EHF COVID19 Guidelines for EHF indoor and outdoor events  January 2021

This document should be seen as guidelines for hosts, teams, officials and spectators for EHF events, taking precautions to avoid the spread of SARS-COV2 (COVID19).

NB In this document this is referred to as COVID19.

Firstly, everyone is required to follow the local/national Government precautions in the hosts’ country/city in addition to the current advice of the WHO.

For Teams and Officials the EHF recommends waiting as long as possible to book flights/train tickets and to pay attention to the cancellation policies.

The EHF has created a COVID-19 Panel, existing of 4 persons: Dr. Udo Rolle (GER), Barbara Morgan (SCO), Björn Isberg (SWE) and Siobhán Madeley (EHF Communications Manager). They work in close cooperation with the EHF Competitions Manager.

If Hosts, Officials or Teams have a query which relates to these guidelines, they can refer their question to this Panel, via competitions@eurohockey.org.

Hosts

You must appoint a COVID19 Officer who is knowledgeable on the precautions to be taken. (Some countries now have an online course to qualify your COVID19 Officer; we recommend this person completes this course).

In the lead up to the event this person will report to the Organising Committee who will in turn report to the EHF. During the event the COVID19 Officer will report to the EHF appointed TD and Chair of the LOC.

Venue

- You must put a contact tracing procedure in place. You can use an app/google docs etc, but you must always know who is at your venue at all times.
  NB Bear in mind the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- You must install sufficient sanitizing stations at your event.
- All toilet facilities must have hand washing/sanitizing stations.
- In the stands or alongside the pitch, block seats/standing places in strict accordance with your Government guidelines on social distancing.
- If changing rooms and showers are allowed to be used at the venue, you must make sure people can keep distance (see above) in the changing rooms and showers.
- If changing rooms are not big enough for showering, to ensure social distance you must either not use them or let teams shower in small groups.
- If changing rooms are not big enough to ensure social distance, please arrange temporary covered areas (eg. tents) where teams can have team talks.
- If there is not sufficient space at a venue, to ensure social distance, it could mean that full teams are not allowed to stay at the venue to watch other matches. However, per team 2 persons (eg. coach and assistant coach) must be allowed to watch games, so please allow space for this at your venue.
- We recommend that you place sufficient signage telling people to keep the required distance (check with your Government guidelines for what is recommended in your country). Signage must be in English and can be in your local language also.
- We recommend that you place sufficient arrows/signage to point out the walkways to avoid crowds converging in small spaces.
• We require that you engage a cleaning crew who will regularly clean toilets, dressing rooms, tables, bars, door handles, etc. during the day.

**Pitch**
• You must ensure 1 entrance and 1 exit to the pitch. If this is not possible, make sure to have a volunteer guard at this gate to manage the movement of people going onto and off the pitch.
• You must ensure you have sufficient extra seats available for players/staff beside the dugouts to ensure social distance. For outdoor events, it would be much appreciated if extra cover (large parasols or tents) is arranged.
• You must make space, behind the fence and in the vicinity of the dugouts, for non-playing team members and extra staff and mark this with tape.
• You must ensure that spectators cannot get in the vicinity of the dugouts and Technical Table.
• You must ensure that the Technical Table is covered and can have 2 persons sitting behind it with sufficient space between them to ensure social distance.
• Teams will be advised (see below) that depending on the size, video towers will perhaps not be accessible for more than 1 person.
• All match balls must be disinfected after the matches.
• You must have an area available at the venue where the 2 teams can do their half-time team talk, in case they cannot stay on the pitch when this is being watered (not applicable on sand-based pitch or indoor).
• You must make sure all players, after the matches, are able to walk through a Mixed Zone but remember press should keep the required distance when doing the interviews.
• Player mascots accompanying teams are not allowed.
• For Championship events: No Nations flags are to be displayed by flag bearers. Nations flags should be displayed pitch-side.
• We recommended you do not use ball patrol and to just have 1 ball available during a game (with some spares at the Technical Table). Teams cannot place balls alongside the pitch as players/umpires might trip.
  **NB** Per event the host could request the EHF Competitions Manager for approval of playing with ball patrol. If ball children are found for all matches, 4 persons per match are required. They are required to wear face coverings and plastic gloves. Ball patrol is not allowed to touch any PC defending equipment.
• We recommend asking the DJ, if present, to keep the music level down at breaks as team members are further apart from each other and otherwise cannot hear the coaches.

