

GOLF INDUSTRY GUIDELINES TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19).

Guidance on dealing with the Coronavirus health emergency is being circulated to golf clubs and their professional workforce in a joint statement from BIGGA, The PGA, and the GCMA. The three organisations, supported by the R&A, have collaborated on the guidelines which offer advice on the running of a golf club in the possible absence of key staff, planning for the longer term effects to the business and the importance of communication to staff and to members. They are being circulated to all three organisations' members and the wider golf club community in response to the escalation of the emergency

Please can the recipient of this communication ensure that it is sent to all key management personnel within your golf club

GRASS ROOTS GOLF PLAYS ON OFFERING FRESH AIR AND EXERCISE

The current restrictions do not prevent golf competitions or casual games taking place, but all golfers should follow some simple steps to maintain the low risk of infection.

By following positive but sensible set of guidelines which we can all adhere to and then communicating those to golfers, we can continue to enjoy the sport in the months to come.

Golf's three professional governing bodies have issued further advice to golfers and the operators for golf clubs as a game to be enjoyed "sensibly and safely" during the Coronavirus outbreak.

The Government has continued its advice that exercise in the fresh air away from human contact should be continued, even for those in self-isolation.

The Professional Golfers' Association (PGA), Golf Club Managers' Association (GCMA) and the British and International Golf Greenkeepers' Association (BIGGA) have issued joint guidance on how golf clubs can continue to allow members and golfers to enjoy the game whilst observing some simple guidelines.

The current restrictions do not prevent golf competitions or casual games taking place, but all golfers should follow some simple steps to maintain the low risk of infection. These measures should be agreed by the golf club following the current health and Government advice guidelines. Once agreed, these should be communicated to members and presented to the wider audience via the website, potential booking platforms and social media.

Whilst 'business' as usual' may not be the case, the game can

undoubtedly send out a positive message that it offers one of the safest ways to take exercise and interact socially with minimal personal contact whilst meeting current Government guidelines

Robert Maxfield, Chief Executive of The Professional Golfers Association, said: "We have always been aware of the wide range of mental and physical benefits that golf offers and it is now that these will really come to the fore. We understand that golf clubs will be coming under pressure but believe that with sensible precautions, many members and visitors may be able to continue to enjoy the game during these difficult times.

"We need to work together as an industry. By following positive but sensible set of guidelines which we can all adhere to and then communicating those to golfers, we can continue to enjoy the sport in the months to come. The game can offer a level of social interaction which will be vital for certain sections of the community."

Below are some best practice ideas that other governing bodies or golf clubs are beginning to adopt. There will be others and we will be sharing these on the Coronavirus Hub developed by the three organisations.

PRIOR TO THE GAME:

- Prioritise online services for entries, bookings and scoring.
- Take payments using contactless means or online prior to the game.
- Players with any colds or coughs or any symptoms of COVID-19 should be asked not to play.
- Locker rooms should be closed to avoid players being near each other. Allow the changing of shoes in the car park.
- Shotgun starts with people congregating before and after are discouraged for the time being.
- Putting green closure should be considered for larger events.
- Golf buggies should be taken out of use or used by single individuals and cleaned afterwards

ADVICE FOR GOLFERS ON THE GOLF COURSE:

- Insist on social distancing (2 metres rule) on tee grounds, greens and throughout the rounds
- Always leave the flag in the hole. Ask golfers to carefully remove their golf ball from the hole, not with a golf club.
- Remove rakes and any other pieces of course furniture that golfers may touch – the greenkeeper team will prepare the course, and where possible, re-rake bunkers during the day. Golfers can and golfers can wipe their own golf balls on a towel
- No divot bags provided.
- Drinking fonts and ball cleaners taken out of play.
- Airlines for cleaning shoes following the round should be closed.
- Golfers should only pick their own ball up
- Do not share any equipment, such as golf clubs or rangefinders
- Don't shake hands before or after your game
- Have hand sanitisers available as golfers leave the golf course

AFTER THE GAME:

- Handling of scorecards is a vulnerability, especially for staff members tasked with checking cards and finalising results. Arrange for this to be done online where possible
- Adjust your catering provision to reduce physical contact through greater space between seating in the clubhouse if possible
- Use disposable plates and cups, have hand washing facilities available on every table
- Hand sanitisers should be made available throughout the clubhouse.
- Regular changing of towels in bathrooms (advice recommends every hour) would be required and regular cleaning of surfaces including door handles.
- Society bookings where food and social interaction is involved afterwards should be limited in accordance with the latest guidance.
- Follow Government advice as mandatory closure of clubhouses may be introduced in the coming days

Phil Grice, Chairman of the Golf Club Managers Association and PGA Member, said: "We are aware that these are very uncertain times for all businesses and their employees and golf clubs are no exception. This also follows a difficult winter where many clubs have already been severely impacted.

"The wellbeing of our teams, including catering, course and professional staff and their teams should be a priority for the operators of golf clubs and volunteer committees. Many are self-employed – PGA Professionals especially – and are facing a difficult period where all aspects of their business – retail, lessons, anything that requires day to day interaction – will be severely limited."

The three professional associations continue to be in constant dialogue and will each and collectively continue to issue advice practicable to their Members as this fluid situation develops.

A website resource is being developed and updated regularly. Golf clubs and golfers should go to www.pga.info/covid-19-resource-hub

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For up-to-date information about the COVID-19 outbreak, visit:

World Health Organization, Rolling updates on coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>

NHS advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

COVID-19: guidance for employers and businesses

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

CONTACT US

If you're concerned about your individual situation and would like to speak to a member of your professional association, you can do so using the following information:

BIGGA

Web: www.bigga.org.uk

Telephone: 01347 833 800

Email: info@bigga.co.uk

GCMA

Web: www.gcma.org.uk

Telephone: 01275 391 153

Email: julie@gcma.org.uk

PGA

Web: www.pga.info

Telephone: 01675 470 333

Email: membership@pga.org.uk