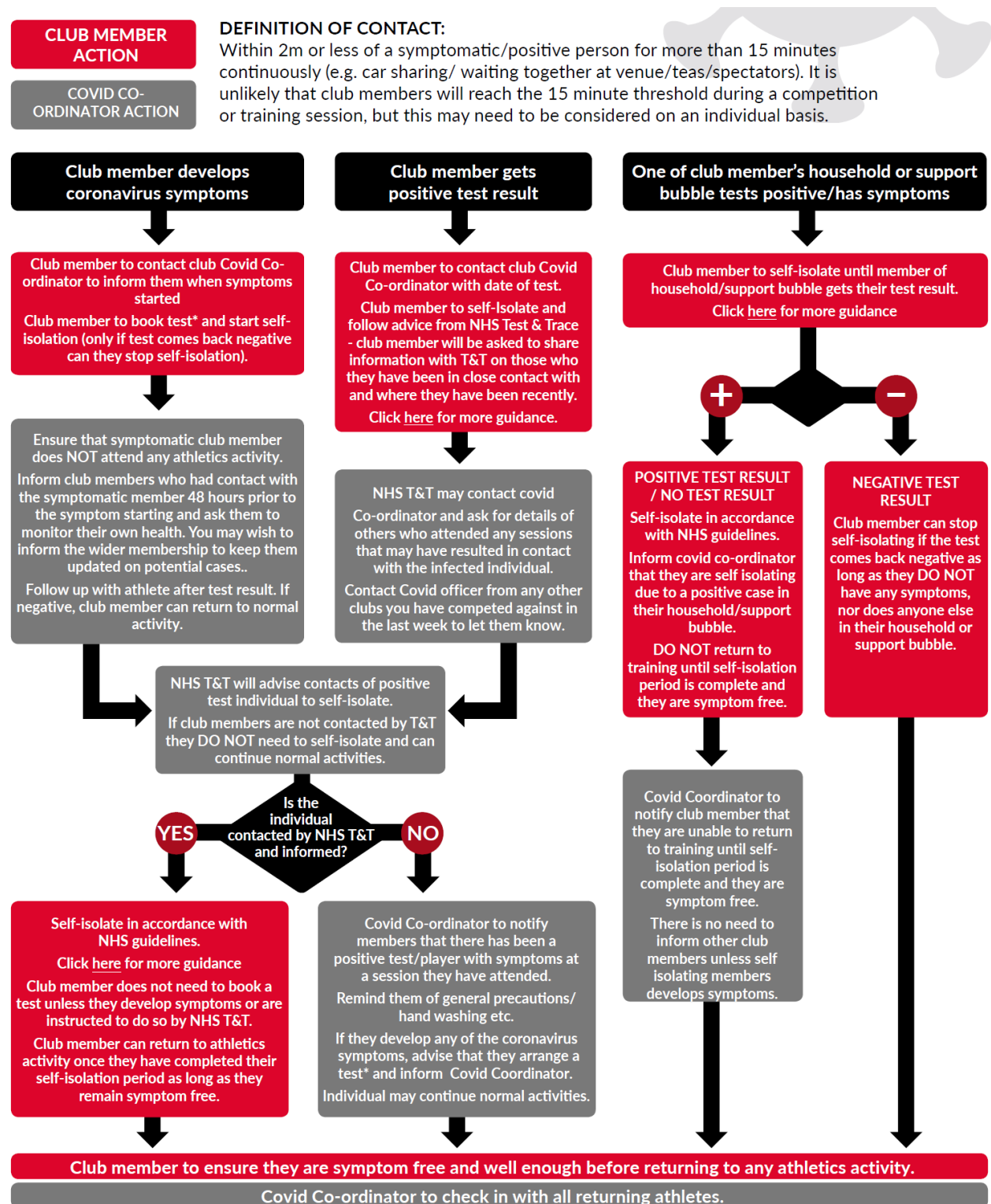
Name of facility						
Coach/Name of Risk Assessor:						
Date of Risk Assessment:						
What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Controls Required	Additional Controls	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus	Coach or leader, athlete or runner  Vulnerable groups –  Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions.  Anyone else who physically comes in contact with other people in relation to your activity	<b>Hand Washing</b> Hand washing facilities in place (with soap and water). Stringent hand washing taking place.  <u>See <a href="#">hand washing guidance</a>.</u>  Gel sanitisers in any area where washing facilities not readily available.  <b>Cleaning</b> 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.  <b>Session Planning</b> Group session plans should aim to minimise the risk of athletes interacting with or impacting on social distancing of members of the public.	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.  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.			

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](#).

## b) Event Group Guidance

Event Group Guidance	
Steeplechase, water jumps & Hurdles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steeplechase barriers, the water jump, and hurdles can be used by a coach and athlete provided the equipment is thoroughly cleaned according to guidance <b>before and after</b> each session.</li> </ul>
Starting Blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting blocks should be used just by one athlete and thoroughly cleaned according to guidance <b>before and after</b> each session.</li> </ul>
High Jump & Pole Vault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mat is cleaned in line with manufacturers and UK Government guidance, before and after each group</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
Long & Triple Jump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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. <a href="#">Public Health England cleaning guidance is here.</a></li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
Throws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coaches and athletes should ensure all equipment is used by one athlete and then thoroughly cleaned according to guidance <b>before and after each</b> session.</li> <li>Seated Throws: extra time should be allowed for throwing frames to be moved and secured in place, whilst socially distancing.</li> </ul>
Off track Running	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware and adherence to all restrictions that may be placed on a public space by the land owner (when accessing parks, trails, roads or mountains to run)</li> <li>Carry out standard safety procedures (e.g. phones, route planning etc) when accessing 'wild' public spaces.</li> <li>Think about touch points on the route and plan accordingly.</li> <li>Consideration should also be taken of whether the activity could add to pressure on the emergency services when running in isolated locations.</li> </ul>

### c) Managing or confirming suspected cases of COVID-19



\*ONLY get a test if you have at least one of the following symptoms: high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of taste or smell. More information about testing is available [here](#).

NB: Covid Co-ordinator should maintain discretion when sharing details of the individual and not specify names of those infected or suspected. Guidance for schools may vary so please follow the guidance sent out by your school.

## 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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