**General**
• **While EHF may not require a COVID19 test, local rules might require this. The host must advise the teams and Officials in time, as well as updating them on any local regulations’ changes.**
• The COVID19 Officer must make sure that all people who need to wear face coverings (in accordance with your Government guidelines), do wear them properly, so covering nose and mouth.
• With regards to hotel bookings, try to have the best cancellations policies with your hotel/s and have regular contact with the EHF Competitions Manager.
• Where possible, book flights as late as possible.
• If teams and officials fly home at the end of the final day and cannot use the showers at the club, it would be much appreciated if late hotel check-outs are made possible for teams and officials, in order for them to shower after the matches. Please negotiate the best possible price for this and remember that for Officials it will be for your account.
NB It would be appreciated if transport (venue-designated hotel) can be arranged for this, free of charge.

- Hotels should try to have separate rooms available for lunches and dinners in the hotel for players and officials, of course if the structure of the hotel permits. If possible, a properly sectioned off area.
- NB Teams should note that hosts may be required under local restrictions to limit the number of accompanying staff. Hosts must advise the teams in advance.

### Teams

- Teams are required to take all the precautions they can take to minimize the risk of becoming infected before or during the tournament.
- What is recommended of all players and team staff, is that especially during approx. 10 days before the event they behave responsibly, follow social distancing guidelines and the government guidelines or directives in place in their country.
- Although the EHF is aware that for some teams a trip to a EuroHockey event is also a team building trip, the EHF requests that all team members respect social distancing and try to minimize activities which can easier lead to infections. The teams must, at all times, aim to reduce the group’s exposure to anyone outside their group.
- Travelling spectators should be encouraged not to travel with or stay in the same hotel as the teams.
- Training in the days leading up to the event will be organised by the host as normal. Players will not be allowed to shower at the venue, although changing rooms will be provided (subject to local rules allowing this at the time of each match).
- Pre-match line-ups will be done as follows:
  - The 2 umpires will walk onto the pitch followed by the 1st named team and then the 2nd named team.
  - Teams will walk from before the dugouts onto the pitch. Only where there is a tunnel where teams are able to keep distance, it is allowed to walk on from the tunnel. The TD to make this decision.
  - Players will have approx. 1-2 m between each other during the line-up.
  - NB In case a minute of silence is held before a match, remember that players also keep 1-2 m between each other.
  - At Championship events where an anthem is played, players are recommended not to sing and definitely not stand shoulder to shoulder.
  - After the line-up, teams will move past the opponents’ team to tap sticks before going to their huddles.
  - Players will not shake hands with either of the umpires.
  - During the huddle, teams should not stand close together.
- Game breaks and end of games will be done as follows:
  - During quarter breaks, teams will try not to stand too close to each other.
  - After the match try to avoid shake hands or give ‘fist bumps’ with opponents and umpires.
  - Tapping of sticks or elbow vs elbow is acceptable instead.
- Recommendations on Changing rooms:
  - If changing rooms are not big enough, to allow for social distancing make sure to hold team talks in the hotel or at another (outdoor) location.
  - If changing rooms are not big enough to allow for social distancing, either do not use them, or shower in small groups.
- Other recommendations for teams:
When goals are scored, of course teams can cheer, but try to minimize the physical contact.

Any member of a team showing any COVID19 symptoms must be isolated immediately and the Tournament Doctor and the TD must be informed.

If there is not sufficient space at a venue, to allow for social distancing it could mean that teams are not allowed to stay at the venue to watch other matches. However, per team 2 persons (eg. coach and assistant coach) must be allowed to watch games.

Video towers will probably not be accessible for more than 1 person. Only 2 persons from the same household can be on a video tower together.

It is strongly advised that teams share video footage amongst each other when a video tower is only accessible for 1 person.

Keep distance in dugouts and use the available additional chairs outside the dugouts also.

