



GOLF IN ASIA-PACIFIC UNDER COVID-19

The R&A has produced these guidelines to assist golf clubs and golfers during the Covid-19 crisis to ensure that health and safety for everyone playing golf and working in golf are paramount.

This material is provided as a guideline only and there may be specific issues relevant to each country that don't apply to the points below. We would therefore encourage all golf clubs and golfers to follow the rules and laws related to the Coronavirus in their respective countries and keep up to date with any new policies that are implemented.

It covers five main areas: course set-up, before, during and after the round and Rules of Golf related matters. Any further updates will be posted here and shared through The R&A's social media channels.

There are many different types of golf clubs and golf facilities, requiring "safe golf" procedures to be finalised and implemented locally. However, the fundamentals are the same throughout the sport, which has a good record of compliance with rules and procedures. These procedures will include all aspects of the golfing experience, from arrival in the car park shortly before the round to departure straight away on completion of the round. Golfers will be required to comply with the rules on social distancing throughout. Some temporary provisions in relation to the Rules of Golf will also be necessary to ensure safe play (see below).

While each club/facility will need to adapt its procedures to ensure compliance with government restrictions, the following aspects of the golfer experience, divided into the five following categories, will need to be considered:

- a. Course Set Up
- b. Before the Round
- c. During the Round
- d. After the Round
- e. Rules of Golf Related Matters

a. Course Set Up

For up to date guidance on essential maintenance, please refer to the most current version of the "Essential Maintenance Statement for Golf Courses during COVID-19 Outbreak".

- **On-Course Items**
 - All rakes and ball-retrievers to be removed.
 - Golf ball washers and drinking fountains to be covered up.
 - Benches and bins to be removed, covered or sign-posted in such a way that players don't touch them.
 - All other removable items to be removed, except that stakes defining areas of the course can be treated as immovable obstructions.
- **Hole and Flagstick**
 - Flagsticks can be retained but it is strongly recommended that a sign is put on the flagstick stating that it is not to be touched.
 - A method of inserting the hole liner to be used that means that all of the ball does not fall below the surface of the putting green and can be easily retrieved by handling the ball only.
- **Practice Areas**
 - Practice areas, including practice nets, are advised to be closed unless safe sanitising practices can be guaranteed.

b. Before the Round

- **Bookings**
 - Clubs/facilities to organise a system of booking and allocation of tee times that ensures the safety of staff and golfers.
 - The maximum number of golfers in a group per tee time to be confirmed by the club/facility and must be in accordance with any government requirements.
 - There is to be a minimum of 10 minute intervals between tee times, but longer intervals may be more appropriate depending on the club/facility.
- **Arrival and Waiting to Play**
 - The clubhouse and locker room facilities are advised to be closed. Limited essential access (for example to use the toilets) may be allowed by the club/facility.
 - Clubs/facilities to communicate in advance with golfers to advise on social distancing requirements that are being applied on arrival at the club/facility, for example not leaving cars until a certain time before their tee time.
 - Clubs/facilities to have procedures in place to ensure social distancing requirements in the area of the professional's shop or starter's building in advance of golfers teeing off.

- No trolleys, carts or other items to be available for hire unless safe sanitising practices can be guaranteed.
- Clubs/facilities to have procedures in place for the practice putting green, for example giving priority of use to the players in the next group due to tee off.

c. During the Round

Guidance and reminders should be provided by clubs/facilities to golfers is to ensure that they keep at least 2 metres apart during the round.

- **Teeing Areas**

- Remind golfers to keep 2 metres apart at teeing areas due the normal close proximity of golfers to one another when tee shots are being played.

- **General**

- Remind golfers to stay more than 2 metres apart when walking to the ball, searching for a ball and playing shots.
- Remind golfers not to touch stray golf balls.

- **Bunkers**

- With no rakes allowed on the course, remind golfers to make their very best efforts to smooth the sand using their club and/or their feet.

- **Putting Green**

- Remind golfers to keep 2 metres apart on the putting greens and not to touch the flagstick.

d. After the Round

Remind golfers that social distancing is as important after a round as it is during the round, so when the round is over, they must leave the course and the club/facility immediately so that there are no gatherings around the clubhouse area.

e. Rules of Golf Related Matters

Covid-19 Related Guidance on Rules of Golf Matters (24 April Update) can be found at the Rules Resource Centre at RandA.org: <https://www.randa.org/~media/rules-modernization/resources-center/files/covid-19-related-guidance-from-the-ra-on-rules-of-golf-matters-24-april-update.ashx>

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