**BFA Action Plan for COVID-19 Adapted Flyball (Step 3) – Revised June 2021**

This Action Plan describes the adaptations for flyball activity, to help participating trainers, handlers and club officials to safely undertake flyball activity in accordance with government guidelines and national COVID-19 restrictions. It outlines the special measures that need to be introduced and adhered to by flyball teams during the conduct of training, racing and club social interaction at flyball events. Members should note that flyball is not yet officially recognised as a sport in the UK and therefore no special regulations or rules apply to the conduct of flyball activities; all flyball activities must therefore comply with the relevant social distancing regulations in force at the time of the activity and these regulations may vary by location.

**Please Note**: The [latest information](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-with-animals) from UK Government is clear that there is no evidence that coronavirus is circulating in pets or other animals in the UK, and no evidence that pets and other domestic animals can transmit the disease to humans. There is also no evidence to suggest you need to wash your dogs to control the spread of coronavirus – Guidance from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Animal and Plant Health Agency updated 18 May 2020[[1]](#footnote-1). Other scientific and medical sources ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/animals.html)[[2]](#footnote-2) and the [American Veterinary Medical Association](https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/interim-recommendations-intake-companion-animals-households-humans-COVID-19-are-present)[[3]](#footnote-3)) confirm that there is no association between pets and the spread of coronavirus. Although the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low, it is still sensible to be scrupulous about normal precautions such as washing hands before and after interacting with animals or handling their food, waste, or supplies, and minimising the handling of other people’s dogs.

Flyball activities therefore present no unique risks related to COVID-19 but the relevant UK Government social distancing guidance should be adhered to at all times, including during any warm-ups and pre and post-event interactions; except in the following limited circumstances where the 1m+ rule is permitted:

 a. Handlers lining up immediately prior to release of the dog into the racing lane.

 b. Movement of a flyball box if it is too heavy for a single-person lift.

 c. During box work requiring the use of props, including during race warm-up.

Social distancing guidelines in the UK can be found [HERE](http://www.gov.uk/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing)[[4]](#footnote-4) (contains links to Wales, NI and Scotland which may be different). Please note this guidance is subject to change in response to the current COVID-19 Alert Level, community prevalence of COVID-19 and-or to reflect additional or updated UK Government guidance. Club captains and tournament organisers should keep themselves familiarised with their local conditions and any specific guidance relevant to their geographic location as well as the national situation.

**Prior to Flyball Activity**

**Risk Assessment**.Event organisers are to conduct an appropriate COVID-19 Risk Assessment using the BFA RA template to ensure all risk factors are identified and mitigated so that any residual risks are as low as reasonably practicable.

Event organisers should clean and disinfect all communal equipment prior to any flyball activities and provide sufficient cleaning material for items such as jumps and timing equipment to be cleaned and disinfected after each race/use.

Racing lanes are to be set with a minimum 16’ between lane centres, and ideally at the maximum width allowed by the venue.

Adequate space for boxes and other team equipment storage next to the ring is to be provided, so that team equipment is kept separate.

If using other facilities at a shared venue (such as toilets, or café), event organisers are to check with the facility owner that the activity has been factored into their own Risk Assessment.

Event organisers are to outline socially distanced areas for each team attending.

**Pre-Attendance Symptom Check**. All participants (handlers, trainers, officials, event organisers), are to check for symptoms of COVID-19. In line with current UK Government [guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance)[[5]](#footnote-5), if an individual is symptomatic and/or living in a household with a possible COVID-19 infection they should remain at home and follow UK Government guidance. In addition, any participants who have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are a contact of a known COVID-19 case, must not exercise outside their home or take part in flyball activities with other people.

Regardless of whether tournaments or other flyball activities are going ahead, flyballers should still follow UK Government guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically vulnerable from COVID-19, if it applies to them.

Participants wishing to engage in flyball activities should comply with all public health restrictions and avoid high risk behaviour outside of a flyball setting to reduce the risk to their fellow participants when the do attend a flyball event.

Good personal hygiene measures should be carried out at home before and after all flyball activity. All personal and team equipment should be cleaned and sanitised prior to arriving at the venue.

Participants should bring their own supply of hand sanitiser where possible and maintain strict and frequent hand hygiene measures at all times.

Participants should follow UK Government guidance on best practice for travel, including minimising the use of public transport and limiting car sharing where possible.

Club Captains should make sure all club members are aware of expected social distancing and hygiene measures during any activity and whilst at the venue. Club Captains should make all club members aware of the increased transmission risk associated with participation in even socially distanced group activities and should ensure that all members are clear that they are opting to participate in socially distanced flyball. Clubs should strictly limit their time spent with other flyballers at the venue pre and post-event.

**During Flyball Activity**

**Track & Trace**. Event organisers are to keep a clear record of all participants in flyball activities, with contact details, for track and trace purposes. Records are to be kept for 21 days post event.