Additional space created for non-playing team members and extra staff will be provided by the organizers, please use this allocated space.

Team members are required to wear face coverings during transport and are required to provide these for themselves.

Staff to keep track of seating plans and interactions at team meetings and meals and taking photos of seating plans on buses/planes to detail interactions.

Staff to keep track of having set seats on all bus trips.

If team members are required or recommended to wear face coverings outside the pitch (incl. video tower) and/or in the clubhouse, is for the host to decide taking the local government rules into account. Teams are expected to comply with these local rules.

Team members are strongly advised that each player brings its own water bottle.

Spitting or emptying nose is not permitted in or around the pitch (possibly punishable by cards during matches).

We strongly advise no sharing of PC equipment - all players should have their own protective equipment for defending penalty corners. Teams must disinfect them often.

Teams are required to bring PC gear to the other side at half-time. This is not for the volunteers to do.

Ball patrol often collect up the face masks and gloves after a penalty corner and replace them (in a container) behind the goal. This however will not be done so this may cause a slightly longer delay than the 40 seconds allowed for the defending team at a penalty corner to get all their protective equipment on and be ready for the corner. Umpires will be advised of this and leniency applied to allow all players to be equipped and ready to defend a PC. However, teams are required to speed up this process.

Team medical staff are required to bring a thermometer to regularly measure the temperature of team members.

A maximum of 2 persons are allowed per team (including a translator) at the Pre-Event Briefing Meeting. Effectively this is the Team Manager plus one.

Teams are advised to not book triple or quadruple rooms in order to keep close contact to a minimum.

If teams fly home after the last match of the event and cannot shower at the club, they should try and arrange for a later check-out in order to shower in the hotel.

NB Teams should note that hosts may be required under local restrictions to limit the number of accompanying staff. Teams will be advised in advance.
NB The EHF **may not require** that team members have to be tested for COVID19 before an event, but we **recommend** that all team members have taken a test before travelling to the event, as per local requirements of the destination.

However, it’s possible that a test might be compulsory in the hosts territory. The host will advise the teams of these local requirements in time.

Of course, it is clear that transmission of the virus can happen between the test and arrival at the venue, but we expect everyone to do their utmost to try and keep possible transmission to a minimum (Social distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene).

NB If a player is vaccinated already, a test may still need to be done.

If any player tests positive, they must be isolated and will not be allowed to play in any matches in the event until they are tested again and have a negative result, and must follow the Government guidelines (or laws) in the relevant country.

**Officials**

- Officials are required to take all the precautions they can take to minimize the risk of becoming infected before or during the tournament.
- The EHF requests that all Officials respect social distancing and try to minimize activities which can easier lead to infections. The Officials must, at all times, aim to reduce the group’s exposure to anyone outside their group.
- Dug-out areas are bigger, so be flexible when players/staff are further away from them than normal.
- Officials are required to wear face coverings during transport and are required to bring their own for the event.
- Officials to keep track of seating plans and interactions at Officials meetings and meals and taking photos of seating plans on buses to detail interactions.
- Officials to keep track of having set seats on all bus trips.
- Officials (not the 2 match umpires) are required to wear face coverings while on duty during matches and are required to bring their own.
- If Officials are required or recommended to wear face coverings outside the pitch and/or in the clubhouse, is for the host to decide taking the local government rules into account.
- It is likely that there will be a reduced number of ball patrol personnel, if any. As they usually collect up the face masks and gloves after penalty corners and replace them in a container behind the goal, this may cause a slightly longer delay than the 40 seconds allowed for the defending team at a penalty corner to get all of their protective equipment on and be ready for the corner. Umpires will be advised of this and leniency applied to allow all players to be equipped and ready to defend a PC.
- Keep the number of officials to a minimum at the Pre-Event Briefing Meeting. Only those really required to be there should attend.
- In the hotel Officials should practice social distancing at all times (including mealtimes).
- The coin toss before a match must be done ahead of the line-ups to allow time for teams to bring their PC equipment to the correct goals so teams have time to lay them down as they wish.
- Any official showing any COVID19 symptoms must be isolated immediately and the Tournament Doctor and the TD must be informed.

