

Masters Swimming Victoria

RETURN TO PLAY



**FRAMEWORK
FOR THE RETURN
OF SWIMMING
IN CLUB
ENVIRONMENTS**

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Message from the President

I never imagined my first role as president of Masters Swimming Victoria (MSV) would be to guide our clubs back to pool swimming with the easing of COVID-19 activity restrictions, but here we are.

I am proud to present this endorsed Return to Play Plan to our clubs. The Return to Play Plan is intended to assist our clubs return to swimming under the latest Stay Safe and [Restricted Activity Directions](#) issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. Getting back in the pool must not compromise the health of our swimmers or the community.

In developing the plan we have made our best efforts to keep swimming at squad as fun and simple as possible while minimising the risk of coronavirus transmission.

Our mission is to “get in – train – get out” but we want you to have fun and stay safe in the process. All MSV clubs are required to comply with this Return to Play Plan except when the club is also affiliated with Swimming Victoria. Clubs that are affiliated with both State associations must comply with the Swimming Victoria Return to Play Plan.

Competition swimming remains prohibited in Victoria. We will issue updated guidance for our return to competition as restrictions ease further.

The plan includes:

- Guidelines for coaches – we are asking coaches to conduct a pool-deck briefing at each squad session prior to swimmers getting in the pool
- A facilities agreement to help clubs and venue managers agree on the venue hygiene and usage protocols
- An optional sign-in sheet. All clubs need to keep accurate records of attendance for contact tracing purposes. The template can be used for this purpose
- A Communication tip sheet to help clubs keep their members up to date.

This plan came together using helpful guidance provided by

- Masters Swimming Australia [COVID-19 resources](#)
- Swimming Victoria’s [plan to assist their clubs prepare for the safe return of club swimming environments](#)
- Swimming Australia’s [National Guidelines for restarting club environments](#)
- The Royal Life Saving Society’s [Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations Managing the Risk of COVID19 in Aquatic Facilities](#)
- The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) [Framework for rebooting sport in a COVID-19 environment](#)

Please ask us for help if you need it. MSV will check in with clubs regularly to offer assistance.

Welcome back to squad.

Rachel Cairns



Organisation details

Masters Swimming Victoria

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Administrator

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State Sporting Association – unfunded

ABN 25 821 364 162

Sports House, Level 2 , 375 Albert Road, Albert Park VIC 3206

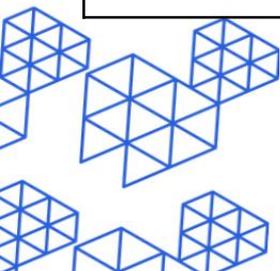
Authorised and published by Masters Swimming Victoria

2 June 2020



1. Club checklist

MSV club has:	Tick
Acknowledged receipt to the MSV Return to Play Plan via email to admin@mastersswimming.org.au	
Confirmed the Club Secretary as the MSV COVID-19 liaison or nominated an alternative club member to this role and advised MSV of the confirmation/nomination via email to admin@mastersswimming.org.au	
Reviewed and considered all sections and attachments of the Return to Play Plan.	
Established facilities agreements with each squad venue and provided a copy of the signed agreements to MSV via email to admin@mastersswimming.org.au	
Advised club members of Return to Play arrangements	
Agreed on communication protocols to advise facilities and members of arrangements as things change	
Engaged with club coaches, club captains and squad leaders about implementing the Return to Club Plan	
Established club safety protocols	
Established protocols to manage swimmer numbers in accordance with Victorian Government directions. Consider establishing an online booking system or working with the venue to use their booking system.	
Purchased a supply of hand sanitizer to be made available for use during squad sessions	
Comments	



2. Hygiene

A pre-emptive low-cost intervention like enhanced hygiene measures of participants is key to reducing the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Examples of personal hygiene measures that should be promoted include handwashing and covering mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve during coughing/sneezing. Advice on cleaning is available from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Commonwealth Department of Health.

