



World Para Swimming

Safe Return to Para Swimming Guidelines Version 1.0



Introduction

These guidelines have been developed to assist NPCs, NFs and swimmers in considering their conduct and to help ensure a safe return to the sport of Para swimming. They provide a list of key principles to observe in order to reduce the likelihood of spreading the COVID-19 virus upon resumption of Para swimming activities. They are not intended to apply as a reference guide for LOCs in hosting Para swimming events.

The situation surrounding COVID-19 is progressing at a variable rate around the world, therefore no single set of guidelines will fit every situation. We encourage you to visit websites of other countries, National Paralympic Committees, swimming and Para swimming national federations who have published their return to sport and swimming plans.

It is very important that all individuals involved in Para swimming activities should adhere to any guidance, rules and regulations produced by your national and local governments and the health regulations in place in your country and local area. You should not return to any Para swimming activities until it is considered safe to do so on the basis of the advice provided by these authorities.

Prior communication to teams, swimmers, and personnel regarding modifications to training and competition venues is essential to ensure that modified rules and practices are adhered to. Particular care should be taken to facilitate an understanding by swimmers with an intellectual impairment, as well as to ensure that swimmers with a visual impairment can access the information on site without having to increase touch points, read signage, or follow arrows on the floor (which they may not be able to access visually).

Before the re-start of Para swimming, athletes, coaches and others should consider their own individual health situation and environment. Individuals should not return to the sport environment if in the past 14 days they have been unwell, displayed any symptoms associated with COVID-19 or had contact with someone with a known or suspected case of COVID-19.

These guidelines are for general information purposes only and should not be relied upon as a form of medical or legal advice. Like any activities, there are some inherent risks involved and by participating in Para swimming activities you are accepting those risks. In resuming Para swimming activities, you do so at your own risk and in no way is the International Paralympic Committee or World Para Swimming liable in connection with your use of these guidelines.

Key Principles

General hygiene measures

- ✓ Apply personal hygiene measures at all times.
- ✓ Wash or sanitize your hands thoroughly (minimum 20 seconds) before and after practice and if appropriate, before entering and after leaving the facility.
- ✓ Avoid at all times touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands.
- ✓ Sneeze and/or cough into a tissue or the internal crease of the elbow (anyone who would be lifting or physically assisting or guiding an athlete should only use a tissue and not sneeze or cough into their elbow).
- ✓ Be aware of which surfaces you touch and sanitize your hands regularly.
- ✓ In general, the World Health Organisation recommends keeping a minimum 1 metre distance from other people, however, observe any such required physical distance according to regulations in your area, if different. Preferably keep 2 metres during and after physical activity.

Swimmers

- ✓ Swimmers should strongly consider whether it is safe for them to participate and follow any applicable government or health authority advice specific to them, particularly if they could be considered to be at greater risk from COVID-19.
- ✓ Resumption of physical activity must be progressive in duration and intensity in order to readjust the body to the effort (heart, muscles, tendons) applying a gradual return to training.
- ✓ Athletes should wear masks following any guidance, rules and regulations produced by the national and local governments and the health regulations in place in their country and local area.
- ✓ Follow the 'Get in, train and get out' process (athletes should arrive at the training facility wearing their training attire, ready to train and leave quickly after practice).
- ✓ Do not share personal equipment (towel, water bottle, kickboards, starting devices, tappers etc.).
- ✓ Maintain physical distancing at all times in and outside the training facility.
- ✓ Should keep personal belongings inside their bag or in a sanitized plastic bin on the pool deck which would have been allocated to them rather than leaving it in common areas.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect your personal mobility device(s) such as wheelchair, prostheses, mobility cane etc. at the end of the training session before leaving the facility.

Training facility (dry land and in the water) and equipment

- ✓ Have cleaning protocols in place for facilities.
- ✓ Ensure physical distancing is maintained around the pool and in the facility by defining maximum number of people in a facility and adding physical barriers and outlining routes.

- ✓ Frequent touch points and surfaces require regular cleaning and disinfecting before and after each use, this would include things such as mats for entering and exiting the pool, ladders and starting blocks, equipment in weight rooms etc.
- ✓ Immediately clean and disinfect any surfaces which may contain bodily fluids.
- ✓ As much as possible, athletes need to be responsible for their own personalised training equipment including cleaning using approved disinfectants before and after every training session.
- ✓ Athletes should not share training equipment.