NB The EHF **may not require** that Officials have to be tested for COVID19 before an event, but we **recommend** that all Officials have taken a test before travelling to the event, as per local requirements of the destination.
However, it’s possible that a test might be compulsory in the hosts territory. The host will advise the Officials of these local requirements in time.

Of course, it is clear that transmission of the virus can happen between the test and arrival at the venue, but we expect everyone to do their utmost to try and keep possible transmission to a minimum (Social distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene).

**NB** If an Official is vaccinated already, a test may still need to be done.

**Spectators**
If spectators are allowed at the venues, the following applies:

- Make sure spectators follow all instructions from the organisers.
- Spectators are to wear, if required, a face covering. Organisers have the right of refusal to a venue if face coverings are required and a spectator refuses to wear one.
- Spectators are to practice social distancing and wash hands often.
- Spectators are NOT ALLOWED onto the pitch.
- Spectators are NOT ALLOWED in the vicinity of the dugouts and Technical Table.
- Travelling spectators should be encouraged not to travel with or stay in the same hotel as the teams.

**Information on positive tests**

**Teams:**

- The EHF will decide when a team needs to drop out of the event if they have a number of positive tests. The advised number is 4.
- Should there be 3 or fewer positive test results, those players or staff must be isolated from the group, but the team’s matches can continue, subject to the TD, the team managers and the EHF Competitions Manager/Director General/COVID-19 Panel reviewing any additional concerns.
- Not being able to play due to too many positive tests, means you forfeit a match as matches cannot be postponed and the opposition will be awarded a 5-0 win (unless the match schedule allows for rescheduling, which is to be decided by the TD and EHF Competitions Manager).
- If a team withdraws from the competition, any matches it has played until then, as well as all the matches it has still to play, will be recorded as a 5-0 loss.
- There is no minimum number of players a team has to have to start a game.
- The EHF will, for the 2020-2021 outdoor clubs season only, allow the team list, to be submitted 2 weeks before the event, to have a maximum of 40 players.
- The EHF will not allow teams to bring more than 18 players to the event. This is to ensure fairness for all teams who may/may not have the budget for more players.
- Teams cannot bring in additional players to the event, even if a number of players have tested positive for COVID19.
- The final list of players needs to be signed off at the Event Briefing Meeting.

**NB** In EHL a different procedure is in place.

- Each host NA/club will confirm with their local health authorities whether players from travelling teams, who test positive for COVID19, have to stay in the host country for the duration of their isolation quarantine period, or whether they can return and finish their quarantine isolation period in their own country. This to be communicated to the travelling teams ASAP.

**Officials:**

- If officials are tested for COVID19 in a host country, the test result needs to be given to the Official directly and not via someone of the organisation / home team.
• If an Official tests positive for COVID19, it means he/she is not able to carry out any role in the event anymore.
• Each host NA/club will confirm with their local health authorities whether officials from outside the host country who tests positive for COVID19, have to stay in the host country for the duration of their isolation quarantine period, or whether they can return and finish their quarantine isolation period in their own country. This to be communicated to the travelling Officials ASAP.

**Finally, we strongly advise a COMMONSENSE approach:**

Just a reminder: Key indicators of a COVID-19 infection include high fever, dry cough, tiredness, breathlessness or loss of sense of taste and/or smell.

Minimizing the risk to EHF competitions from COVID19 relies on thorough and robust preparations and on-site organisation, but also to a large extent on the cooperation, behaviour and understanding of the teams, their players and technical staff, as well as the EHF Officials, the host volunteers and all target groups involved in the event.

Please bear in mind that whilst testing is a good indicator, it is not 100% effective. Even if testing is mandatory on arrival in a country, teams and officials may have already travelled and stayed together and perhaps have had breakfast together before the testing takes place.

This means that testing is only partly effective as a transmission during those interactions would not yet result in a positive test. The WHO is clear that the incubation period for COVID19 is several days.

So even with negative tests, we highly recommend that all participants in all EuroHockey events practice social distancing, hand washing, and wear face coverings as recommended in the host country for the duration of the event.

Thanks and Enjoy the events!