

GETTING YOUR FACILITIES FIT FOR SPORT

SPORTSCOTLAND OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE: SPORTS COURTS & PITCHES AUG 2020

INTRODUCTION

The information set out in this document applies to Scotland only and has been developed in line with current [Scottish Government: Exercise & Activity Guidance](#) for Phase 3.

We recommend that you keep up to date with the Scottish Government's guidance on health, physical distancing and hygiene. Facility operators, clubs and participants should be aware of any updates and may need to adapt to changes in the guidance at short notice. Information on the Scottish Government's approach to managing Coronavirus (COVID-19) is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland Guidance](#).

Who is this guidance intended for?

This updated guidance is intended for facility operators to help them plan and prepare for the opening of **sports courts and pitches**, which are defined as multi-use games and court-size areas, training areas and larger pitch-size areas.

This appendix to our [Getting your facilities fit for sport guidance](#) will guide you through the key facility-specific considerations and actions required before opening. It should be read in conjunction with, and not instead of, our overarching document.

Additional considerations

Scottish Governing Bodies of sport (SGBs), clubs and participants should be made aware that the easing of restrictions does not mean that all facilities will open immediately. Owners and operators will require time to consider the implications of opening facilities, putting plans in place to re-engage their staff and setting up operations that ensure the safety of participants, staff and volunteers.

Prior to any activity taking place at a facility, it is the responsibility of the operator to undertake a documented risk assessment, based on their local circumstances. Consider safety first, particularly focusing on minimising the risk of infection/transmission. Appropriate measures must be put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are always protected.

Operators must ensure that all sport-specific organised activity planned and programmed at the facility is fully in accordance with the guidance issued by SGBs – see [Scottish Governing Body specific guidance](#).

Please note it is now more important than ever that operators of facilities develop inclusive plans for everyone, ensuring extra support for people who may need it to be active.

Four-stage plan



The work carried out at the plan stage should now be put into action. This next stage will help you prepare your facility prior to opening.

PITCH ESSENTIALS

Checklist of actions

- An inspection should be carried out to establish if the court or pitch area has sustained any damage during the period of non-use.

- All equipment and furniture that cannot be cleaned must be removed.

- Dispose of any rubbish and debris.

- High-traffic touch points must be identified.

- All services must be checked and tested by a qualified professional including floodlighting and CCTV.

- Pest control measures must be implemented, if required.

- Ensure that all user information is clearly displayed at entry and exit points and any other key areas around the court or pitch area. If not possible, consider issuing members or visitors with information prior to their attendance at the court or pitch area.

The time required to reinstate any outdoor sport facilities to the necessary standard must be taken into consideration before any activity can resume. In addition to the considerations above the following list highlights the key actions required for natural grass surfaces.

NATURAL GRASS SURFACES

Checklist of actions

- If the pitch has not been maintained, the height of the grass should be reduced gradually to prevent damage to the turf. You must leave a few days between cuts.

- The surface could require decompaction to aerate the rootzone and improve surface drainage and promote growth.

- To prevent any additional delay, pest and weed control could wait until the next off-season.

- If a maintenance team or external contractor is responsible for multiple sites and pitches, be prepared for the process of reinstatement to take up to six weeks.

- Further information on the reinstatement of natural grass surfaces after a period of non-use is available at [The Grounds Maintenance Association](#).

The use of synthetic sports surfaces is regulated by the health and safety and testing standards provided by the associated international and national governing body. Prior to use, an inspection must be carried out to assess if any remedial work is required.

SYNTHETIC PITCHES, COURTS & MULTI-USE GAMES AREAS

Checklist of actions

- Clear any debris, plant seedlings or animal faeces that may have gathered during the period of non-use.
- A safety check should be carried out to assess any damage or irregularities on the surfaces.
- The requirement to clean the synthetic surface should be based on a risk assessment. Where there has been significant contamination (i.e. from animal faeces) then disinfecting the surface may be required. Check with the installer / manufacturer before any work is carried out.
- High-traffic touch points such as gates, barriers and benches should be disinfected with appropriate product in line with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Re-line the surface if required.
- Further operations and safety checks may be required depending on the surface and sport.
- SAPCA has provided guidance on [minimum maintenance levels that may prevent significant deterioration of surfaces and protect warranties](#).
- Further guidance on [getting your synthetic pitch ready for a return to sport](#) is provided by Sports Labs.
- Cleaning schedules and procedures should be trialled.
- Regular cleaning checks must be carried out and recorded.

CAPACITY

The maximum capacity of a sports court or pitch should be based on the Scottish Government requirement for physical distancing, and with consideration given to the nature of the activities to be undertaken.

Checklist of actions

- You must conduct a risk assessment for the facility and the proposed activities that will be undertaken in each of the areas to identify:
 - The number of participants that can reasonably follow physical distancing within the sports court or pitch area, the user profile (i.e. under 12 years old, 12-18 or adult) as well as access to support facilities such as toilets.
 - The activities that can be undertaken.
 - The specific measures to be put in place to ensure physical distancing, enhanced hygiene and cleaning.
 - Additional needs of any customers with disabilities.

