

TOUCH FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA – COVID-19 RETURN-TO-PLAY PROTOCOLS AND GUIDELINES



INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a roadmap for Touch Football Australia's return to play following the COVID-19 pandemic. While specific timelines will vary from state to state, the following protocols and guidelines serve as a minimum baseline to be adhered to at all times for members of the Touch Football community. These guidelines have been designed to assist in reactivating the Touch Football community with the guiding principles of:

- ▶ Keeping all members of the Touch Football community safe and healthy
- ▶ Alignment with State, Territory and Federal Government legislation



Developed by TFA in conjunction with Dr Paul Griffin,
Director of Infectious Diseases at Mater

ISSUED JUNE 2020

AIIS FRAMEWORK FOR REBOOTING SPORT

Within the Australian Institute of Sport Framework for Rebooting Sport, return to play is divided into key stages:

- ▶ **Stage A – No Touch**
Throughout Stage A, the Touch Football community is encouraged to participate in solo training. These sessions must be conducted alone and could include skills training or fitness training. Competition Administrators are encouraged to review specific State and Territory legislation and announce their own return-to-play dates after reviewing and implementing the Hygiene Protocols, Social Distancing and other conditions required throughout this document.
- ▶ **Stage B – Training for Touch**
Throughout Stage B, the Touch Football community can prepare to play Touch Football in small-group training environments, focusing primarily on skill-development activities and minimising contact wherever possible. Competition Administrators will be encouraged to open registrations after reviewing specific State and Territory legislation and implementing strategies to adhere to requirements around gathering size, Hygiene Protocols, Social Distancing and any other conditions required throughout this document.
- ▶ **Stage C – Play Touch**
Throughout Stage C, the Touch Football community is now able to return to play Touch Football in competition environments, with a key focus on adhering to specific State and Territory legislation around gathering size, Hygiene Protocols, Social Distancing and any other conditions required throughout this document.

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERS

All members of the Touch Football community are integral to continuing to stop the spread of COVID-19 upon resumption of Touch Football throughout each stage. To assist in clearly educating the wider Touch Football community about their responsibilities we have divided the community in to three key member types:

- ▶ Competition Administration
- ▶ Players, Coaches and Spectators
- ▶ Referees

Please read the following pages for the responsibilities for each member type.

COMPETITION ADMINISTRATORS

Competition Administrators will play a crucial role in the resumption of Touch Football competitions and will be required to implement strict protocols at the venue. All Competition Administrators are encouraged to complete the *COVID-19 (Coronavirus): What It Is, How to Prevent Spread* course available for free in *The Nest* prior to resuming competitions. Key messaging to all members must be to adopt the **Get In. Play and Get Out.** approach. Competition Administrators are responsible for enforcing the following protocols and making available the appropriate handwashing facilities along with the following considerations:

- Remain at home if you feel unwell
- Sport Australia advises your association should appoint a COVID-19 Safety Coordinator to be the key resource and central point of contact for all matters COVID-19. [Click here for more information.](#)
- COVID-19 Safety Coordinator to review the TFA Return to Play Protocols and complete a COVID-19 Safety Plan, which is available at www.touchfootball.com.au/coronavirus-return-to-play
- Conduct a risk assessment on the venue in relation to COVID-19 mitigation strategies
- Conduct an assessment of the competition's ability to stay within State and Territory legislation requirements on gatherings – if you are unable to adjust, the competition is unable to resume
- Adjust competition scheduling to adhere to specific State and Territory legislation regarding gathering size
- [Encourage members to download the *COVIDSafe* app and have it on](#)
- Restrict access to clubrooms, amenities and communal areas to essential members such as Competition Administrators only and, wherever possible, establish separate entry and exit points
- [Clean all surfaces and areas at the venue with disinfectant before and after competition nights](#)
- Staff/Volunteers on-site must wear protective equipment (eg, gloves), regularly wash or sanitise their hands and observe social distancing at all times
- [Provide sanitiser/disinfectant on each field for both participant use and for use on footballs and other equipment such as cones](#)
- Adjust competition rules to allow substitution from anywhere along the sideline (i.e. no sub-box)
- Remove hire whistles for Referees and hire uniforms/bibs for players/teams/Referees
- Implement alternative forms of player sign-on, such as one referee managing the list
- Remove signing-off scorecards
- Restrict all available tables and seating with clear signage to promote **"Get In. Play and Get Out."** message
- Communicate to players, coaches, spectators and Referees the specific guidelines regarding Social Distancing and Hygiene Measures required
- Communicate to players, coaches, spectators and Referees the game times (and allocations) and venue information in a timely manner prior to the competition starting, to reduce time on-site at the venue
- Report any known cases of or tests for COVID-19 to TFA by emailing coronavirus@touchfootball.com.au then work with your State or Territory Health Department for next steps