What infection control measures will you introduce to ensure all participants and spectators are maintaining personal hygiene?

MSV will regularly reiterate in all communications to clubs that, firstly, swimmers must not attend training if unwell, showing any symptoms relating to COVID-19 or have been overseas in the last 14 days. Everyone attending training is to uphold personal hygiene standards, including:

- showering at home prior to attending squad,
- washing and/or sanitising hands prior to entering the water
- cough/sneeze hygiene (cover mouth, into elbow).

Clubs are required to ensure:

- hand sanitiser is placed at the end of the pool and near any gathering areas (e.g. sign-in sheet, cash tin).
- cash handling is minimised – move to online payments if possible. Where this is not practical, exact change to be provided and deposited in tin.
- communal change rooms are not to be used (venue protocols and Victorian government directions are followed).

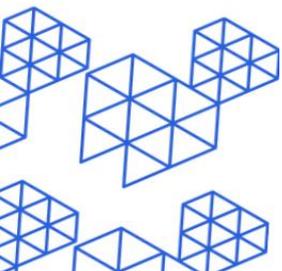
Guidance material is enclosed for coaches and squad leaders (Attachment 1). All coaches, club captains and squad leaders to conduct a pool-deck briefing prior to swimmers entering the water. Coaches (and club officials) are requested to undertake infection control training.

How will personal hygiene and cleaning of facilities and equipment be maintained to minimise transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- Cleaning of facilities is the responsibility of the venue manager. However, each club is to discuss and agree to cleaning protocols with venue management and a Facilities Agreement to be executed by both parties (club/facilities manager); example attached (Attachment 2).
- Equipment: including Swim Caps, Goggles, Kickboards, Drink Bottles etc. Bring your own equipment, sanitised prior to bring to pool deck. No sharing of equipment or using facility provided equipment.
- void handling lane ropes.

2.2 Have you increased regular cleaning schedules for common use areas?

Not applicable, cleaning is done by venue manager. This will be negotiated on a club by club basis and agreed as per Facilities Agreement.



3. Physical contact activities

Physical distancing decreases the risk of transmission by reducing incidence of contact with other persons through shaking hands, hugging or tackling. The Stay at Home Directions require that participants take reasonable steps to maintain 1.5m distance from all other people.

For activities that contain physical contact, or close interaction with other people, what protocols or modifications to activities can be implemented to ensure physical distancing is maintained?

Coaches guidelines and pre-squad briefing reminds swimmers of social distancing (1.5m), max 3 people per lane and advising swimmers people not to “bunch up” near the end of the lane while receiving instructions from the coach. Please minimise contact with other squad participants. No shaking hands or high fives.

4. Arrival and departure of participants, officials, parents or carers

Physical distancing decreases the risk of transmission by reducing incidence of contact between people. The Stay at Home Directions currently limit gatherings of groups of people to reduce the risk of people spreading coronavirus (COVID-19). The control of facilities and management of areas where people might gather will reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission.

What measures have you put in place for managing entry and exit points, separating assembly areas, adjustments to activity timings and maintaining physical distancing of people?

- Swimmers are to arrive and exit via the points/routes designated by the facility manager only, and adhere to the directions/lane markings.
- Participants are to maintain 1.5m distance at entry / check in points/areas (if applicable).
- Get in – train – get out. No socialising before or after training.

5. Spectators/gatherings

The Stay at Home Directions currently limit gatherings to groups of 10 people to reduce the risk of people spreading coronavirus (COVID-19). Spectators, and other non-participants watching activities should not attend activities unless they have an essential role or they are parents and/or guardians. Public gathering limitations apply. Organisations should plan for activities without crowds to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

What protocols will be in place to restrict access to athletes and maintain recommended physical distancing?

No spectators except carers are allowed at squad training sessions..

