



Guidance for British Dressage competitors and their connections

COVID-19: returning to restricted competition activity safely

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Guidelines for a safe return to competition activity

These guidelines currently apply to organisers/venue owners and members residing in the United Kingdom and have been produced in line with government guidance on public areas, outdoor activities and exercise published in March 2021 which are available on the respective websites, [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), [gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot) and [gov.wales](https://www.gov.wales).

These procedures are correct at the time of printing; however, they need to be reviewed regularly in accordance with the latest advice provided by government. Operating procedures are based on Public Health England (PHE) guidance, please note that other guidance may apply generally in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. You should refer to the relevant websites for the devolved governments for guidance relating to any other country other than England.

We all have a part to play in making sure that competitions are run under the safest conditions possible and minimise the risk of spreading coronavirus. While venues won't be able to provide the same fun, social environment we usually enjoy for competitions in the immediate future, by working together under the new requirements we will be able to take this important first step towards a return to normality.

The safety of all participants is our over-riding priority and we all need to work within the government guidelines in order to safeguard the health and well-being of competitors, officials and venue staff. We've consulted closely with our organisers, judges and stewards to put protocols in place that will provide a controlled and regulated environment, enabling competitions to return safely while reducing the risks associated with coronavirus.

Organisers and venues have been encouraged to conduct their own thorough risk assessments prior to the resumption of activity. This document is intended to provide guidance and recommendations only, not provide a prescriptive list as each venue will have different requirements depending on their circumstances. Nevertheless, the general principles that underpin our Standard Operating Procedures should still be in place at all venues when competitions restart to ensure that venues are COVID Secure.

Key dates for the resumption of activity (correct at time of publication):

- **England** – From **Monday 29 March**, outdoor competitions can resume, with no travel restrictions in place. Under 18s, Para and elite riders can participate in competition and training activity indoors. From **Monday 12 April**, indoor individual activity can also resume, including competitions and one to one training, providing there is no mixing of households (excluding those working in a professional capacity at the venue). Overnight stays will be permitted in self-contained accommodation. On-site retail facilities can also re-open from this date and outdoor table service is permitted for on-site catering, providing it complies with the rule of six and mixing of households.
- **Scotland** – From **Monday 29 March**, members can participate in competition and training activity at venues within their local authority area, up to a maximum of 15 people. Under 18s may travel outside the Local Authority boundary, with up to 15 people allowed for 12-17 year olds and up to 30 for under 12s. Indoor arenas are classified as outdoor sport facilities by the Scottish government for the purposes of this guidance. Travel into England to compete or train is not allowed currently. Travel within mainland Scotland will be allowed from **Monday 26 April** onwards.

- **Wales** – Venues may re-open for arena hire and individual training activity only currently, for up to four people from two households. The advice is to ‘stay local’, within five miles where possible, although there is some flexibility for those that live in more remote areas. Cross border travel from Wales into England will be permitted from **Monday 12 April** onwards. From **Monday 26 April** up to 30 people can participate in outdoor sport and exercise, including competitions and training activity. Retail shops and trades stands will also be permitted to re-open from this date. From **Monday 3 May** individual indoor competition and one-to-one training will be able to resume, with up to 15 people permitted indoors for group activity from **Monday 17 May** onwards.

The member FAQ document on the [BD COVID-19 hub](#) on our website may offer further help with any questions you may have. These procedures are correct at the time of printing; however, they need to be reviewed regularly in accordance with the latest advice provided by government. Operating procedures are based on [Public Health England \(PHE\) guidance](#); please note that other guidance may apply in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#). You should also refer to the relevant websites for the devolved governments for specific guidance relating to any other country other than England.

BD Community COVID-19 Charter

The following general principles apply to all of our stakeholder groups:

- The health and safety of all of British Dressage members, and those connected with our sport in any way, must remain paramount at all times.
- Government guidelines should be adhered to by all participants, whether you are a competitor, organiser, judge, steward, groom, trainer, owner or other support personnel.
- All training and competition activity will be COVID-19 risk assessed in advance to manage risks and provide a safe, controlled and regulated environment for all involved.
- Regular handwashing, cleaning and hygiene procedures are essential for all activities.
- Social distancing of two metres should be maintained where possible; if this is not possible, individuals are advised to remain at least one metre apart, plus take other mitigating measures.
- It is recommended that face coverings are worn in indoor spaces, such as on-site cafeterias or shops, where close contact cannot be avoided and it is not possible to maintain safe social distancing.
- Flexibility, understanding and support are key to the successful resumption of training and competition activity, therefore compliance with these requirements is essential.
- Good communication is required between all participants to maintain awareness, vigilance and help to control the virus.

