



Return to Curling Guidelines

*Scottish Curling guidance on the resumption of
curling activity after COVID-19 lockdown*

Version 1
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Foreword

Scottish Curling fully supports the national effort to protect public health by controlling the spread of COVID-19. The health and wellbeing of our members and the wider community is at the forefront of our planning and decision making. This guidance has been developed in line with other sports in Scotland and internationally, recognising that sport can play a role in the physical and mental health of people of all ages and abilities.

Input to this document has been received from many of our stakeholders and we are grateful for their support. Scottish Curling is committed to working in partnership with the Scottish Government, **sportscotland**, Scottish Ice Rink Association (SIRA), Ice Rink Managers Association (IRMA), all ice rink operators, other partners and our clubs and members.

Each ice rink is unique, with its own challenges to overcome to be ready for a safe and welcoming reopening. The operators of each facility should conduct detailed operational plans including risk assessments to determine the right time to reopen.

Each curler should refer to this document along with Scottish Government and local rink guidance to inform their decision on when they feel it is appropriate to return to curling.

Information on the Scottish Government's approach to managing COVID-19 is available [here](#). Other sources of relevant information are in the table below.

Title	Published By	Access
Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis	Scottish Government	Link
Latest coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance from NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government	NHS Scotland	Link
Coronavirus in Scotland	Scottish Government	Link
Coronavirus (COVID-19) information and resources	sportscotland	Link
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information	Scottish Ice Rinks Association (SIRA)	Link
COVID-19	Scottish Curling	Link

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Introduction

On 21 May 2020, the Scottish Government laid out a four-phased route map out of lockdown, on which this guidance is based. This document is intended to be clear, unambiguous and easy to follow guidance for Scottish Curling members and stakeholders. This document will be updated if and when new Scottish Government advice is issued, and the latest revision [can be found on our website here](#).

I. Background

Internationally, the response to COVID-19 varies depending on local factors. Even within Scotland there is variation across the country, so there may not be a standard approach that applies to all clubs and ice rinks. Scottish Curling has developed the Return to Curling Guidelines to help ice rink operators, clubs and members in planning, but in the event of inconsistencies between Scottish Government advice and this document, the Scottish Government advice shall take priority. Current Scottish Government advice can be found [here](#).

As an indoor team sport, curling will resume after outdoor sports have restarted. The curling season ended in March 2020, a few weeks before the season end in April. Most ice rinks would typically reopen for curling in September but those that offer other ice sports often remain open over the summer. Based on their own facility, an ice rink may opt to resume curling later than the phases laid out in this document, but there should be no curling before phase 3 of the Scottish Government's route map. Ice rinks should be prepared to revert to a previous phase if deemed necessary by the Scottish Government.

Physical distancing is a key part of the Scottish Government's route map. In a typical game of curling with a maximum of eight participants per sheet, each curler has up to 27m² of space. However, this guidance considers that players are frequently active in close proximity to team members, particularly during sweeping.

The overall priority must be to act responsibly, so we avoid spreading the virus.

2. Personal Responsibility of Curlers

We urge our members to follow the most up to date advice provided by the NHS and Scottish Government. The latest NHS Guidance can be found [here](#).

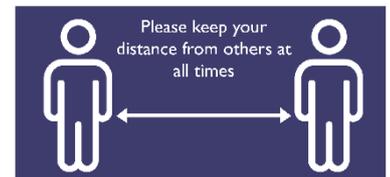
Scottish Government advice currently includes:

- regular hand washing
- appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette
- being acutely aware of the symptoms of the virus
- engaging with the Test and Protect system
- isolating if you (or someone you have been in contact with) have the virus

We encourage curlers to walk, cycle, wheel or use private cars without car sharing to get to the ice rink. Curlers should avoid using crowded public transport where possible, particularly at peak times. As per the Scottish Government's Test and Protect system, curlers may be required to log their contact details electronically with their club and/or the ice rink when attending a session to facilitate the tracing of individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19. This information will be used for this purpose only.