If your risk assessment identifies that a facility cannot be opened safely, or activities that are not safe for staff, coaches or participants, then the facility or space must remain closed or activities suspended.

- Sports courts and pitches should be divided up into playing zones. The number of training zones is determined by the overall size of the playing area.



There should be a 2m buffer area between zones.

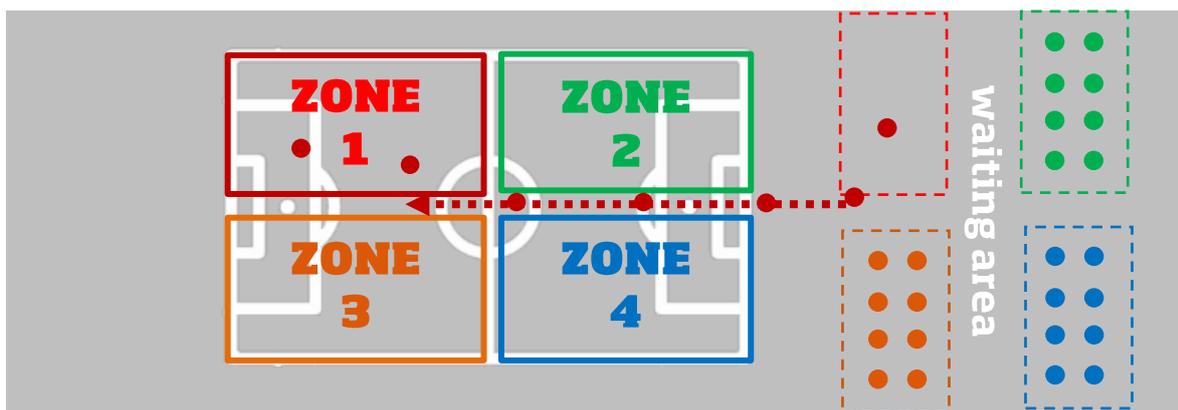
No spectators / supervising parents should be within a playing zone or immediate surrounding area.

- The capacity of each playing zone should be determined by the sport-specific activity taking place. For capacity information for sport-specific activity please check the guidance issued by the relevant SGBs – see [Scottish Governing Body specific guidance](#).

PROGRAMMING

Checklist of actions

- Session start and finish times should be staggered so that no more than the maximum number of participants and coaches are using the facility at any one time.
- A buffer time should be included between sessions of 20-30 minutes to allow for cleaning and for people to leave without sessions overlapping, prevent the crossover of participants, either within the building or externally in the car parking area / drop-off area.
- Ensure location of pick-up and drop-off areas of the car park are clearly identified. This may need to be managed to prevent crossover of participants or build-up of traffic and people.
- A one-way system should be implemented to enable physical distancing while entering the playing zones.



All users should gather in designated area outwith playing zones.

Entry and exit should be managed. Session groups should enter one at a time (e.g. zone 1, followed by zone 2 etc) using the 2m buffer zones as circulation.

Session groups should exit one at a time, starting with the zone closest to the exit point. Each zone grouping should exit in a clockwise motion using the 2m buffer zones as circulation.

Separate entry and exit points should be used, where possible.

This stage includes actions to protect participants while your facility is open and operating. The work carried out at the plan and prepare stages should now be put into action.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Checklist of actions

- Calculate the maximum safe capacity for each pitch, court or playing zone and each activity using 2m physical distancing.

We recommend you allow a minimum of **9 square metres (sqm)** per person to maintain 2m physical distancing. This figure is based on a physical footprint of 1sqm per person and the requirement to maintain 2m between one another. It is based on a more static activity, faster-moving activities may require more space between participants to ensure that 2m distance is achieved.

Refer to the relevant SGB or fitness provider for guidance on physical distancing guidelines on their specific sport or activity – see [Scottish Governing Body specific guidance](#).

- We recommend that the maximum capacities of spaces are posted publicly to reinforce compliance and increase user confidence.
- Physical distancing requirements must be clearly displayed. Consider how playing zones will be marked out.
- Open and restricted areas must be clearly marked with signage.

Please note, this may reduce the capacity of the facility and impact the size or number of sessions that can take place.

HYGIENE, HEALTH & SAFETY

Checklist of actions

- Provide hand-sanitising stations at the entrance and exit points and any other key areas.
- Fit-for-purpose hand-washing facilities should be provided, if possible.
- All non-personal equipment must be cleaned, disinfected and fit for purpose between each user.
- Equipment that is difficult to clean should be taken out of use.

CLEANING

Checklist of actions

- All high-traffic touch points must be included in cleaning schedule for after each session. This includes all access gates, perimeter barriers, goals or any other non-personal equipment.

- Enough time should be allowed between group sessions to carry out required cleaning.

- Touch-point cleaning should be in addition to the planned daily cleaning schedules. Links to cleaning plan and sample schedule are available on the [Getting your facilities fit for sport resource page](#).

GOOD PRACTICE HELPS SAVE LIVES

If your risk assessment identifies any activity, space or facility that cannot be opened safely then the facility or spaces must remain closed or the activity suspended.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions regarding the guidance please get in touch with one of **sportscotland's** Facilities Project Managers at facilities@sportscotland.org.uk

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