Key guidance

The following measures will help to keep yourself and those around you safe by minimising the risk of spreading the virus:

- Do not attempt to travel to venues if you or anyone in your household is feeling unwell or is displaying symptoms associated with the virus.
- Keep your hands and face clean – wash your hands and/or use hand sanitiser regularly.
- Avoid touching your face, mouth and eyes if possible when in a public environment.
- Take hygiene precautions, including using a tissue when sneezing, disposing it safely, and cough into the crook of your elbow, not your hand.

- Limit the number of contacts you have with other people outside of your household.
- Keep your distance – at least two metres on the ground, three horse lengths while mounted.
- If closer contact is unavoidable, you should keep a minimum of one metre apart at all times, plus take other mitigating measures, avoiding face to face contact where possible.
- Wear face coverings in situations where social distancing may be compromised, particularly in indoor areas such as cafeterias, take-away outlets and shops on site.
- Do not share tack or equipment and thoroughly clean all items, including clothes, when returning home after competition.

General competition procedures

- Under current restrictions, the number of people permitted on site will be limited through the day, so entry numbers may be restricted to manage this effectively.
- In addition to the rider, only one other person is permitted to attend per horse. This could be an owner, trainer or groom, but the limit is one extra person per combination.
- An additional person is also permitted as the nominated parent, guardian or carer for all Under 18s and Para riders (see Para specific guidance below).
- No spectators are permitted on site; other than competitors' access will be limited to venue staff, officials and pre-accredited media and photographers only.
- The secretary's office at the venue will be closed to the public to minimise unnecessary contact, but assistance will still be available on site and contact numbers will be provided.
- Provision will be made by the venue for a first aider with appropriate PPE and knowledge of procedures under COVID-19 provisions.
- Competitions will be run in a way that avoids unnecessary contact. This includes the removal of scoreboards and no prize giving presentations, while results will be posted online.
- Venues are recommended to scan or photograph completed test sheets and either email results or post sheets out to competitors after the competition.
- Alternatively, the venue may distribute score sheets on the day of competition, providing this is done in a controlled manner avoiding interaction, social distancing can be maintained at all times and the process is fully documented on the venue's risk assessment.
- Soft face coverings that cover the mouth and nose may be worn while riding, although these remain optional for competitors. No face shields are permitted and nothing should attach to the riding hat.
- Toilet facilities will be open and cleaned regularly. Venues are advised to regularly clean all facilities, particularly common touch points, such as door and gate handles.
- Cafes and restaurant facilities are permitted to open for takeaway only at present and competitors must consume food and drink outdoors. Competitors can take their own refreshments and supplies, as required.
- Outdoor hospitality is permitted from 12 April in England and 26 April in Scotland and Wales, although table service is mandatory – with no more than six people sat at one table, in accordance with government restrictions. Face coverings must be worn when moving around the cafe or restaurant, but are not required while sat at a table.
- You may be required to wait between tests in your car / lorry so be prepared – take a book, laptop, tablet or something similar to occupy the time.
- No stabling is permitted at competitions at this time, until 12 April at the earliest (in England) when restrictions may be relaxed.
- Competitors must bring their own equipment, which should be stored in their own horseboxes or trailers when not in use, not left outside the stable.
- As per DEFRA requirements and BD rules, equine passports should accompany all horses during travel and be made available for inspection if requested.

- Horses must be vaccinated in accordance with BD rules. However, there is an amnesty in place for the six month requirement until 30 June 2021. BD strongly recommends that all horses receive their six month vaccination at the earliest opportunity.
- All safeguarding, horse welfare and anti-doping policies will be followed and monitored as normal.
- Commanders are allowed for tests outdoors only, providing they adhere to social distancing at all times. They should be included in the people allocation permitted for additional rider support. If the venue is able to offer this service, they must use their own test sheets. This will be reviewed when restrictions allow.

