COVID-19: Guidance for Golf Courses

This interim document is intended to provide guidance for golf courses to protect staff and golfers against COVID-19. Whether private or public, each golf course is unique. Thus, it is the responsibility of each facility to review their policies and set up to ensure infection control measures are followed.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 stands for Corona Virus Disease – 2019 (year the outbreak began). COVID-19 spreads through the direct contact with the respiratory droplets of someone who is infected with the virus through their cough or sneeze. Cough or sneeze droplets can travel up to two metres/six feet. It is also possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

Protective Measures to Keep Everyone Safe

- Keep two metres/six feet distance from others.
- Clean your hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based (70%) hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- A face mask or covering can be used if you are unable to maintain a two metres/six feet distance from others, such as on transit, in an elevator, when entering and leaving your apartment building.
- Avoid non-essential trips in the community.

Hand Hygiene

- Disinfect hands after interacting with co-workers/ customers or completing tasks.
- Encourage frequent handwashing with signage in washrooms and high traffic areas.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer by entrances, service counters and other high touch locations for customer and staff use.
- Monitor and top up supplies of soap, paper towels and sanitizers as needed.
- Provide hand sanitizer for customers to use upon entry.

Training and Education

All staff need to be trained on COVID-19, its symptoms, and how the virus can spread in the workplace setting. They should also know what steps are being taken to protect them in the workplace, and how they can protect themselves, including good hand hygiene.

Health Screening of All Staff and Golfers

It is strongly recommend that all employees complete a health screening questionnaire before each work shift. The questionnaire can be completed on paper or electronically.
When booking tee off time, encourage all golfers to review the health screening questions before arriving at the course. Screening questions should be made available online/ email and posted at the front entrance and check-in areas. Encourage golfers to bring their own hand sanitizer, sunscreen, water or other personal items for use while golfing.

**Employee Attendance Policy**

Ensure staff do not come to work sick, and have a clear procedure for staff to notify a supervisor if they are sick. Further considerations include:

- While at work, if an employee becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms, they should be sent home right away with instructions to self-isolate. The employee can call Telehealth, their health care provider or an Assessment Centre, to see if they need testing.
- It is not recommended that employees be tested for COVID-19 if they do not have symptoms.
- Establish return to work criteria. In general, a person with COVID-19 can return to work 14 days after the symptoms first appear. There are no tests of clearance that are required for return to work. Be flexible about needing a doctor’s note.
- Maintain flexible policies so employees can stay home to care for a sick family member, or if they must self-isolate because they were in close contact with a person with COVID-19.

**Enhance communication with customers and staff:**

Download and print posters and post at all entrances and/or other highly visible locations:

- **Physical Distancing**
- **Physical Distancing in Elevators**
- **Protect yourself**
- **COVID-19 - Cover Your Cough**
- **Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing**
- **How to safely put on and take off a mask**
- **Posters and Staff Screening Questionnaires**

Information should also be communicated on the golf course website, and through automated booking systems, telephone messages and e-mail subscriptions.

**Measures to Ensure Physical Distancing**

**Limit Access**

- Allow access to golfers and employees only.
- Screen golfers for signs of illness prior to entry onto the course and restrict entry if illness is detected.
- Tee times must be reserved in advance, online or by telephone. No walk-ins permitted.
- Strongly encourage golfers over age 70, or persons with poor immunity, to stay home.
- No events, tournaments, camps or programs.
- Professional lessons and clinics should be limited as much as possible, and must ensure physical distancing at all times.
- Advising golfers to arrive no earlier than 20 minutes before their scheduled start time.
- Do not permit golfers to congregate in the parking lot.
Limit food and beverage service to the course and take-out only. Restaurant and dining areas, including lounge and patios, are required to be closed.

Limit access to locker rooms, club storage, washrooms and other common areas.

Pro Shop
- Limited entry to a maximum of two patrons at a time.
- Manage traffic flow and physical distancing with barriers and floor markings.
- Remove surplus furniture/equipment to allow ease of movement while maintaining physical distancing.
- Offer scorecards and pencils at the starter hut, upon request.
- Cloth masks and face covers are strongly recommended when physical distancing is difficult to maintain.
- Consider installing Plexiglas or other barriers by the registration/cash area.
- Use tap features or e-transfer instead of cash at checkout, as much as possible.

Practice Facilities:
- Consider installing barriers or partitions at the driving range to allow for 6 feet distancing.
- Reduce the number of practice holes on putting greens.

Power Carts, Pull Carts and Rentals
- Encourage golfers to bring their own clubs and pull carts if possible.
- Do not share clubs or ball with other players unless from the same household.
- Encourage golfers to walk, unless it will delay other player or players from the same household.
- Limited power carts to one rider unless players are from the same household.
- Provide sanitizing wipes for customers to use on carts and hand held baskets.
- Clean and sanitize rental power carts and pull carts after every use.

Start / During Play
- Increase tee time intervals between groups.
- Provide dedicated waiting areas with proper signage.
- A Starter should direct players and start groups off the first tee to ensure spacing of players.
- Marshalls should patrol and enforce the pace of play. Discourage players who are not from the same household from congregating on the course.
- Do not touch flagsticks. If a player’s ball hits the filler, consider it to have been holed.
- Ask golfers to leave the course after completing their round.
- If a golfer becomes ill with COVID-like symptoms while on the course, they should go home right away and self-isolate, and call Telehealth and/or an Assessment Centre to determine if they need testing. If anyone falls seriously ill, call 911.

Reduce Contact Transmission
- Limit the number of staff using course equipment (e.g. mowers, leaf blower, and turf sprayers).
- If possible, assign each employee to their own piece of equipment (e.g. golf cart).
- Remove or disable water fountains and ball washers.
- Remove shared or commonly touched items such as bunker rakes, garbage lids and sand bottles.
Instruct golfers to leave the flag in place and elevate the cup at each hole so that the ball does not drop into the hole. Play is concluded when the ball makes contact with the cup.

Common areas should have soap and water, hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant wipes available. If wipes are not available, general disinfectants can be used.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting Requirements**

Golf courses should implement thorough and frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and common areas. These include vehicle door handles, entrances/exits, pay terminals, waste containers, door handles, counters, cabinet doors, light switches, faucets, toilet handles, hand rails, touch screen surfaces, keypads, cell phones, keys, golf course equipment, powered hand tools, steering wheels, radio controls, rental power carts, pull carts and clubs.

Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) that confirms it is approved for use in Canada. Follow manufacturer's instructions and check the expiry date of products. Review Public Health Ontario’s Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings document.

**Additional Resources**

- COVID-19 Fact Sheet – Toronto Public Health
- Guidance for Workplaces / Businesses and Employers – Toronto Public Health
- Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace – Ontario Ministry of Health

**More information**

For more information, visit our website at [www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19) or call us at 416-338-7600.

**References**