The MSV Return to Play Plan will be updated as restrictions ease to allow for competition swimming. This plan only covers squad training.

6. Sharing equipment

In combination with good hygiene practices, a similar pre-emptive measure is to promote behaviours such as not sharing drink bottles, towels, and limiting the shared use of equipment. Equipment that touches the head of face or cannot be effectively cleaned (for example, if made from soft materials or clothing) should not be shared. Where sharing equipment cannot be avoided, equipment with smooth surfaces should be cleaned between sessions.

What modifications can be made to ensure there is no transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) through the sharing of equipment, contact with equipment and/or contact with any surfaces where participants may be at risk of infection?

All swimmers are to:

- Bring your own equipment, sanitised prior to bring it onto the pool deck.
- No sharing of equipment or using facility provided equipment.
- Avoid handling lane ropes.

6.1 Do you have protocols in place for sports medicine staff who share medical equipment?

MSV do not use or employ sports medicine staff. This question is not applicable.

7. Group activity

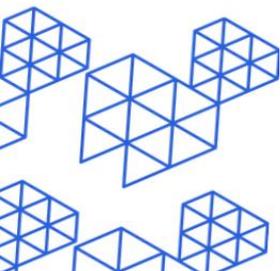
Restricted Activity Directions and Stay at Home Directions currently limit gatherings to no more than 20 people in a single space plus those reasonably required to run the space. Indoor and outdoor pools to open, to maximum 20 patrons and limit of 3 people per lane in each pool.

For team activities, what protocols are in place to enable a staged return to activities of small groups (up to 20) in non-contact formats?

The MSV Return to Play Plan will be updated as restrictions ease to allow for competition swimming. This plan only covers coached training sessions conducted at swimming pools. All sessions will be limited to no more than 20 swimmers. A Facilities Agreement is to be negotiated by each club for each of their venues. Clubs are to maintain their squad booking systems to ensure attendance records and contact details are available for all sessions. An optional sign-in sheet is available for clubs to use (Attachment 3).

7.1 Are changes required to participant behaviour during sport activities in addition to no shaking hands and high fives?

Yes. Swimmers are advised not to bunch up at the end of lanes and ensure no more than three swimmers per lane.



8. Indoor facilities

The Restricted Activities Direction prohibits the use of indoor facilities such as club rooms, change rooms, and showers. Only toilets can remain open.

How will you ensure that indoor facilities, other than toilets, remains closed?

This is the responsibility of the facilities manager. However, each club to enter a Facilities Agreement, executed by both parties (club/facilities manager), including these requirements; example attached.

9. Travel

To prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Stay at Home Direction restricts travel to participate in sport and recreation activities to day trips only.

How can your return to play plan ensure travel is minimised and participants stay in the local neighbourhoods and towns?

Club members are reminded of the Stay Safe and Restricted Activity Directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. Members are asked to limit squad participation to your local club.

10. High injury risk activity

To reduce the strain on Victoria's health and emergency services, common sense should be used in avoiding activities that have a high risk of injury that may result in hospitalisation.

What measures are in place for high injury risk activities that may result in hospitalisation?

Not applicable



11. Protocols

What protocols or processes are in place to ensure participants are free of coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms?

- Club communications and websites to insist swimmers with symptoms, or have been overseas in the last 14 days, to stay away.
- Clubs who use booking systems to include information at booking about not turning up if you have symptoms.

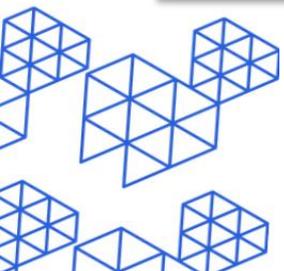
The included coaches guidelines and briefing instructs the coach to request any participants with symptoms to leave the session and encourage them to be tested for COVID-19.

What protocols do you have in place for people who present to training with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever or respiratory symptoms such as cough, sore throat and shortness of breath)?