Indoor arena use

England

From 12 April onwards, indoor riding arenas can be used for individual activity only, including competitions and one to one training. No mixing of households will be permitted; however, officials and operational staff working in a professional capacity at the venue are exempt from restrictions on numbers. This includes any judges, writers, stewards, coaches and volunteers required to run competition or training activity. Indoor warm up arenas cannot be used unless they operate on a one in one out basis.

Exemptions continue to apply for the below categories, where there are no restrictions on numbers:

- Organised disability sport, including Para Equestrian competition and training activity.
- Supervised sport and physical activity for Under 18s (with a limit of 15 on parental supervision).
- Elite sports people, restricted to athletes on the World Class Programme (P1 and P2).

Scotland

Indoor/covered arenas are permitted for use for training and competition activity as well as outdoors.

Wales

From 26 April outdoor competition (for up to 30 people) can resume and indoor arenas will be permitted for individual exercise only, with up to 15 people permitted from 3 May and from 17 May indoor arenas will be permitted for gatherings of up to 15 people.

Para riders

- Para riders are permitted to have an extra person in attendance to provide assistance where required, such as a family member, guardian or carer (i.e. two people in total, in addition to the rider).
- Organisers should consider the needs of any riders that may require additional support and allow adequate parking for horseboxes / trailers with adjacent parking for additional support vehicles.
- Para riders should liaise with the venue prior to attending to request any specific requirements or additional support they may require. This is particularly important if the rider is visiting the venue for the first time.
- In the warm up arena, para riders may receive assistance from one additional person, as required, but otherwise no spectators or grooms are allowed to access these areas.
- Para riders requiring overnight stabling should liaise with the venue prior to attending to ensure that clear access to the stabling / walkways is available.

Making an entry

- Please use the BD online portal for details on all competitions due to run in July. We are continuing to work with organisers to keep the fixture schedules and show status up to date.
- All entries and payments will be made online, as per the details in each individual schedule.
- A condition of your entry will be that you agree to adhere to all government regulations and BD protocols relating to social distancing, public health and hygiene.
- If space permits, late entries will be permitted up until times are published.
- Normal withdrawal, ballot and refund conditions will apply.
- Entries will be accepted using class tickets.
- Once times have been published, no changes may be made to the class.
- If you're unable to compete, for whatever reason, please do let the venue know in good time. If it's before the times are published, your space may be able to be filled. This information is also required for track and trace sheets, as well as results, as all withdrawals must still be recorded.

Before you compete

- Communication with the venue is important, as they'll keep their website and listing on the BD online portal up to date with all the information you'll need on the day.
- Venues have been asked to post a map on their website a map, highlighting any changes to the site, including parking instructions and clearly marked toilet locations.
- Venues will also provide competitors with details of any additional requirements in place to help manage the COVID-19 risk. Please take time to read them in advance so you're fully prepared before travelling to the venue.
- Venues are being encouraged to operate a one-way system, if possible, so you should familiarise yourself, even if it's somewhere you go to compete regularly.
- If you have any special requirements, for example to assist with access, please consult with the organiser by telephone or email ahead of your arrival.
- If you must stop for fuel on route to the competition venue, please wear protective gloves and either wash your hands thoroughly or use hand sanitiser.

Music classes

- Venues wishing to run music competitions should ensure that clear guidance is relayed to the competitor regarding the transfer of music files, whether in physical or digital format.
- CDs, MP3 and USBs are all permitted; however, these must be sanitised before and after transfer between competitor and organiser.
- Online methods of music transfer are recommended if the venue has the facility to do so. We Transfer is a free online platform for transferring large file sizes.

On arrival

- Please park where directed by the venue. If there are marked bays, please use them to maintain social distancing. Vehicles should remain a three metre distance apart to avoid unnecessary contact.
- Horses should remain outside (whether tied up or held in hand) in the proximity of the horsebox / trailer for a limited period of time only and should not be left unaccompanied.
- There will be a number of posters/notices to help you with the requirements in place and how to contact organisers. Venues should have a nominated COVID-19 Compliance Officer in place and their contact details will be made available to visitors.
- There should also be notification of an emergency contact for the venue vet and farrier.

