



United States Australian Football League

A 501(C)3 Not-For-Profit Organization

9160 Hwy 64, Suite 12, #205, Lakeland, TN 38002

Tel. +1 872-22-USAFL (+1 872-228-7235)

www.usafl.com | info@usafl.com

USAFL Return to Footy Safely Framework

- As states will progressively return to *normal activity* over different timeframes and will have different requirements within their jurisdiction, this framework applies specifically to individual clubs.
- As your local jurisdiction approves community sports to proceed, the following return to footy guidelines should be applied:
- Return to footy safely phases:
 - Phase 0: Early Return to Training: 10 or fewer, no contact drills, work in pairs to minimize exposure
 - Phase 1: Training in small groups: 20 or fewer, work in pairs, no contact
 - Phase 2: Training in larger groups: 20 or fewer recommended, light contact now allowed
 - Phase 3: Training in large groups: contact now allowed, match simulation drills now allowed
 - Metro Competition: Return to metro size competition
 - Full Competition: Return to full competitive matches
- General guidance: The disease caused by this virus is deadly. Each individual must protect themselves, their families and their communities by staying informed on the latest guidance on health and safety from the [Center for Disease Control](#) and the [World Health Organization](#)
- **The information provided here is a guide only. Where local information, guidelines, and ordinances differ from these guideline please follow the guidance of your local health authority**
- **If local health authority guidance differs significantly from the CDC or WHO guidelines it is recommended to follow the most restrictive guidelines available to maximize safety of players and community**
- Inter-club games are not recommended at this time. The USAFL will continuously monitor information from health organization and update the guidance as warranted
- USAFL Return to Footy Safely guidelines will be subject to change as circumstances surrounding COVID-19 change. Please consult your Regional VP for the latest guidance.



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General Information

The virus is spread through water droplets in exhaled or otherwise expelled respiratory fluid

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol based hand sanitizer before, during water breaks, and after training, especially if handling a shared ball or equipment.
- Avoid spitting.
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of the arm if needed and immediately wash or use sanitizer on the affected area
- Do not share towels, gloves, water bottles, or other items that may become contaminated during use
- Do not attend any club group event if you are feeling ill or think you may be becoming ill
 - A list of symptoms can be found [here](#)
- Follow all CDC guidelines on minimizing your risk of infection: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html>
- If any player, coach, staff, or person they have come in close contact with becomes ill that person should self-isolate, seek professional medical advice, and immediately notify club leadership
 - If testing is available, testing should be done if advised by their medical care provider
 - Participation in team events should cease until the person tests negative or has completed a period of self-quarantine and recovery
 - Follow the CDC guidelines for recovery criteria: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>
 - Any confirmed cases should be reported to the Club Safety Officer and to the Regional VP
 - See Club Safety Officer section below for more information



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Individual Responsibility

The safety of our players, coaches, umpires, and the families and communities from which they come are of the utmost importance. Each individual plays an essential role in minimizing the risks through responsible behavior, candid self-monitoring, and timely reporting of possible symptoms to their club leadership. Each individual is responsible for not only their own safety but also those of their club and their community both on and off the field.

- Individuals should be aware of the symptoms, cause, method of spread, and possible outcomes of becoming infected or potentially infecting others
 - If they are immune compromised, in a high risk category, or have regular interactions with high risk individuals that person should not participate until a vaccine or highly effective therapeutic are available
- Anyone who feels unwell, may be becoming ill, or has been exposed to anyone that is potentially ill should not attend any training or games and should self-isolate until a 14 day quarantine period has elapsed or until testing returns a negative result after the person has recovered
- Individuals should maintain social distancing as prescribed by local health authorities
- Avoid handshakes or other hand to hand contact
- Avoid touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes
- Use a [CDC recommended mask](#) when in public places outside of training
- Wash hands frequently with soap and hot water or use alcohol based hand sanitizers
- Individuals should complete a self assessment for [symptoms](#) before each training or competitive event

Club Safety Officer

Each USAFL Club must designate a Safety Officer who is responsible for administering the Return to Footy Safely guidelines and that all local requirements are being met by the club. Clubs must communicate the person designated to this role to their Regional VP by June 15.

The Club Safety Officer must report any instances of COVID-19 infection confirmed within their club to the USAFL via their Regional VP as soon as it becomes known. They must also ensure that anyone confirmed as infected immediately ceases all football activity until appropriate testing has confirmed they are negative to COVID-19 before returning.