- Coaches (and club officials) to be vigilant to anyone showing symptoms.
- Anyone displaying symptoms during training will be required to leave immediately.

How will you coordinate and communicate and changes to the directions to your clubs, members and stakeholders?

- Nominate Secretary of each club as the COVID-19 Liaison Officer unless the club nominates an alternative person.
- Email to club Secretary requiring a response and acknowledgement that the information has been distributed to swimmers. Follow-up phone calls to Secretaries who do not acknowledge receipt.
- Regular emails to Secretaries and web page updates.
- Request to distribute key messages to clubs via all club emails, coach briefings and club social media pages.
- Optional webinar to members if clubs express an interest in this option.



12. Communication

Communicating coronavirus (COVID-19) risk mitigation strategies to participants is vital. Setting and promoting expectations for required behaviours prior to recommencing activities will be crucial to ensuring activities are safe to return to and remain free of further restrictions. This includes communicating current restrictions, improved health literacy of participants and social distancing measures.

List the measures you will use to communicate and provide guidance to participants and clubs?

- Email to club Secretary requiring a response and acknowledgement that the information has been distributed to swimmers. Follow-up phone calls to Secretaries who do not acknowledge receipt.
- Regular emails to Secretaries and web page updates.
- Request to distribute key messages to clubs via all club emails, coach briefings and club social media pages.
- Optional webinar to members if clubs express an interest in this option.
- Pre-recorded videos on social media announcing the plan and support material.
- Plan and support material will be published on our dedicated COVID-19 web page <https://mastersswimmingvic.org.au/COVID-19-and-beyond/>
- Cross-reference to the MSV plan published in the Swimming Victoria Return to Play Plan.

The plan will be supported by:

- Guidance material for our clubs and coaches
- A communications help sheet to provide clubs with tips and key messages for their web pages and emails to members (Attachment 4).
- An optional sign-in sheet. Or clubs have many ways to manage their attendance including electronic pre-booking systems, membership cards and facilities check-in. Clubs who do not have an existing process to carefully track attendance can use the sign-in template or develop their own.
- A template facilities agreement to be signed by a club official and venue representative describing the arrangements the club will put in place with venue operators.
- Emails to all members.
- Emails Club's email addresses with information passed onto club members.
- MSV's Website
- Club websites and social media platforms
- MSV's social media platforms. (Facebook and Instagram.)

12.1 Do you have protocols to advise participants, officials and parents or carers to not attend if they are feeling unwell?

Yes (see section 4)

12.2 Do you have strategies to address non-compliance? Yes What are they?

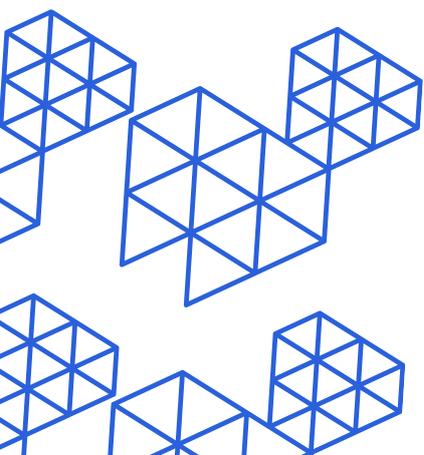
The presidents introduction to the Return to Play Plan emphasises the importance of compliance with the plan. MSV will check in with clubs regularly to support its implementation.

Non-compliance will be monitored via the check-in process and managed on a case by case basis.

Non-compliance can be addressed with responses ranging from improving communications and supporting clubs with the plan requirements through to requesting clubs exclude members from training sessions. In extreme and unusual circumstances the association can sanction a member via the association's disciplinary procedure.

ATTACHMENT 1

COACHES GUIDELINES



Return to Play Plan – Guidelines for Coaches

Masters Swimming Victoria (MSV) clubs are required to comply with the association's approved Return to Play Plan except when the club is also affiliated with Swimming Victoria. Clubs that are affiliated with both State associations must comply with the Swimming Victoria Return to Play Plan.

