

Getting Started

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Blue type updated since 14.10.20

Whilst the UK governments have relaxed their measures to varying degrees, they still require that everyone must keep a distance of 2m/6ft apart when out, where possible. Therefore this **must currently remain one of our key protocols** when getting started (subject to ongoing review).

As a part of the Getting Started Guidelines we have stated that groups should not be using PPE as a standard protocol to mitigate against the risk of Covid-19 contamination. This currently remains the case.

1. What is PPE?

- Personal Protective Equipment
- PPE is important in some areas, where an essential service is needed and social distancing is impossible, but **handwashing is even more important!**

2. Does RDA advocate the use of PPE as standard protocol to get re-started?

- **The first line of defence against COVID-19 should always be social distancing and good hand hygiene.**
- **However there may be times where additional PPE could be beneficial, for example if you are within closer proximity situations which are permitted currently in Scotland, Wales and England. Please read the RDA guidance about these [closer proximity situations](#)**
- **People are also much more comfortable in wearing face coverings as these have become commonplace in many settings. Wearing a face covering is not a substitute for social distancing where it can be adhered to.**

3. Should we wear gloves?

- We always recommend the use of gloves whilst working around horses as it prevents damage to your hands whilst holding lead ropes and reins / sweeping stables etc.
- Normal material / leather gloves are acceptable (keep these gloves just for RDA work; wash them frequently or leave them out to dry between uses. **Do not use them if you need to come into contact with an individual in a closer proximity situation unless these can be changed between each individual. We recommend using bare hands and sanitising hands before and after coming into contact with a participant.**
- Do not touch your face with your gloves.
- Disposable vinyl or nitrile gloves should be used whilst cleaning / anti-bicing surfaces. Only use these gloves once, removing and disposing of them carefully.
- Always wash your hands after removing your gloves (in case the gloves have a hole in them or you have touched a contaminated area whilst taking them off).

4. Should we wear face coverings?

- **If you are leading or sidewalking, you are now permitted to wear face coverings during sessions if you so wish. This is not a substitute for social distancing and so sidewalkers still need to be from the rider's household/ support bubble.**

- Volunteers, coaches and participants continue to be able to wear face coverings outside of ridden sessions if they choose to do so, e.g. quiet corners, stable management sessions.
- We would not recommend riders to wear a face covering during ridden sessions as this could impede communication between rider and coach/ volunteers and due to the level of exercise involved for some of our riders. However, they can now choose to do so if they feel more comfortable and by wearing a face covering this would enable them to feel safe to come back to RDA sessions. Any face covering must not interfere with their safety on the horse (i.e. no loose elements to it).
- It is mandatory to wear face coverings in closer proximity situations in Scotland, Wales and England.
- Face coverings **MUST** be worn and handled correctly in RDA sessions, please see [RDA Face Covering Policy](#)

5. Should we wear face visors or shields?

- Individuals should consider wearing a face shield/ visor or goggles to offer eye protection in addition to a face covering with riders who are known to habitually cough or spit when in [closer proximity situations](#).
- Horses will need to be trained carefully for this as there have been issues with shields reflecting the light.
- Face shields/visors should not be worn on their own, they should always be worn with a face covering that covers both the nose and mouth.

6. Do we need to wear aprons?

- No – we do not need to wear aprons – they may flap and scare the equines.
- It is recommended that you change and wash your clothes after being at RDA.
- Keep coats / non-washable items / shoes and boots just for RDA – wash hands after removing or changing. Don't wear them around supermarkets where social distancing becomes more difficult.

7. What about first aid kits?

- In line with our guidance on first aid during this period, there must be disposable masks and gloves in the first aid kits to protect the first aider in case there is an emergency requiring close contact.
- If a first aider needs to use PPE, they should remove masks by holding the ear attachments whilst still wearing gloves. Then remove gloves by peeling one glove off from the wrist so it is inside out then using the removed glove to pull the other glove off the same way. Remove and dispose of the items correctly and wash your hands immediately.

As a reminder, these are the current guidelines for social distancing and general hygiene:

8. What does social distancing mean?

- Social distancing means that you should stay 2 metres (6 foot) away, **or 1m plus mitigation in England** from another person or people not in your household/ **support bubble**.
- Whilst recognising this will not always be possible, it is important to be aware that the risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus, and the

amount of time you spend in close contact with them. Therefore, for example, you are unlikely to be infected if you walk past another person in the street.

- Please be conscious of people with guide dogs / assistance dogs – these dogs will not have been taught social distancing rules.

9. Why is it important to wash my hands?

- Many illnesses and diseases (COVID-19 included) are spread through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose being sneezed or coughed out of the body - you then touch this droplet on a surface - you then touch your face and spread the disease to yourself.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

10. How often should I wash my hands?

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Before you leave your house / arrival to RDA / leaving RDA/ on arrival to your house.
- After using the toilet / before eating / after touching your face / after being in a busy environment where people have gathered e.g. RDA.
- After touching surfaces that others may have touched (door handles, toilet flushes etc.).
- If they are visibly dirty.

11. A bit of dirt never hurt anyone – why is it different now?

- Dirty areas are more likely to hold the droplets of virus as they are discharged from the nose during a sneeze.
- Some dirty areas will be harder to keep clean.
- All frequently touched areas – e.g. door handles should be cleaned regularly to prevent cross infection of the virus should it be present.

12. What is hand sanitiser?

- This is a quick and convenient alternative to hand washing for already physically clean hands which are not visibly contaminated with dirt or organic material, especially when soap and water for hand washing is not readily available.

13. Does hand sanitiser work as well as soap and water?

- No; it will not work on visibly dirty hands – it may coat the dirt and then the dirt may flake off later leaving your hands still contaminated underneath.
- You should wash your hands with soap and water after 3 uses of sanitiser to prevent build-up of contaminants.