The Club Safety Officer will also be required to provide evidence of approval from their local jurisdiction to play competitive football against another team within that jurisdiction, by way of an approved field rental agreement or copy of the relevant jurisdiction's ordinance. Matches that do not meet these requirements will not be allowed usage of the League Management Service, players participating will not accrue Nationals Eligibility points, and the League will not acknowledge the match as being sanctioned.

Safety Officers will be expected to attend periodic Regional calls to ensure they receive the latest information regarding Return to Footy Safely guidelines or policy updates from the USAFL. However it must be noted that it is also the responsibility of everyone involved in football to follow all health protocols and guidelines to ensure football can return safely.

The following phases provide guidance for returning to footy safely once your club's local jurisdiction has approved community sports can take place.



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How and when to move between phases

Each club will have situations specific to their region and members. Club leadership must monitor local conditions and guidelines issued by their [Local Health Authority](#) in order to judge when it is safe to move between phases.

Considerations for moving between phases include:

- Confirmed cases are diminishing for 14 consecutive days since the previous move between phases to allow ample time to monitor for potential cases within the training groups
- No active outbreaks or case spikes in the area
- No known or presumptive positive cases within the training groups

If a positive or presumptive positive case occurs within a club that club leadership should halt training until such time as a full evaluation of exposure within the club has been established.

Reverting to Earlier Phases

Regardless of which phase you are in, you should be prepared to step back and revert to an earlier phase or cease training temporarily if any of the following occur. Follow local public health official guidelines at all times. Club leadership should closely consider the following when deciding which phase is most appropriate given the greater risk that may be present:

- Cluster of infections occur
- Inability to maintain COVID-19 prevention and response protocols
- Inability to track and/or isolate players or staff
- External factor exposes a COVID-19 risk to your club
- Changes to local public health official guidelines regarding group gatherings



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Training: Phase 0, Early Return

- Local restrictions have been lifted and outdoor exercise has been allowed to resume
- Small Training Groups, always following local ordinance or guidelines
 - 10 or fewer total participants recommended including coaches and staff
 - Recommend breaking your larger training pods into groups of 10 or fewer and stagger times/location of trainings, or maintain distance from other pods if space allows
 - Coaching/Support staff should use appropriate PPE for the duration of training
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- Work in assigned pairs
 - Each pair will have a dedicated ball marked or kept separate from the others
 - Pairs should remain together throughout Early Return
 - Coaches should prepare solo drills if a member of a pair is unavailable for a session
 - Pairs should be in constant contact to notify the other if one has been potentially exposed or becomes ill. The other member of the pair should then self-isolate and cease participation in training until a quarantine period has elapsed and notify club leadership immediately
- No contact, bumping, contested marking
 - Modify existing drills or consult CoachAFL for drills that allow for maintaining 6ft/1.8m distance between participants
 - Examples of drills will be made available at a later date
- No shared hydration
 - Each player should provide their own or team should supply dedicated water source for each person
 - Players are encouraged to label their own hydration source to minimize possible contamination
- Maintain social distance at water/wind or coaching breaks, warmup, and cooldown
- Use hand sanitizer or wash hands at each water and rest break
 - Clean any workout equipment used during each break
- If a player, coach, or staff is feeling ill or may have been exposed, they must self isolate and not participate in training
 - Clubs should immediately notify players they may have contacted
- Players should minimize touching their faces at training for any reason (e.g, wiping sweat)
 - Wipe sweat with a cloth or wristband and change the wristbands and cloths at each stoppage opportunity
- Club should record the names and contact information of all persons in attendance for contact tracing purposes
 - If a person in attendance becomes ill and test or have a likely positive case of COVID-19 the club should contact the other players, staff, or coaches that may have had contact with the ill person