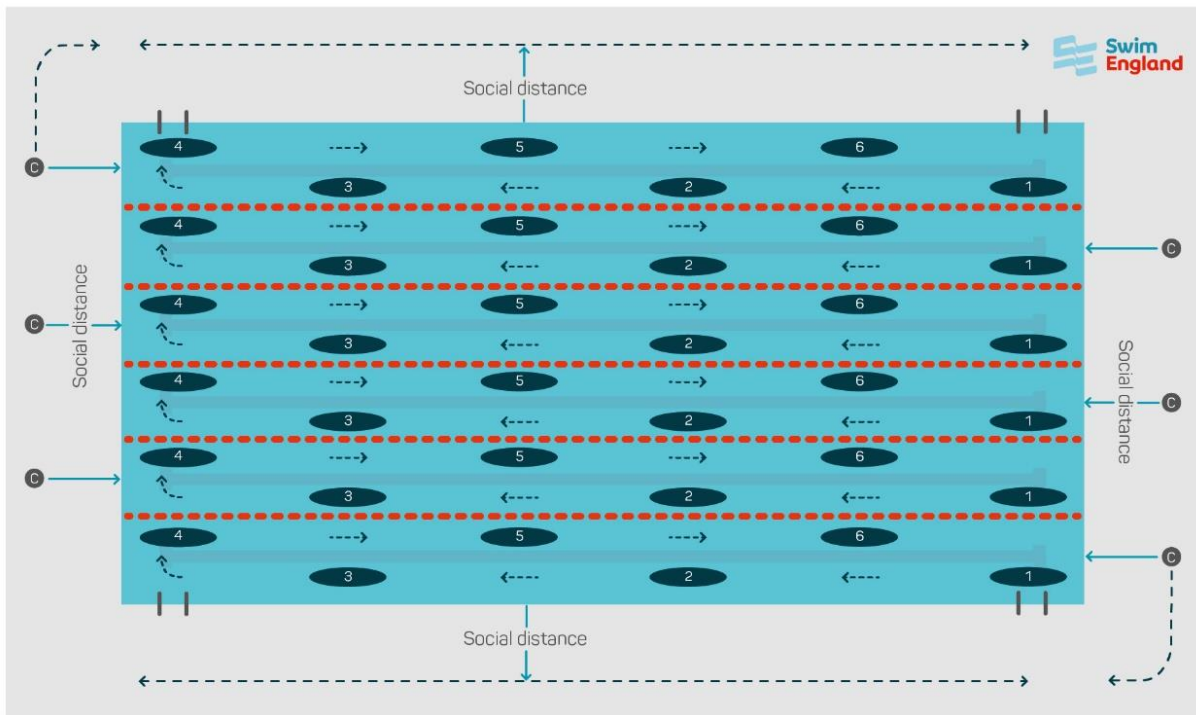
Planning the safe flow of swimmers in the water

- ✓ Consider the swimmers in your group and how many can safely train in each lane and in adjacent lanes while maintaining an appropriate distance from each other.
- ✓ Consider the options provided by other areas in the swimming facility which could be used for some purposes – e.g. diving tank or additional pools.
- ✓ Consider the flow (direction of the swimmer) in each lane as well as adjacent lanes to ensure appropriate distancing and the least amount of contact.
- ✓ Consider where and when swimmers in a lane will start and which end, they will start from. E.g. will lanes be one direction or both directions (e.g. up lane 3, back lane 4)? This will depend on the facility, pool length, swimmers, etc.
- ✓ Consider the flow of entry and exit from the pool for the training session or any specific drills where swimmers may exit, such as starts.

