

RE-STARTING OUTDOOR COMPETITIVE GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL – SUMMARY

COVID-19 GUIDANCE



This guidance must be READ in addition to The FA's general Covid-19 Guidance on restarting outdoor competitive grassroots football, found [here](#).

Please remember: Referees should only return to football when it's right for them to do so. There is no pressure to return and there will be no consequence or judgement for not returning. Everyone's health, wellbeing and safety are the priorities. **Under-18 referees should refer to guidance [here](#).**

BEFORE THE MATCH

- All referees should complete a self-assessment for symptoms of Covid-19 before travelling to their match. If any symptoms are noted, you must self-isolate in line with current UK **Government guidance**.
- **Social distancing** as per current Government guidance should be maintained at all times, where possible.
- Face coverings should be worn pre-warm up and post-match.
- Referees are asked to arrive in match kit as changing rooms may not be available.
- Toilets should be available pre-match and for 30 minutes after full time.
- Cashless payment of match fees is recommended. Referees should agree with the paying club on BACS/electronic payment where possible.
- Referees must clean assistant referee flags before and after use, or advise clubs to use their own flags.
- Referees should complete pitch and player inspections visually and at a safe distance.
- The exchange/collecting of paperwork (e.g. teamsheets) should be done at a distance, with minimal contact.
- The Respect handshake **must not** take place.

DURING THE MATCH

- The Laws of the Game and their practical application, including the decision-making principles, remain unchanged.
- At the coin toss, the referee and both captains should maintain 'one-metre plus' social distance. The referee should toss and catch the coin, not either captain.
- 'One-metre plus' social distancing should be observed when referees are:
 - Speaking to players in play or during stoppages;
 - Interactions between referees and assistant referees;
 - Issuing misconduct (yellow/red cards);
 - Assessing injured players;
 - Managing the substitution procedure.
- Referees should avoid spitting, as well as reminding the players of the same responsibility. However, spitting is not an act of misconduct, unless it is at someone.
- If possible, referees and players should avoid shouting or raising their voices when facing each other.
- Referees are encouraged to re-start the game as quickly as possible, specifically at stoppages for corner kicks, free kicks etc., when there are often large gatherings of players.

If referees feel there are matchday breaches of The FA's Covid-19 Guidance on re-starting outdoor competitive grassroots football, even if they are not a discipline matter, these must still be reported to the competition and County FA. Referees are not responsible for clubs, players or spectators complying with The FA guidance.

AFTER THE MATCH

- Post-match handshakes must not take place.
- If flags are used by assistant referees, the referee should clean them at the first opportunity.
- If cash payment for match fees is agreed, this should be done with minimal contact and in an envelope.
- Post-match hospitality may be offered in accordance with the latest Government guidance for **bars and restaurants**.
- Changing rooms and showers may not be available, even in adverse weather conditions.

DISCLAIMER:

This guidance is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice, nor is it a replacement for such, nor does it replace any Government or PHE advice; nor does it provide any specific commentary or advice on health-related issues. Affected organisations should therefore ensure that they seek independent advice from medical practitioners, or healthcare providers, prior to implementing any re-opening plan, as required. Independent legal advice should be sought, as required and depending on your, or relevant circumstances.

While efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication, the reader is reminded to check the Government website to obtain the most up-to-date information regarding social distancing and any other Government measures.

THANK YOU! NOW LET'S GET OUR GREAT GAME GOING AGAIN – SAFELY.