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Training: Phase 1

- Local restrictions have been lifted and outdoor exercise has been allowed to resume
- Small Training Groups, always following local ordinances or guidelines
 - 20 or fewer total participants recommended including coaches and staff
 - Recommend smaller working groups, staggering days of the week, location, or field space if available
- Work in assigned pairs
 - Pairs should remain together throughout this training period
 - Coaches should prepare solo drills if a member of a pair is unavailable for a session
 - Pairs should be in constant contact to notify the other if one has been potentially exposed or becomes ill. The other member of the pair should then self-isolate and cease participation in training until a quarantine period has elapsed and notify club leadership immediately
 - Each pair will have a dedicated ball marked or kept separate from the others
- No contact, bumping, contested marking
 - Modify existing drills or consult CoachAFL for drills that allow for maintaining 6ft/1.8m distance between participants
- No shared hydration
 - Each player should provide their own or team should supply dedicated water source
- Maintain social distance at water/wind or coaching breaks, warmup, and cooldown
- If a player, coach, or staff is feeling ill or may have been exposed they must self isolate and not participate in training
 - Attending training and supporting from a distance and/or in PPE at the discretion of the Club administration/Coaches
- Use hand sanitizer or wash hands at each water and rest break
- Club should record the names and contact information of all persons in attendance for contact tracing purposes
 - If a person in attendance becomes ill and test or have a likely positive case of COVID-19 the club should contact the other players, staff, or coaches that may have had contact with the ill person



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Training: Phase 2

- Local restrictions on any group size have been lifted and outdoor exercise has been allowed to resume
- Small Training Groups, always following local ordinances or guidelines
- Recommend smaller working groups, staggering days of the week, location, or field space if available
 - Assign groups and train as a group
 - Group will remain together as a unit until next phase of easing
 - Groups should be in constant contact to notify the other members of the group and club leadership if they have been potentially exposed or become ill. The other members of the group should then exercise increased caution and monitor their own health more diligently
 - Each group will have a dedicated set of balls marked or kept separate from the others
- Light contact such as bumping/shepherding and lightly contested marking now allowed
- No shared hydration
 - Each player should provide their own or team should supply dedicated water source
- Maintain social distance at water/wind or coaching breaks, warmup, and cooldown
- If a player, coach, or staff is feeling ill or may have been exposed they must self isolate and not participate in training
 - Attending training and supporting from a distance and/or in PPE at the discretion of the Club administration/Coaches.
- Use of hand sanitizer is recommended at each rest/water break
- Club should record the names and contact information of all persons in attendance for contact tracing purposes
 - If a person in attendance becomes ill and test or have a likely positive case of COVID-19 the club should contact the other players, staff, or coaches that may have had contact with the ill person

Training: Phase 3

- Training will resemble pre-pandemic training with the following exceptions:
 - No shared hydration
 - All players, coaches, and support staff should maintain heightened awareness of illness and not participate or attend if feeling ill
 - Notification to the club leadership should be made such that possible exposure can be communicated throughout the club
 - Extra diligence should be exercised in cleaning training equipment during breaks and after each training session
 - Use hand sanitizer or wash hands at each water and rest break
- Club should record the names and contact information of all persons in attendance for contact tracing purposes
 - If a person in attendance becomes ill and test or have a likely positive case of COVID-19 the club should contact the other players, staff, or coaches that may have had contact with the ill person



Game Day, Metro

- Local group restrictions have been lifted or relaxed and outdoor sports has been allowed to resume
- Smaller Metro competitions highly recommended
 - Must follow local guidelines and ordinances for maximum numbers in a group
- Allow additional time for proper, safe hydration
 - Extra time after each goal
 - Umpire should call frequent water breaks
 - Captains and Umpires should arrange timing prior to the match beginning
 - Swap out the ball for a clean ball after every scoring play and at quarter time/water breaks
 - Use hand sanitizer or wash hands at each water and rest break
- Follow social distancing guidelines when play is not underway
 - Umpires should be given additional distancing when in discussions with coaches or captains
 - Players, Captain, Coaches, and Umpires should avoid traditional pre and post game handshakes
- Club should record the names and contact information of all persons in attendance for contact tracing purposes
 - If a person in attendance becomes ill and test or have a likely positive case of COVID-19 the club should contact the other players, staff, or coaches that may have had contact with the ill person

Game Day, Full Competition

- Must follow local guidelines and ordinances for maximum numbers in a group
- Allow additional time for proper, safe hydration
 - Extra time after each goal
 - Umpire should call frequent water breaks
 - Captains and Umpires should arrange timing prior to the match beginning
- Swap out the ball for a clean ball after every scoring play and at quarter time/water breaks
- Use hand sanitizer or wash hands at each water and rest break
- Follow social distancing guidelines when play is not underway
 - Umpires should be given additional distancing when in discussions with coaches or captains
 - Players, Captain, Coaches, and Umpires should avoid traditional pre and post game handshakes
- Club should record the names and contact information of all persons in attendance for contact tracing purposes
 - If a person in attendance becomes ill and test or have a likely positive case of COVID-19 the club should contact the other players, staff, or coaches that may have had contact with the ill person

