

Football NSW COVID-19 Protocol – Guidelines for Match Officials

The impact of COVID-19 previously resulted in the suspension of all football activities over the last three months. This followed a national directive by Football Federation Australia on 1 April 2020.

Since this time, the priority of Football NSW has been to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the community and to undertake its social responsibility to do everything it can to slow down the spread of COVID-19. The key point of reference in all our considerations and guidelines has been the measures recommended and implemented by both the Federal and State Governments.

Listed below are guidelines specific to Match Officials, including action plans for Referee Branches as well as helpful tips for Referees on matchday.

This resource is designed to accompany [Football NSW 'Return to Play Guidelines'](#), State & Federal Government COVID-19 plans & directives including social distancing & hygiene, and any other directive or guideline from Football NSW or FFA specific to COVID-19.

Participation

- All Referee Branch members willing to participate in their nominated capacity for the 2020 Community Football season may do so. This includes active Match Officials, Referee Coaches/Assessors, and committee members.
- Members that choose to de-register from a Referee Branch due to COVID-19 may do so prior to the season commencing. FNSW is still working on a refund policy.
- Members displaying cold/flu like symptoms should not participate in matches, training, meetings, or any other football activities.

Training

- Training attendance must be taken & kept on file. Records must include if a member has downloaded the COVID Safe App.
- Return to training guidelines are available via the [Football NSW Return to Training website](#). Match Officials will be considered 'players' in the context of returning to training & all protocols within the guidelines must be adhered to regarding distancing, number of referees per group etc

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Preparation

Referees 'Toolkit' should include:

- Download the COVIDsafe App
- Soap
- Antibacterial wipes
- Sanitiser
- Ensure whistles have been sanitised after each day
- Bring your own drink bottle – clearly labelled with your name

Arrival

- 30 minutes prior to play to inspect fields/warm-up/complete administration
- Maintain the 1.5 social distancing protocol
- Arrive in uniform (bring spare shirts as per usual)

Pre-Match

- Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres before and after matches
- Sanitise regularly
- Physical contact such as shaking hands is not allowed
- Do not share clothing. If this means referee teams are wearing different colours, so be it.
- Do not share equipment, including stationary. This includes 'sharing' flags with Club Assistant Referees.
- Do not share drinks, snacks, lollies etc

Change Room (if applicable)

- Officials should be encouraged to keep a record of who enters whilst they are present.
- After completing their matches, officials should leave the change room & remove their belongings
- Shower at home post-match

The only people allowed in the referees change room are:

- Referee
- Referee's coach
- One representative of the home team who will be responsible for supplying payment and/or team sheets

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In situations where there are multiple 'teams' of officials using a change room that is not large enough to allow for social distancing measures to be taken (maintaining a 1.5m distance), it should be the responsibility of the referee team going ON to the next match to be ready & vacate the change room BEFORE the completion of the previous match.

During the Match

- Do not touch players for any reason
- Referees are to follow the LOTG only. They are not there to police Covid 19 guidelines of players, coaches or spectators.
- Spitting should be discouraged; however, referees should apply the Laws of the Game only & sanction a player only if they are guilty of spitting at a person
- Assistant Referees are to use their own flags

Post-Match

- Officials should leave in their uniform and shower at home
- Sanitise equipment including whistles
- In the event of an Official testing positive for COVID-19, they should contact their Referee Branch and FNSW Referee's Department.

Questions/Clarifications

Any referee-specific questions regarding COVID-19 Guidelines should be directed to Football NSW Referees Department:

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