A copy of the MSV Return to Play Plan is to be provided to all coaches, club captains and squad leaders. You can request a copy from your club's secretary or view it online at Masters Swimming Victoria if you have not received a copy.

We are trying to make swimming at squad during COVID-19 restrictions as fun and simple as possible while minimising the risk of coronavirus transmission. Coaches play a central role in how squad sessions run. We are asking all coaches or squad leaders to brief swimmers about staying safe and practicing appropriate hygiene standards.

Please review the MSV's Return to Play Plan and the clubs facilities agreement and ensure you follow all mandatory requirements.

The club secretary is the club liaison officer for COVID-19 matters except where the club has nominated a different person to take on this role.

Infection Control Training

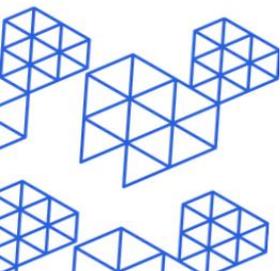
The Australian Government's Department of Health provides free online COVID-19 infection control training. We request all coaches complete this training prior to coaching any session for Masters Swimming Victoria.

The training is available on the Department of Health website at: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/COVID-19-infection-control-training>

Pre squad briefing

We require all coaches, club captains or squad leaders to conduct a pool-deck briefing prior to swimmers entering the water. It is not necessary to follow the exact script provided but please try to cover all of the content.

Masters Swimming Victoria will provide updated information to clubs as the situation changes. Please incorporate changes to your briefings as the need arises.



Example script for pool-deck briefing

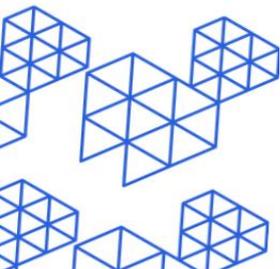
We are still in the middle of a global pandemic. There is no cure or vaccine for coronavirus. The restrictions put in place to slow the spread of the virus are starting to ease. We are now allowed to get back to swimming. But we need to do things differently to make sure we don't get a resurgence of cases.

Our mission today is to "get in – train – get out" but we want you to have fun and stay safe in the process.

Training sessions have to be a little different. Each session now starts with a pool deck briefing:

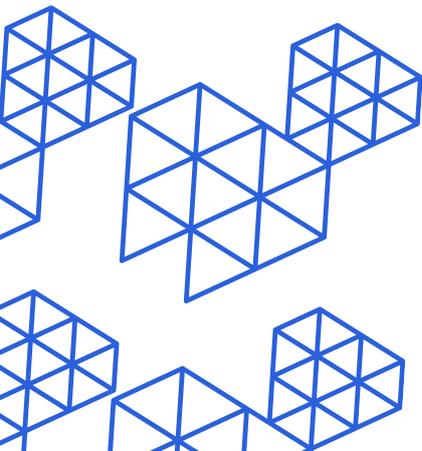
- Stay 1.5 metres away from other people whenever and wherever you can while you are out of the pool.
- No spectators are allowed except for carers.
- The change rooms are closed but the toilets remain open.
- You can only use your own equipment, all facility equipment is unavailable.
- Please keep equipment and water bottles separate and within reach.
- Please do not share equipment or water bottles.
- Today we will be using [pull buoy; fins; snorkel etc].
- If you have returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days you must leave this session now, you are not allowed to be here.
- If you have any of the following symptoms – fever, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, loss of sense of smell you must leave this session now. Please get tested for the virus.
- No more than three swimmers are allowed in each lane.
- Please either get in and out of the pool at your lane if you can, or move quickly and carefully across the pool from the ladder.
- As always, please let me know if you have any medical conditions that might affect your training.
- Please have clean hands when climbing down the pool ladder (be careful, hand sanitiser makes them slippery).
- Please let me know if you feel ill at any time. I will ask you to either leave the session to go home or move you to [explain where the isolation room is].
- [Add in any other details required by the venue].
- [Add anything you want to say as the coach].
- There is no staying back for a chat, coffee and socialising after the session.
- At the end of the session, please dry off, put your clothes on while you are on the pool deck. All showers must wait until you get home.
- Please read your emails from the club and get to squad with just enough time to participate in the pre-squad briefing.