PLAYERS, COACHES, PARENTS AND SPECTATORS

Players, Coaches and Spectators are encouraged to complete the *COVID-19 (Coronavirus): What It Is, How to Prevent Spread* course available for free in *The Nest*. Above all else players, coaches and spectators are encouraged to adopt the **Get In. Play and Get Out.** approach. In addition to this, the following are the minimum requirements for Players, Coaches and Spectators to consider when participating in Touch Football competitions:

- Remain at home if feeling unwell
- If you are a member of a high-risk category, reconsider your participation in Touch Football
- Download the *COVIDSafe* app and ensure it is functional while at the venue
- Prior to attending the venue, assess if you are essential to the delivery of the game – spectators must be kept to a minimum at all times to enable safe social distancing
- Prior to your game, review game time and venue information supplied by Competition Administrators to reduce your time on-site at the venue
- Make sure you arrive at the venue ready to play
- Upon arrival at the venue and prior to participating in a match, ensure that you have thoroughly washed or sanitised your hands with products provided at the fields
- Avoid the use of changerooms, bathrooms and communal areas
- Cover your mouth to cough or sneeze using your elbow
- Avoid touching your face
- Do not spit or clear your nasal passages at any time
- Maintain social distancing by avoiding team huddles and congregating in groups before, during or after your match
- No communal team water bottles or shared items such as jerseys, bibs or towels
- Avoid unnecessary contact with other participants, such as high-fives, handshakes and hugs
- Shower at home instead of at the venue
- Wash and disinfect footballs, cones and any other equipment before and after training and matches
- Complete tasks at home wherever possible, such as meetings or recovery sessions
- Parents/guardians, please limit drop-off and pick-up to only one parent/guardian and other dependents as required and necessary
- Spectators are not encouraged. Supervision of minors must be done from one's own vehicle, if possible. If not, social distancing is required at all times
- If you are tested for COVID-19, immediately notify your Competition Administrators and email coronavirus@touchfootball.com.au to inform TFA

REFEREES

Referees play an integral role in the game of Touch Football and will be required to work closely with Competition Administrators in assisting in the implementation of protocols for our return to play. Referees are encouraged to complete the *COVID-19 (Coronavirus): What It Is, How to Prevent Spread* course available for free in *The Nest*. Referees are encouraged to promote the **Get In. Play and Get Out.** approach to all teams. In addition to this, the following are the minimum requirements for Referees to consider when officiating in Touch Football competitions:

- Remain at home if feeling unwell
- If you are a member of a high-risk category, reconsider your participation in Touch Football
- Download the *COVIDSafe* app and ensure it is functional while at the venue
- Prior to your arrival, review your game allocations, game times and venue information as supplied by Competition Administrators
- Prior to arrival at the venue, disinfect your whistle and do not share it with other Referees
- Make sure you arrive at the venue ready to Referee
- Upon arrival at the venue and prior to and immediately following officiating a match, ensure that hands have been washed thoroughly or sanitised with products provided at the fields
- Understand your role in player sign-on and score-keeping – this must be done by only one Referee
- Avoid the use of changerooms, bathrooms and communal areas
- Cover your mouth to cough or sneeze using your elbow
- Avoid touching your face
- Do not spit or clear your nasal passages at any time
- Maintain social distancing by avoiding huddles and congregating in groups, before, during or after your matches
- No communal referee water bottles or shared items such as duty referee shirts, shared whistles or towels
- Bring your own pencil and coin
- Manage unnecessary contact between participants, such as high-fives, handshakes and hugs
- Shower at home, instead of at the venue
- Complete tasks at home wherever possible, such as meetings or recovery sessions
- For parents/guardians of referees, please limit drop-off and pick-up to only one parent/guardian and other dependents as required and necessary
- If you are tested for COVID-19, immediately notify your Competition Administrators and email coronavirus@touchfootball.com.au to inform TFA