Warm up arenas

- In England, from 12 April to 16 May indoor arenas can only be used for warm up purposes if operating on a one-in-one-out basis. No mixing of households is permitted at any time, apart from officials, stewards and operational staff who require access in a professional capacity.
- In Scotland indoor arenas are classified as outdoor facilities and can therefore continue to be used for training and competition purposes, including warm up areas.
- In Wales, from 3 May indoor arenas can only be used for warm up purposes if operating on a one-in-one-out basis. No mixing of households is permitted at any time, apart from officials, stewards and operational staff who require access in a professional capacity. From 17 May a limit of 15 people will be permitted for indoor arenas, dependant on size.
- The number of competitors permitted to use outdoor warm up arenas at any one time should be based on one horse per 200sqm, depending on the overall size.
- For example, a 60 x 20m arena = 1,200sqm space, which would allow six competitors at any one time, while a 70 x 40m arena = 2,800sqm, which would allow up to 14 competitors.
- Warm up time is limited to a maximum of 40-50 minutes prior to going down the centre line, depending on the judging arrangements and amount of time allocated per competitor in each class.
- Competitor numbers using the warm up arena should be managed effectively, following the above advice for one competitor per 200sqm. Riders should maintain a distance of three horse lengths apart at all times, in order to maintain social distancing.
- The warm up area should be monitored by a steward / marshal to ensure that riders adhere to these restrictions at all times.
- Para riders may receive assistance from one additional person, as required, but otherwise no spectators or grooms are allowed to access the warm up area.

Judging

- Where safe social distancing in line with government regulations cannot be maintained, judges will either bring a writer with them from their household / support bubble or judge on their own.
- Some venues are adapting judge boxes with screens between the judge and writer, which is permitted under social distancing guidelines from 4 July, but the judge must formally agree to officiate under these conditions when they are engaged by the venue.
- Where judges are on their own, limited comments will be given with scores but three minutes of extra time has been given for each test so that they can give as much feedback as possible in the summary section. The amount of feedback may not be as comprehensive as normal.
- Judges have a full toolkit and have been provided with detailed guidance on their revised judging protocol and procedures to ensure that the safety of officials is protected at all times.

After your test

- If possible, there will be a marshal to guide you from the warm up area to the competition arena to maintain social distancing.
- A separate warm down arena is recommended, which riders and horses may use for up to ten minutes after their test. However, please note that this may not be possible at all venues.
- Competitors should not return to the warm up area to stretch their horse after their test.
- Once you've completed your test and warmed down, you should return to your lorry to wash/down and untack.
- Horses should remain outside (whether tied up or held in hand) in the proximity of the horsebox / trailer for a limited period of time only and should not be left unaccompanied.
- If you have further tests, please wait in your car/lorry as there won't be any public facilities or spectator areas open for the time being.

- On returning home, it's advisable that you clean and disinfect all tack and equipment, including clothing worn during competition.

Results

- No scores should be published at the venue on a public scoreboard.
- No public prize giving ceremonies will be conducted at the venue.
- All prize money to be paid electronically by BACS transfer or equivalent.
- Results must be published on the venue website within 48 hours of the competition and sent to BD.
- Venues are recommended to scan or photograph completed test sheets and either email results or post sheets out to competitors after the competition.
- Alternatively, the venue may distribute score sheets on the day of competition, providing this is done in a controlled manner avoiding interaction, social distancing can be maintained at all times and the process is fully documented on the venue's risk assessment.
- This information will double as a 'track and trace' record to help if any competitor/visitor is subsequently tested positive for COVID-19.
- Objections or complaints will be dealt with over the phone or via email after the completion of the competition. Payment will be taken on a credit/debit card, as per current rule 125, page 132 of the BD Members' Handbook.
- The BD team will process all results as normal and aim to have the final verified version live as soon as possible after receipt.

Stabling

- Onsite stabling is permitted from 12 April in England, with a one way system in place where possible to minimise contact and ensure that social distancing is maintained. It is also recommended that empty stalls are used to facilitate social distancing between competitors, where numbers allow.
- The venue should ensure their risk assessment is updated to reflect the use of stabling, in line with the most recent public health guidance.
- Full bio-security measures must be in place for cleaning stables before and after use, specifically with the raised concern over EHV-1.
- Social distancing signage, COVID-19 posters and PHE protocols must be displayed and clearly visible in all stabling areas.
- Venues should ensure that high standards of hygiene are maintained in the stabling area at all times and that stables are cleaned in between use.
- All shared surfaces or common touch points must also be thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis.
- Competitors must bring their own equipment, which should be stored in their own lorries / trailers when not in use, not left outside the stable.
- Multiple day shows are permitted from 12 April onwards in England, where competition has been able to resume. However, competitors staying overnight in self-catered accommodation, including in horse boxes, lorries or camping areas, must continue to adhere to all restrictions on social distancing, hygiene and the mixing of households.
- Households are not permitted to mix indoors, so this must continue to be avoided at all times, including in covered stabling areas. Face coverings should also be worn when not riding.