And after all of that, let's get swimming. Welcome back to the pool. Are there any questions?



ATTACHMENT 2

FACILITIES AGREEMENT





Facilities agreement

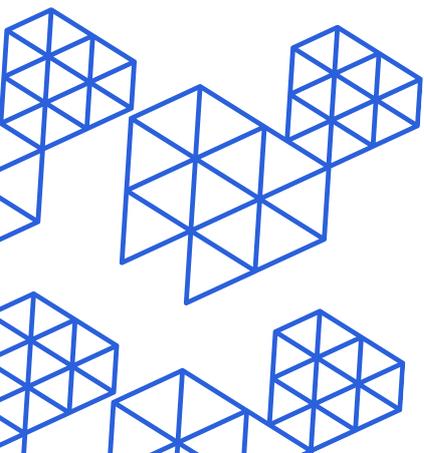
Club:			
Facility:			
Club office holder:			
Name:			
Position:			
Signature:		Date:	
*Club Covid-19 Liaison Officer			
Name:			
Signature:		Date:	
Facilities manager			
Name:			
Position:			
Signature:		Date:	

*Club Secretary unless role allocated to an alternative club member

Masters swimming club and facilities manager has:	Tick
Shared and discussed the MSV Return to Play Plan with coaches, committee and facilities manager	
Agreed on the facility' safety protocols and incorporated these into the coaches pre-squad briefing	
Established hygiene and no sharing protocols around water bottles and equipment.	
Established protocols to manage swimmer numbers in accordance with Victorian Government directions	
Established protocols with the coach and facility if a swimmer becomes sick whilst training	
Has an agreed club/facility communication protocol should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed	
Has an appropriate drop off/pick up procedure for swimmers in place	
Will provide the names and contact details of squad attendees to the facilities as per restricted directions requirements (strike through if not required)	

ATTACHMENT 3

OPTIONAL SIGN-IN SHEET





Squad sign-in sheet

Club:			
Date:		Time:	
Coach:		Location:	

By signing this attendance record you certify that:

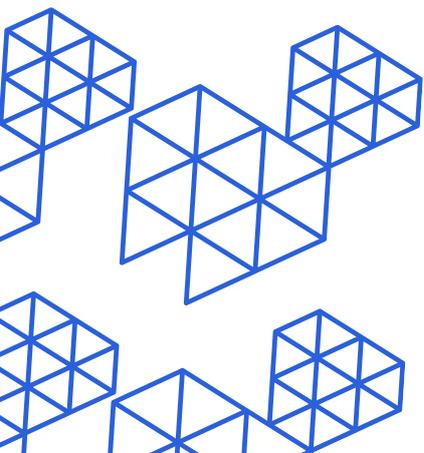
- You have not returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days.
- You are medically and physically fit and not a danger to yourself or to the health and safety of others.
- You are not experiencing any of the following symptoms – fever, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, loss of sense of smell.
- While at the venue, participating in club activities, you will ensure you comply with physical distancing and exemplary hygiene measures.
- You acknowledge that you undertake all activities at your own risk and the club and venue (as well as Masters Swimming Australia and Masters Swimming Victoria have NOT and cannot make any representation or warranty that attending the venue or participating in swimming or club activities is free from risk.

In order to comply with Victorian Restricted Activity Directions, your name and contact phone number will be provided to the swimming pool facility operator for contact tracing purposes.