REPORTING PROCESS

All areas with known cases and tests must take the following steps:

- ▶ Email coronavirus@touchfootball.com.au to notify Touch Football Australia
- ▶ Work with your State or Territory Health Department for next steps

STATE AND TERRITORY SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Further specific information from each state and territory government can be found by clicking the following links

- ▶ [Australian Capital Territory](#)
- ▶ [New South Wales](#)
- ▶ [Northern Territory](#)
- ▶ [Queensland](#)
- ▶ [South Australia](#)
- ▶ [Tasmania](#)
- ▶ [Victoria](#)
- ▶ [Western Australia](#)

APPENDIX A

Recommended Level A, B, C activities for community and individual sport

From AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport

	Level A	Level B	Level C
General description	<p>Activity that can be conducted by a solo athlete or by pairs where at least 1.5m can always be maintained between participants. No contact between athletes and/or other personnel. Examples for all sports – general fitness aerobic and anaerobic (e.g. running, cycling, sprints hills).</p> <p>Strength and sport specific training permitted if now equipment required or have access to own equipments (e.g. ergometer, weights)</p> <p>Online coaching and resources (e.g. videos, playbooks).</p>	<p>As per Level A plus:</p> <p>Indoor/outdoor activity that can be conducted in small groups (not more than 10 athletes and/or other personnel in total) and with adequate spacing (not more than 1 person per 4m²).</p> <p>Some sharing of sporting equipment permitted such as kicking a football, hitting a tennis ball, use of a skipping rope, weights, mats.</p> <p>Non-contact skills training. Accidental contact may occur but no deliberate body contact drills. No wrestling, holding, tackling or binding.</p> <p>Commercial gyms, bootcamps, yoga, pilates, dance classes (e.g. barre, ballet, hip hop, not partnered), cycling ‘spin’ classes permitted if other measure (above) are met.</p>	<p>As per Level B plus:</p> <p>Full sporting activity that can be conducted in groups of any size including full contact (competition, tournaments, matches). Wrestling, holding, tackling and or binding (e.g. rugby scrums) permitted.</p> <p>For larger team sports, consider maintaining some small group separation at training.</p> <p>For some athletes full training will be restricted by commercial operation of facilities.</p>
General hygiene measures	<p>No sharing of exercise equipment or communal facilities.</p> <p>Apply personal hygiene measures even when training away from group facilities – hand hygiene regularly during training (hand sanitisers) plus strictly pre and post training. Do not share drink bottle or towels. Do not attend training if unwell (contact doctor).</p> <p>Spitting and clearing of nasal/ respiratory secretions on ovals or other sport settings must be strongly discouraged.</p>	<p>Communal facilities can be used after a sport-specific structured risk assessment and mitigation process if undertaken.</p> <p>‘Get in, train and get out’ – be prepared for training prior to arrival at venue (minimise need to use/gather in change rooms, bathrooms). Minimise use of communal facilities (e.g. gym, court) with limited numbers (not more than 10 athletes/staff in total). Have cleaning protocols in place for equipment and facilities.</p> <p>Hand hygiene (hand sanitisers) on entry and exit to venues as well as pre, post and during training. Thorough full body shower with soap before and after training (preferably at home). Where possible maintain distance of at least 1.5m while training.</p> <p>No socialising or group meals.</p>	<p>Return use of sporting facilities. Continue hygiene and cleaning measures as per Level B.</p> <p>If any massage beds being used, hygiene practices to include no bed linen except single use towels, cleaning treatment beds and key surfaces after each athlete and hand hygiene.</p> <p>Limit unnecessary social gatherings.</p>
Spectators, additional personnel	<p>No spectators unless required (e.g. parent or carer).</p>	<p>Separate spectator from athletes. Spectators should maintain social distancing of at least 1.5m.</p>	<p>Minimum contact of non-essential surfaces to occur and hands on treatment should be kept to essential only.</p> <p>Non-essential personnel should be discouraged from entering change rooms.</p>



Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for COVID-19

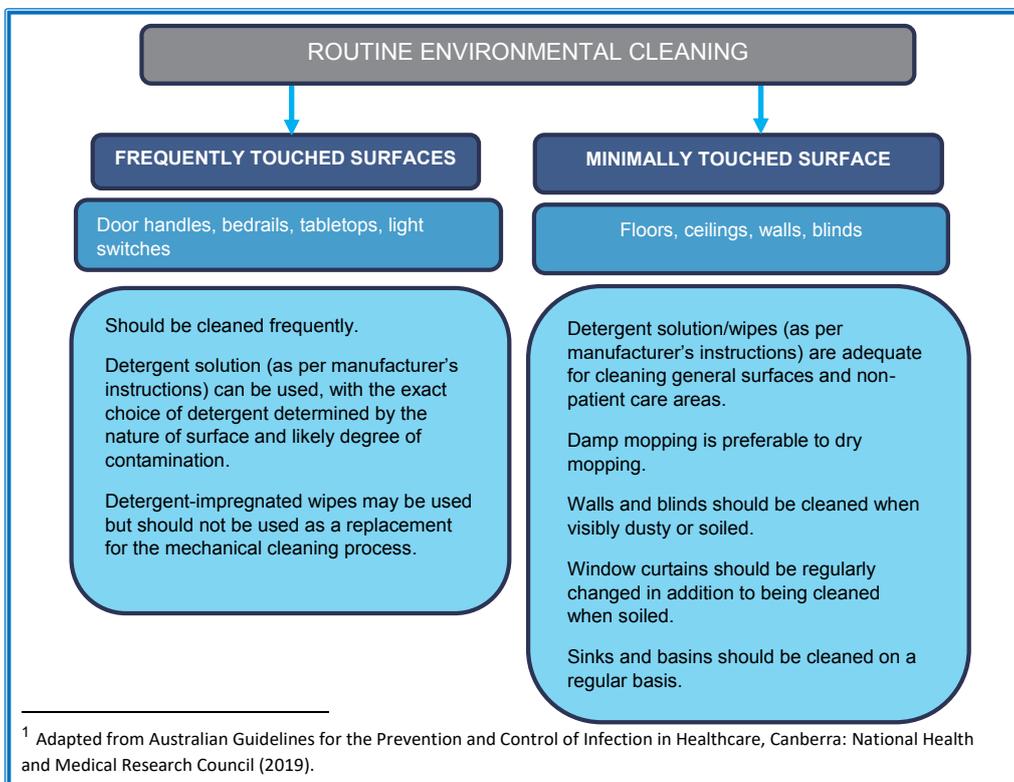
Routine environmental cleaning

- Cleaning is an essential part of disinfection. Organic matter can inactivate many disinfectants. Cleaning reduces the soil load, allowing the disinfectant to work.
- Removal of germs such as the virus that causes COVID-19 requires thorough cleaning followed by disinfection.
- The length of time that SARS-COV-2 (the cause of COVID-19) survives on inanimate surfaces will vary depending on factors such as the amount of contaminated body fluid – such as respiratory droplets – present and environmental temperature and humidity. In general, coronaviruses are unlikely to survive for long once droplets produced by coughing or sneezing dry out.

It is good practice to routinely clean surfaces as follows:

- Clean frequently touched surfaces with detergent solution (see diagram below).
- Clean general surfaces and fittings when visibly soiled and immediately after any spillage.

Routine environmental cleaning requirements can be divided into two groups¹:



¹ Adapted from Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare, Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council (2019).