Flyball activity, including team training may resume as long as it is managed in groups of less than 30 people at a time, in accordance with UK Government guidelines. When taking part in activities with larger groups, participants should take particular care to follow normal social distancing guidelines. In addition to those guidelines, the following principles should be observed to ensure the activity minimises the risk of spreading infection:

* limit the time spent interacting with people from outside a household or support bubble to the specific activity being undertaken.
* limit the number of different activities being undertaken in succession to reduce the potential chain of transmission.
* follow strict social distancing guidelines from people outside a household or support bubble.
* **group size should be limited to the minimum which allows the activity to take place.**

All participants should sanitise their hands prior to entering a ring or undertaking any flyball activity.

Event organisers are not to prepare drinks or refreshments for officiating or participating personnel. Officials, judges and other attendees are to provide their own refreshments.

Indoor venues must ensure adequate ventilation by keeping windows and doors open.

Event organisers are to set up a clear one-way system for entry and exit to the ring.

As few people as possible should touch the balls. If a mechanical ball picker is not available, balls should be rolled to the side of the ring with the foot, and the Box Loader, or designated individual, should collect them at end of the race or during a break in activity. The Box Loader/ball collector should wear gloves when touching balls and loading the box, the gloves should be removed at the end of each race/activity and disposed of appropriately if disposable gloves are used or otherwise left with the balls. Each Box Loader/ball collector should have their own set of gloves. The Box Loader should disinfect their hands at the end of each race.

Sharing team equipment is to be avoided where possible; if shared equipment is to be used it is to be cleaned before and after each use, and each user must wash and sanitise their hands immediately after.

Handlers should avoid shouting/calling their dog whilst directly facing another person.

Socially distanced flyball events/racing will inevitably take longer than normal racing. More time will be required during warm-up to adequately manage people and dogs congregating at the box end..

Handlers are to actively avoid encroaching within 2m of the Divisional Judge. Netting could be used down the middle of the run-back area to reduce the occurrence of stray balls or dogs causing unnecessary interaction with the opposing team.

Box Judges, Line Judges and Scribes are to all be provided from the same club for each lane[[6]](#footnote-6). Box Judges are to be situated more than 2m from the box and more than 2m from the racing lane. Scribes should be sat 2m from the Line Judge. Team assistants judging cross-overs are to ensure they stand at least 2m away from the Line Judge.

To minimise the requirement for tournament organisers to access the ring, in Block format, all the racing paperwork for the division is to be left in the ring and the Divisional Judge is to supervise the exchange of paperwork after each race. Alternatively, the host team could provide the LJ and supervise the arrangement of racing paperwork in the ring.

To minimise the risk of cross-infection from communal equipment, jumps and slats are to be touched/moved by either Ring Party or host team personnel only. If the Ring Party is used rather than host team, they should clean and disinfect jumps and slats and timing equipment on handover-takeover of ring party responsibilities.

Presentations of prizes/rosettes should be done separately, immediately on completion of the relevant event, rather than conducted as a large gathering at the end of the day.

**After Flyball Activity**

All participants should sanitise their hands after the completion of the activity.

Social gathering post-activity is only to be allowed in accordance with extant UK Government guidelines.

All equipment should be cleaned and disinfected immediately after each use. Balls should be taken home and thoroughly washed in between each event.

Participants should report any symptoms in themselves or their household in the 21 days after the activity to the [NHS Test & Trace](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works) system to limit the spread of the virus.

**Additional Guidance**

**Protecting People Shielding or in a Vulnerable Category**. The BFA membership includes people from a wide age range and as restrictions ease flyball activities may well include personnel who have been shielding or are in a vulnerable/high-risk category or have vulnerable people in their ‘bubble’. Therefore, please be aware of the extra precautions these people will need to ensure social distancing is properly adhered to. People attending flyball activities should be careful not to assume that everyone else in attendance can automatically assume the 1m+ rule.

**Young Members and Members with Disabilities**. Event organisers should be aware that the BFA has a large number of young members and members with disabilities who may not be able to understand or adhere to social distancing requirements without some additional assistance.

**Useful Websites**:

Government COVID-19 Guidance

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Health

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

Flyball

[www.flyball.org.uk](http://www.flyball.org.uk)

**Guidelines for Layout of Socially Distanced Flyball Ring**

During socially distanced flyball activity the 1m+ rule can be implemented to allow for normal flyball activity in a ring but there are clear opportunities to ensure the primary 2m rule is complied with, through some minor adjustments to the normal layout of a flyball ring:

2m

Ring Party/Judge

Competitor

1. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-with-animals> 18 May 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/animals.html> 22 June 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ###  <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/interim-recommendations-intake-companion-animals-households-humans-COVID-19-are-present> 22 April 2020.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [www.gov.uk/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing](http://www.gov.uk/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Organisers should consider using experienced Line Judges only, which means they could dispense with the use of a separate scribe, OR host team provide all the LJ/Scribe function and box judges. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)