#	PRINT NAME	Signature	Contact telephone	\$ Payment (if applicable)
1				
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ATTACHMENT 4

COMMUNICATION TIPS



Communication tips

Communication tips

- ✓ Fire up your committee – Circulate the Return to Play Plan amongst your club committee. Get agreement on who needs to do certain things.
- ✓ Manage participant numbers – Consider setting up an online booking system for your squad sessions to manage participant numbers. Platforms like [Trybooking](#) and [Eventbrite](#) are simple and easy to use or your venue may already have a booking system. Use the platform to inform members of the new squad arrangements.
- ✓ Update your webpage and social media sites – Feel free to use or adapt the key messages below to keep your members (and potential members) informed. Develop your own messages. Don't forget to include a link to the online booking system if you have one.
- ✓ Engage members with emails and social media – Send out all club emails and regularly post updates on your social media sites to let members know what is going on.
- ✓ Engage members in high risk categories – Develop ways to keep older people and people with chronic conditions connected with the club while health advice recommends they continue to self-isolate.
- ✓ Engage coaches – Share the Return to Play Plan with Coaches, Club Captains and squad leaders. Invite their participation. The committee and coaches all need ownership of the new safety protocols that need to be developed and implemented.
- ✓ Contact your venues – Work with your venues to develop safety protocols.
- ✓ Keep in contact with Masters Swimming Victoria (MSV) (Email: admin@mastersswimming.org.au) – Reach out for assistance if you need it. Share your successes with us. Tell us about the things that are working for your club. Let us know if we need to update or change advice if something could be improved.
- ✓ Celebrate – Use social media with the tag @Masters Swimming Victoria to tell the world you are back in the pool. Take photographs and post about club sessions.

Key messages

Masters Swimming Victoria Return to Play Plan

- The MSV Return to Play Plan is intended to assist MSV clubs return to swimming under the latest Stay at Home and Restricted Activity Directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. Getting back in the pool must not compromise the health of our swimmers or the community



Communication tips

- Competition swimming remains prohibited in Victoria. MSV will issue updated guidance for our return to competition as restrictions ease further

Changes to squad arrangements

- Stay home and avoid contact if you're feeling unwell
- Get in, train and get out'. Swimmers should prepare for exercise at home, to minimise need to congregate at the pool. Swimmers should get dressed to train at home and shower at home on completion
- You can use toilet facilities at the pool. Showers and change facilities must remain closed
- You may use your own sanitised equipment at training including caps, goggles, fins, pull-buoy etc. All facility equipment is unavailable. You must not share equipment with other swimmers
- Squad sessions will commence with a pool-deck briefing. Please arrive at squad with just enough time to participate in the briefing
- You must notify us of your intention to attend squad to help us manage participant numbers. [describe your clubs process]
- Carers may attend and spectate at MSV squad sessions. No other spectators are allowed. Carers are included in the number of participants who can attend the session which cannot exceed 20. Please let the club know if a carer will be attending to ensure we can manage participant numbers
- Consider downloading the COVIDSafe app to help slow the spread of the virus.

Members in higher-risk groups

- The strong recommendation for people over 70 is to self-isolate and stay home as much as possible. People over 60 with chronic conditions and Indigenous Australians over 50 are also recommended to self-isolate.

Victoria's current directions

- From 11:59pm on 31 May indoor and outdoor swimming pools can be opened to a maximum of 20 patrons per swimming pool with a limit of three persons per lane in each pool. The four square metre rule applies to the publicly accessible area excluding the pool.
- From 22 June 2020 indoor and outdoor swimming pools will remain at a maximum of 20 patrons per swimming pool, with a limit of three persons per lane in each pool. The four square metre rule applies to the publicly accessible area excluding the pool.



Communication tips

- As of March 29, the Federal Government has advised all people arriving in Australia will be required to go through a supervised quarantine process at the point of entry into Australia for 14 days. Any athletes or coaches entering Australia after this date must comply with these instructions