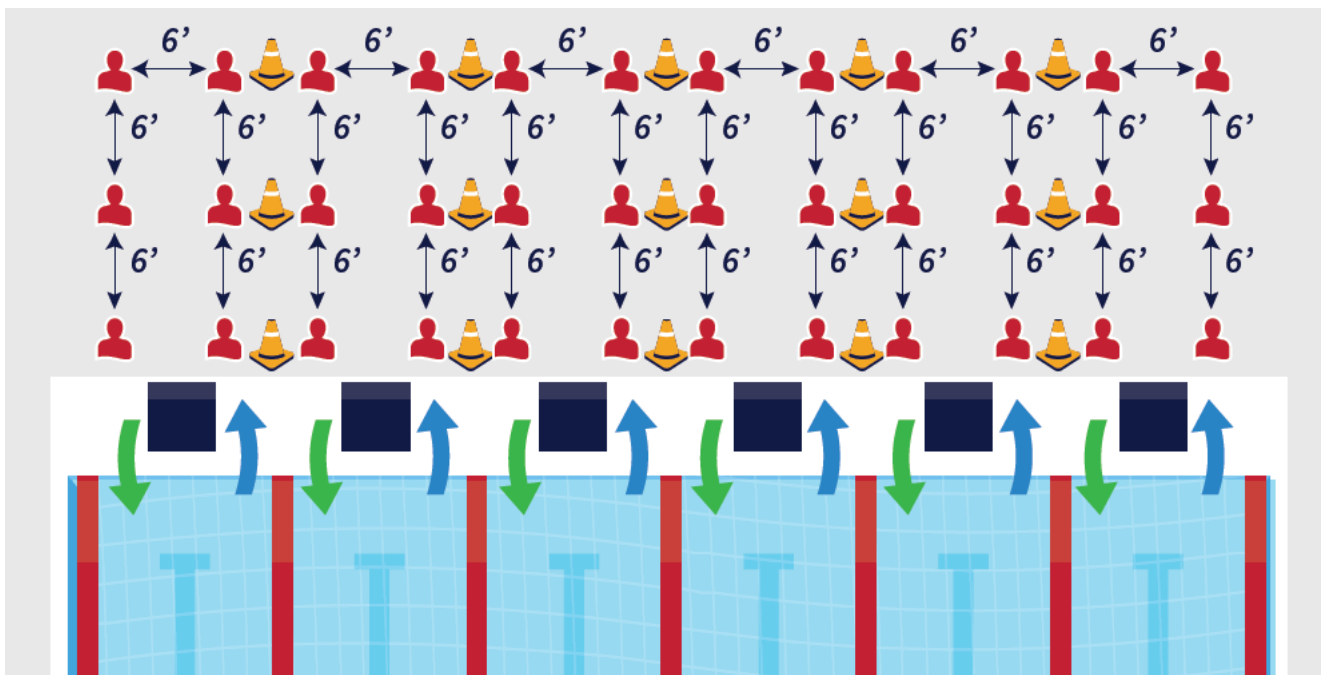
Example 1: Diagram showing the flow of swimmers always keeping the lane rope on their left, so they are not beside a swimmer in an adjacent lane but are rather passing each other going in opposite directions, limiting the time or contact (credits – Swim England)

Returning to the pool – Guidance for clubs.

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Example 2: Diagram showing swimmers lined up 6 feet (2m) apart to enter the water for training (credits – USA Swimming)



Coaching

- ✓ The use of masks during training should follow any guidance, rules and regulations produced by your national and local governments and the health regulations in place in your country and local area.
- ✓ Avoid sharing hand-held equipment such as stopwatches, clipboards, or pens etc. with coaching colleagues.
- ✓ Use of a whiteboard for drills, instructions may be useful.
- ✓ Always maintain social distancing when giving feedback, while athletes are resting, and at all other times.
- ✓ Implement a 15-minute buffer between sessions, to ensure equipment can be cleaned.
- ✓ Organize online training sessions and use of online resources (videos) where possible.

Swimmers requiring guides or assistance

- ✓ As far as possible swimmers who require a guide should use their own guide or have the same person guiding them at all times. Masks should be worn as per local health guidelines.
- ✓ Consider use of modified guiding techniques for VI swimmers to maintain physical (social) distancing, for example the swimmer and guide each hold onto different ends of a tapper as the

- swimmer is guided to the pool.
- ✓ For swimmers who have to be lifted in and out of the water, the assistants should wear a mask. Where possible the swimmer should also wear a mask, however consideration should be given to who has to place the mask on the swimmer (hand cleaning before and after) as well as whether the mask will interfere with the swimmer's ability to breathe – particularly after a workout.

More Resources

Further resources are also available online:

Videos

- Handwashing video demonstration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PmVJQUcm4E&feature=youtu.be>
- Public advice: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Websites

- World Health Organisation Stay informed COVID-19 website: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- World Health Organisation: Considerations for sports federations/sports event organizers when planning mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19 - https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331764/WHO-2019-nCoV-Mass_Gatherings_Sports-2020.1-eng.pdf
- World Health Organisation: Guidance for the use of the WHO Mass Gatherings Sports: addendum risk assessment tools in the context of COVID-19 - <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/guidance-for-the-use-of-the-who-mass-gatherings-sports-addendum-risk-assessment-tools-in-the-context-of-covid-19>
- World Health Organisation Travel Advice: <https://www.who.int/ith/en/>
- IPC: <https://www.paralympic.org/news/information-para-athletes-and-ipc-members-covid-19>
- IOC: <https://www.olympic.org/athlete365/coronavirus/>
- FINA: https://www.fina.org/sites/default/files/fina_covid-19_presentation.pdf
- Other: For more information, you can also visit websites of other countries, National Paralympic Committees, swimming and Para swimming national federations who have published their return to sport and swimming plans.

Credits

- World Para Powerlifting: Safe return to Para Powerlifting Guidelines; <https://www.paralympic.org/ipc/medical/covid-19-and-return-to-sport>
- FINA; https://www.fina.org/sites/default/files/fina_covid-19_presentation.pdf
- Swim England; <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/pool-return-guidance-documents/>
- USA Swimming; <https://www.usaswimming.org/home/covid-news>