

Masters Swimming Victoria

RETURN TO PLAY



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

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Message from the President

Masters Swimming Victoria has updated its Return to Play Plan to account for what we have learnt about COVID-19, swimming and to reflect new Victorian Government guidance.

Under the Stage 3 activity restrictions indoor pools (including swimming classes) are open subject to a maximum patron cap of 20, subject to density limits. Outdoor swimming pools will open subject to patron caps of 50 and density limits, other than for exclusive use by a single school at any one time for community sport.

As we head towards COVID normal there will be no exercise restrictions. Facilities will be able to open subject to density limits, group cap, and safety measures. Organised contact sports resume for all ages with limitations for spectators.

The Return to Play Plan is intended to assist our clubs return to swimming in accordance with these activity restrictions. Like before, getting back in the pool must not compromise the health of our swimmers or the community.

Our mission stays the same - “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.

The plan includes:

- Guidelines for coaches
- A communications tip sheet to help clubs keep their members up to date.

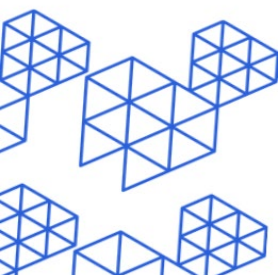
This plan came together using helpful guidance provided by

- 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



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1. 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.
- Refer to guidelines on wearing and removing a mask <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-masks-vic-covid-19>.
- washing and/or sanitising hands prior to entering the water.
- cough/sneeze hygiene (cover mouth, into elbow).

Clubs should:

- minimise cash handling where possible– move to online payments if possible. Where this is not practical, exact change to be provided and deposited in tin.
- Ensure communal change rooms are only be used in accordance with venue protocols (Victorian government directions are followed).

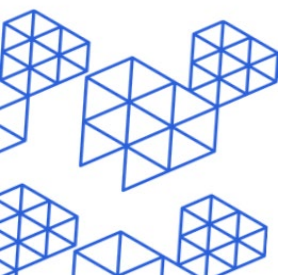
Guidance material is enclosed for coaches and squad leaders (Attachment 1).

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

- Cleaning of facilities is the responsibly of the venue manager.
- You may use your own equipment at training including caps, goggles, fins, pull-buoy etc. You should not share equipment with other swimmers.
- Avoid handling lane ropes.

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

Not applicable, cleaning is done by venue manager.



2. 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 and squad leaders should remind swimmers of social distancing (1.5m) and advise swimmers 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.

3. 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.
- Refer to guidelines on wearing and removing a mask <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-masks-vic-covid-19>.
- 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.

4. 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.

5. 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:

- Refer to guidelines on wearing and removing a mask <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-masks-vic-covid-19>.
- Bring your own equipment, sanitised prior to bringing it onto the pool deck.
- No sharing of equipment or using facility provided equipment.

5.1 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.

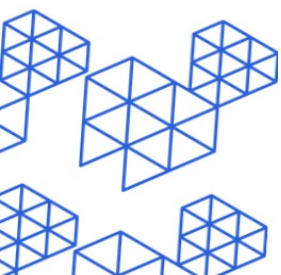
6. Group activity

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 in accordance with facility arrangements.

Clubs are to maintain their squad booking systems to ensure attendance records and contact details are available for all sessions.

6.1 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.



7. Indoor facilities

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

This is the responsibility of the facilities manager.

8. Travel

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

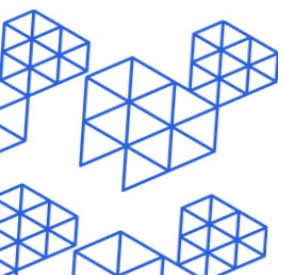
Club members are reminded of the Stay Safe and Restricted Activity Directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. Members are asked to limit squad participation to your local club.

9. 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



10. 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.

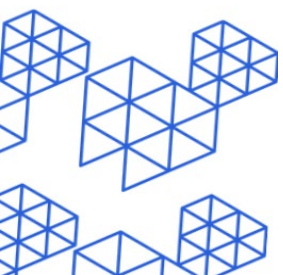
The included coaches guidelines instructs the coach to request any participants with symptoms to leave the session and encourage them to be tested for COVID-19.

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?

- MSV standard protocol is to communicate with club Secretaries. club Secretaries are requested to forward MSV communications to members. On occasion MSV will communicate directly to all members.
- Regular emails to club Secretaries and web page updates.
- Request to distribute key messages to clubs via all club emails, coach briefings and club social media pages.



11. 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?

- MSV standard protocol is to communicate with club Secretaries. club Secretaries are requested to forward MSV communications to members. On occasion MSV will communicate directly to all members.
- Regular emails to club Secretaries and web page updates.
- Request to distribute key messages to clubs via all club emails, coach briefings and club social media pages.
- 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 2).
- 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.)

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

Yes (see section 10)

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

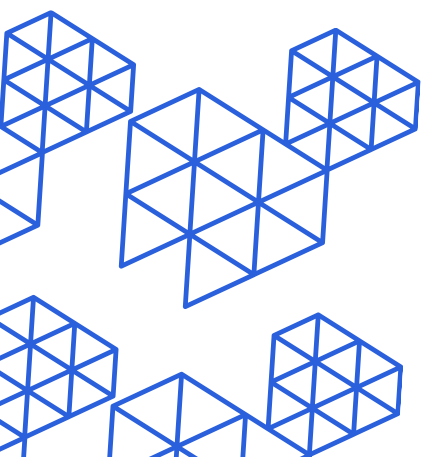
The presidents introduction to the Return to Play Plan emphasises the importance of compliance with the plan. MSV will check in with clubs regularly to support its implementation.

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





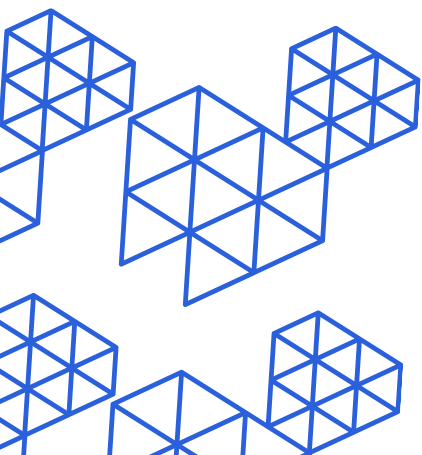
Guidelines for Coaches

Return to Play Plan

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

ATTACHMENT 2

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



Communication tips

Changes to squad arrangements

- Stay home and avoid contact if you're feeling unwell.
- Get in, train and get out'. Swimmers should comply with facilities requirements re: change rooms.
- You may use your own equipment at training including caps, goggles, fins, pull-buoy etc. You should not share equipment with other swimmers.
- 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. Please let the club know if a carer will be attending to ensure we can manage participant numbers.