- In outdoor spaces a group of up to six people from different households or a group of any number from up to two households can mix. Face coverings are not required in outdoor stabling areas.

Safeguarding and horse welfare

- [Safeguarding](#) to be followed as per current protocols; refer to BD website for further information.
- Organisers must ensure that they obtain the contact details for a parent or guardian for any rider under 18 for any direct and digital communication required after the initial entry.
- [Horse welfare](#) should continue to be monitored as normal. Welfare forms can be found on the BD website and any concerns must be reported by the organiser to the BD Sport Operations Manager.

Travel Restrictions

- **England** – There are currently no travel restrictions in place.
- **Scotland** – By law competitors are only allowed to travel within their local authority area to participate in competition and training activity, with exemptions in place for Under 18s (please refer to the Scotland organiser tool kit for full details). No cross border travel is currently permitted. Travel within mainland Scotland will be allowed from Monday 26 April onwards.
- **Wales** – cross border travel into England is permitted from 12 April, so Welsh members can participate in competitions and training in England prior to organised sport resuming in Wales on 3 May.

Please note that the following general principles continue to apply:

- Members, organisers and officials must abide by the restrictions that apply for travel restrictions, both in terms of where they are travelling to and from.
- Organisers and venues have the right to refuse entry to members from areas with travel restrictions; however, entry fees should be refunded in accordance with BD rules.
- Any venue in an area with mandatory travel restrictions in place should not accept entries or bookings from members outside of that area, unless they have put additional mitigations in place and have received local authority approval.
- Organisers should not accept bookings for training or competition entries from members who live in areas with any mandatory travel restrictions.
- Members should not travel to / from areas with travel restrictions to take part in organised competition, training or test riding activity.
- Judges, stewards or officials who reside within an area with travel restrictions should visit venues or clients for work purposes only.
- Where activity takes place within an area under travel restrictions, coaches and judges should only conduct training or test riding for members who reside within that area.
- With the three nations subject to different restrictions, it is the responsibility of individual members to ensure that they check the latest situation in the area they are living in, or travelling to, to ensure that they are complying with all requirements.

Local Lockdown

In the event of any local restrictions being imposed by the government, the following protocols should apply:

- Any venue that falls within a restricted area will not be permitted to host BD affiliated competition and training activity while local restrictions remain in place.
- Organisers should not accept bookings for training or competition entries from members who live within the exclusion zone for the duration of any local lockdown.
- Members residing within the exclusion zone should adhere to government advice on non-essential travel, which includes not participating in any BD activity until restrictions are lifted.
- No judges, stewards or officials who reside within the exclusion zone should be employed or travel to venues for BD activity from while these restrictions remain in place.
- All travel in or out of any exclusion zone should be kept to a minimum and only where it is deemed essential; for example if coaches are unable to work from home.
- Where possible, staff, contractors and suppliers should not travel to venues from within the exclusion zone, unless this is deemed essential for work purposes.
- Coaches and judges should not conduct training or test riding activity for members who reside within the exclusion zone until local restrictions are lifted.

Useful web links

- [UK Government guidance for the public on the phased return for sport and recreation](#)
- [UK Government guidance for providers of outdoor facilities on the phased return of sport](#)
- [UK Government guidance for providers of grassroots sport and indoor leisure facilities](#)
- [Wales Government guidance for businesses reopening](#)
- [Wales Government guidance for a phased return of sport, recreation and leisure](#)
- [Sport & Recreation Alliance Outdoor facilities guidance](#)
- [Sport England return-play FAQ](#)
- [UK Government general coronavirus advice](#)
- [UK Government guidance on social distancing](#)
- [UK Government guidance on face coverings](#)
- [Government FAQs: what you can and can't do](#)