If wearing gloves for warmth, these should only be worn for curling activity, not used before the start of each session and should be disinfected/washed after each session. Players should remove all personal equipment, including brushes and delivery aids, from the building after each session and clean with disinfectant.

All curlers should refer to guidance which is specific to their local rink as this may vary due to individual facility provision and local authority restrictions.



3. Ice Rink Responsibilities

Facilities will adopt measures to assist in following the Return to Curling Guidelines. The list below is not exhaustive but contains suggested measures that ice rinks may follow. Curlers should be aware the below items may be implemented, but they should consult local ice rink advice for specific details that apply to the ice rink they are attending.

- Carry out risk assessments for all areas of the facility and implement control measures as required
- Adopt measures that assist with following Scottish Government guidelines on physical distancing which may include restricting the number of people able to access the facility, floor markings and planning the flow of people entering and leaving the building
- Liaise with their local authority for any specific conditions that may apply, or for advice/support they may offer
- Follow any procedures related to the Scottish Government's Test and Protect approach such as the recording of individual's attendance
- Ensure policies, procedures and training material are updated for staff and volunteers, including first aid provision
- Provide suitable equipment for their workforce (including appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as necessary)
- Review and update operating procedures to allow touch-free access where possible and ensure busy areas of the building are cleaned more regularly
- Operate an online payment system or use contactless where possible
- Provide hand sanitisers at key points and ensure hand-wash sinks have disposable hand towels
- Disinfect any provided curling equipment, including brushes and stone handles, between each session
- Publicly display a statement on cleaning and disinfecting procedures and remind customers of their responsibilities
- Conduct formal training for all workforce members on new procedures and protocols
- Communicate with members regularly, with key updates such as reopening date (when known) and new procedures that players/visitors may be required to follow on their return

4. Return to Curling Phases

5.1 Overview

Below is our proposed phased Return to Curling. Transition from one phase to the next is likely to be a minimum of three weeks, in line with Scottish Government review cycles.

When Scotland reaches Phase 3 of the Government's route map, each ice rink will determine the date from which they will reopen, based on their individual restrictions and business case.

Indications are that it is likely that physical distancing will be required in some way until there is a cure or vaccine in adequate distribution. There is no guidance on how long this may last nor whether there may be a variation in the distance from the current two metres physical distance requirement.

5.2 Scottish Government Route Map Phase 0 – 2

As per the Scottish Government route map, indoor sport is not permitted in this period so ice rinks should remain closed.

Phase 0 – lockdown, continue to follow the guidance to Stay at Home.

In **Phase 1**, there should continue to be no curling. However, ice rinks may begin to put plans in place for the resumption of play. The Scottish Government route map states 'Workplaces resuming in later phases can undertake preparatory work on physical distancing and hygiene measures'. **We are currently in Phase 1 of the Scottish Government route map. This is due to be reviewed on 18 June 2020.**

In **Phase 2** there should continue to be no curling. However, ice rink staff may be able to return to work as the Scottish Government route map states: 'Non-essential indoor non-office-based workplaces resume once relevant guidance agreed'. This may allow staff to prepare the facility and put in place any changes required for physical distancing and hygiene measures.

5.3 Scottish Government Route Map Phase 3

Curling may resume. Ice rinks and other indoor facilities may open, with physical distancing and increased hygiene measures. Each ice rink will determine the date from which they will reopen. In this phase people may drive beyond their local area for leisure and exercise purposes.

In the ice rink:

- All players, coaches and staff should wear face coverings when in enclosed public spaces in line with Scottish Government guidance
- The customer flow or journey should be managed by rinks from entry to exit to avoid pinch points
- Each rink to consider introducing staggered start times if appropriate to assist with customer flow
- Each ice rink will determine off-ice physical distancing and hygiene measures appropriate to their facility
- Changing rooms and social areas may have altered usage – members are encouraged to arrive changed and ready to curl, as much as possible. Rinks to provide clear guidance on where curlers can change their footwear and leave any clothing
- Food and beverage may be offered based on Scottish Government guidance on bars, cafés and restaurants
- Competition spectating will be restricted

On Ice:

