

BFA Action Plan for COVID-19 Adapted Training Flyball Reviewed February 2021

This Action Plan describes the adaptations for flyball training, to help participating trainers, handlers and club officials to safely undertake flyball training 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 and club social interaction at training events.

Please Note: The [latest information](#) 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 2020¹. Other scientific and medical sources ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)² and the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#)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; special care should be taken regarding proximity to other people in the following circumstances:

- 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](#)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.

If 2 racing lanes are to be used, they are to be set with a minimum 16' between lane centres, and ideally at the maximum width allowed by the venue.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-with-animals> 18 May 2020.

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/animals.html> 22 June 2020.

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.

⁴ www.gov.uk/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing

Adequate space for boxes and other team equipment storage next to the training area is to be provided, so that team and any personal 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 if organising collaborative team training events.

Pre-Attendance Symptom Check. All participants are to check for symptoms of COVID-19. In line with current UK Government [guidance](#)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 easing of restrictions, 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 they 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 can only take place as long as it is managed in accordance with the latest UK Government guidelines. Event organisers will need to comply with all government guidelines, including conducting the appropriate RAs and even with strict adaptations to flyball activities there will still be a requirement for teams to limit the numbers of personnel they have assisting in the ring or training area to the absolute minimum necessary.

In accordance with UK Government guidelines, when taking part in activities with larger groups, participants should still 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:

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance

- 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 training area.

Sharing team equipment including balls should 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.

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](#) system to limit the spread of the virus.

Additional Guidance

Vaccination – the national vaccination program is working through the JCVI cohorts which means that increasing numbers of the BFA membership will have already been offered or will soon be offered the vaccine.

Team members should make their team captains aware once they have accepted, especially if they have previously fallen in a shielding category.

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

Health

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Flyball

www.flyball.org.uk