

In line with advice from the NSW Government advice, it is a requirement that participating clubs, teams, officials, players, and spectators exercise caution and Covid-safe practices when training and playing. For the latest information regarding Covid-19 please stay up to date with the advice of NSW Health <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>

With numerous active cases in the greater Sydney area (and the re-introduction of mask wearing) it is a requirement that we adopt the following practices around our sport to protect the community. These requirements and recommendations apply immediately – with updates provided as necessary.

Masks:

Anyone attending football matches or training must wear a mask.

People may remove their mask only for strenuous physical exercise (e.g. to warm up, train, play or referee), or when eating or drinking, and must put their masks back on at all other times, including spectators, coaches, managers, officials, substitutes etc.

Similar to earlier orders, there are other exemptions that apply including for children under 12, people with autism or intellectual disabilities and other health conditions.

More detail is available here: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx#face-coverings>

Social distancing:

Capacity restrictions now apply so that spaces must have no more than one person per 4 metres squared, and masking also applies. Therefore it is recommended that spectators be limited to one per participant wherever possible.

The use of change rooms is now likely to be impractical (as it will be very difficult to remain compliant and therefore SSFA (and FNSW recommend) that change rooms be closed and not used.

Dugouts can again only be used with appropriate social distancing

Specific to playing football please be advised as follows:

TRAINING

The following recommendations apply immediately to TRAINING.

- Observe hand hygiene practices before and after participating in training.
- Do not share drinks or drink bottles.
- Conduct training in small groups of no more than 20 people (including coaching personnel) wherever possible.
- Observe social distancing practices (1.5 metres between players) where practical.
- Parents and spectators are discouraged from attending and to remain socially distant.
- Minimise contact training (tackling and challenges) where possible.
- Minimise sharing of equipment (particularly the handling of cones, ropes, weights etc)
- Individual players wear allocated bibs and they take individual bibs home and wash them.
- Change-rooms not used and should remain closed.
- Social activity before and after is discouraged. We recommend arrival 15 minutes prior and departure immediately after training.
- Non participants to wear a mask.

PLAYING

The following recommendations apply to PLAYING.

- Observe hand hygiene practices before and after participating in a game.
- No handshakes prior to the start or at the end of a match.
- Team huddles, handshakes and high-fives and multi-player celebrations are discouraged.
- Do not share drinks or drink bottles.
- No spitting (on or around the park or on gloves)
- Spectators observe social distancing practices.
- Parents and spectators are asked to limit attendance where possible.
- Change-rooms are not to be used but are to remain closed.
- Team benches organised to 1.5 metres between coaching staff and substitutes.
- Social activity before and after is discouraged. We recommend arrival on-time prior and departure soon after games.
- Clubs operating canteens and BBQs are reminded to follow their Covid-safe plans and practices.
- Coaches, Managers and Substitutes to **wear a mask**.
- **ID CARDS.** It is the responsibility of the players and the Team Manager to present and inspect ID Cards respectively prior to the start of the match – preferably in the centre of the field (but it can be done elsewhere if that is required e.g. due to the prior game running late, or inclement weather, or at the side of the field if that is considered necessary to satisfy these Covid restrictions, and so on). If ID Cards are inspected off the field both Team Managers should let the Referee know that they have undertaken the required inspections.

It is not the referees responsibility to participate in checking of ID Cards – though referees have been asked to properly annotate the Match Sheet to say whether they have evidenced the inspection of ID Cards or not.

Please note however that we are not the COVID police but should encourage all to follow safe practises within our sport and grounds, for both home and away fixtures. It is not necessary to confront objectors simply ask them politely to follow the recommendation for the good of all (there may be some who think this is not necessary).

The SSFA want all participants to continue to enjoy the great benefits of community sport and football in particular. Participation in our game is voluntary. If players are unable or unwilling to participate in a scheduled match, please contact your club.

Please pass on to your teams, officials, players, volunteers and spectators.