- All players, coaches and staff wear protective face coverings in line with Scottish Government guidance and should not share equipment
- If curlers do not own their own brush, cue or delivery aid, one will need to be allocated to each curler per session and sanitised between uses
- Physical distancing guidance from the Scottish Government must be followed at all times
- Ice rinks may opt to limit the number of players per sheet based on the facility, the ease of ice access and the possibility of overcrowding
- Maximum one sweeper at a time. Of the two players who would usually sweep, one should stand to the side of the sheet while the other sweeps from the hog line at the throwing end. All other players should maintain a distance of 2 metres from the sweeper. There should be no sweeping of an opposition stone behind the tee line and the opposition skip should be behind the hack when their opponent's stone is in motion
- No shaking of hands at beginning or end of games. Good sportsmanship should still be acknowledged verbally
- Local competitions can begin but organisers may require variations to the rules to ensure the respect of physical distancing, e.g. reduced number of sweepers
- Curlers with a disability and disability clubs should consider the following additional points:
 - Household members or carers of wheelchair curlers can attend and provide buddying where required. If no household member or carer is available alternative methods can be used to stop the chair moving during delivery as long as they are

- safe e.g. stones placed behind the chair or a brush can be placed behind the back wheels of a player.
- Consideration needs to be given for physical distancing on the ice with wheelchair curlers potentially positioned along the side of the rink as it may not be possible to have all players behind the house 2 metres apart. If this is not possible, or preferable, reducing the numbers in each team is an alternative option.
 - Additional sanitisation for stone handles if on-ice helpers are required to move stones.
 - Vision Impaired curlers who require someone in front of them for guidance on direction of stones will need to follow physical distancing measures unless they are a household member or carer.
 - Further guidance to follow on the use of face coverings for curling with deaf or hard of hearing players who rely on lip-reading and/or British Sign Language (BSL) e.g. transparent masks are being developed
 - Additional consideration required on the access and sanitising of disabled toilets as in some circumstances curlers with a disability may need access more frequently
 - Coaching and junior club sessions may commence with physical distancing measures in place with a maximum of eight people per sheet including coaches (This number may vary locally)
 - Umpires can perform their duties while being mindful of physical distancing, and with special consideration given to:
 - Cleaning measuring equipment before and after use
 - LSD measures to be used by one umpire with the other recording results
 - Teams to sign scoring sheets with their own pens
 - Wearing of gloves to change scores
 - Umpires to supervise while curlers tape their own brushes for championship play
 - Alternative arrangements for change of line-up process to remove touch points e.g. electronic or drop off point.

5.4 Scottish Government Route Map Phase 4

Fewer restrictions will be in place as we continue to follow Scottish Government advice on physical distancing and increased hygiene. There is a further relaxation of restrictions on live events in this phase.

In the ice rink:

- As in Phase 3 with the small changes noted below:
 - Follow latest Scottish Government guidance on the wearing of face coverings in enclosed public spaces
 - Changing rooms and social area restrictions may be reviewed.
 - Viewing restrictions may be reviewed in line with available space

On ice:

- As in Phase 3 with the small changes noted below:
 - Full utilisation of the rink, with up to eight players per sheet in facilities not already operating at this capacity

5. Summary

All players, coaches, parents/carers, volunteers, staff and other facility users are responsible for following this guidance. By so doing we will collectively help to reduce the spread of the virus, protect health workers and save lives.

The ice rink staff are responsible for the operations of their facilities and facility users must follow the local instructions.

Guidance beyond Phase Four will follow, in tandem with Scottish Government advice as we look at the journey of returning to normal play. Our priority at this time is a safe initial return to the ice.

6. Version Control

Status	Date	Author	Approved	Action
Draft for stakeholder review	28/05/2020	Scottish Curling Development & Comp Staff	CEO	Draft Guidelines prepared with input from ice rinks and Scottish Curling staff. Circulated for feedback and comment from Scottish ice rinks, IRMA (UK).
Internal review following rink feedback	2/06/2020	Scottish Curling Development & Comp Staff	CEO	Amends made and agreed following feedback from ice rinks.
Public version I	11/06/2020	SC Staff	CEO	Includes feedback from sportscotland



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