

Club Compressor/Facilities Guidance

These notes are intended to provide a framework for a return to diving following easing of government restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance is based on current knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with the outbreak and the current scientific evidence informing decisions by government and other relevant authorities. It is acknowledged that the evidence base and knowledge surrounding the outbreak is rapidly and continually evolving and so the guidance will be reviewed regularly and be subject to update and amendment as appropriate.

STATUS

Currently in the UK different criteria applies within each of the devolved administrations. Please refer to the [STATUS document](#).

Protecting others and reducing the demands on the NHS

Current advice on avoiding transmission of the virus can be found on the Government Website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

The advice for anyone in any setting is to follow these main guidelines:

- The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or high temperature. If you have these symptoms, however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started (if you live alone), or 14 days (if you live with someone who has symptoms). You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.
- Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas where other people are doing so. Use hand sanitiser if that's all you have access to.
- To reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue in a bin immediately. Then wash your hands or use a hand sanitising gel.
- Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Anyone displaying any symptoms should NOT engage in any activity outside the home.

Ensure you are not showing any symptoms of Coronavirus (temperature, cough, difficulty breathing, or loss of smell and/or taste).

At the height of the pandemic significant social distancing rules were in place as a legal requirement. Thanks to significant measures applied to control the spread, including the vaccination programme, most restrictions on group size and social distancing have been removed. The following guidance provides advice on appropriate safety precautions that can still be taken to help ensure the safety of all persons engaged in these activities.

The best initial precaution is for all divers to check their own medical condition and consider the use of lateral flow testing prior to departure and not travel if testing positive or showing symptoms.

COVID-19 virus survival time

The coronavirus will not survive indefinitely outside of a host organism. The survival time on different surfaces varies depending on the nature of the surface.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is stable for several hours to days in aerosols and on surfaces, according to a new study from National Institutes of Health, CDC, UCLA and Princeton University scientists in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. The scientists found that severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was detectable in aerosols for up to three hours, up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel. The results provide key information about the stability of SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19 disease, and suggests that people may acquire the virus through the air and after touching contaminated objects.

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>

The use of heat, disinfectant and other cleaning agents can be effective in reducing contamination.

Club Compressor and Blending Equipment

Any use of club equipment to support the activities of other members should be carried out in a manner which protects the operator and prevents or minimises any risk of contamination of member's equipment.

Location

The siting of compressors and any associated blending equipment is generally fixed and indoors. The location should be assessed for its suitability to allow the operation of the equipment and ease with which hygiene standards can be maintained. Facilities should be available to allow hand washing with soap and water or a supply of alcohol based hand sanitiser provided for use by the operator. Additionally, adequate cleaning materials (minimum alcohol based antiseptic wipes) to allow cleaning of all routinely touched surfaces, compressor controls, door handles, cylinders, etc. PPE such as ear defenders should either be dedicated to an individual or wiped clean before and after use, with suitable alcohol based antiseptic wipes and allowed to dry thoroughly before use.

Portable Compressors

Compressors intended to be portable can be used outdoors provided they can be positioned whilst maintaining social distancing rules. If the compressor unit is transported and capable of being operated within a dedicated trailer then the primary consideration is whether or not the trailer can be hitched and unhitched from the towing vehicle and sited either by one person or if two people are required that social distancing can be maintained. Very small portable compressors, which the manufacturer advises can be moved by one person should not present a risk in moving as long as the operator is also the person responsible for moving and siting the compressor. If moving and siting the compressor requires two or more people you must ensure social distancing rules can be followed. In any instance where the compressor is manually handled all surfaces touched during movement should be cleaned using alcohol based antiseptic wipes and allowed to dry.

Equipment handling

All equipment controls that are routinely handled should be cleaned with alcohol based antiseptic wipes and allowed to dry before use and cleaned again after the equipment is closed down. In order to monitor for potential risks to subsequent users it is recommended that a register of user, with date and time of use, is maintained. Compressor operators should avoid touching or otherwise contaminating the outlet of the filling whip that connects to a cylinder. If it is necessary to replace damaged or displaced 'O' ring on DIN outlets then clean single use disposable gloves should be worn.

Cylinders provided for filling should be handled the minimum amount necessary. Compressor operators should lift and move cylinders by a carrying handle if fitted and should avoid touching or otherwise contaminating the outlet of the cylinder or the first stage of the regulator that connects to it. If it is necessary to replace damaged or displaced 'O' ring then clean single use disposable gloves should be worn.

Cylinder delivery and collection

Divers dropping off their cylinders for filling should avoid accessing the filling room whilst anyone is already present in the room where possible. The owner should either clean any surfaces they have touched on the cylinder with a suitable alcohol based antiseptic wipe or the compressor operator should do so before handling the cylinder. If cylinders are dropped off for filling when an operator is not present then the owner should clean any surfaces they have touched on the cylinder with a suitable alcohol based antiseptic wipe and clean any other surfaces that have touched (door handles etc.). If the compressor operator is uncertain that any surfaces have been disinfected previously then they should do so before handling the cylinder. Collection of filled cylinders should follow similar protocols.

Gas Blending analysis

Owners of cylinders that have been filled with gas mixes other than air should use their own analysers to confirm the mix and mark up their own cylinder with mix and MOD.

Clubs are recommended to investigate remote means of recording and signing for the gas mixes to reduce the need for multiple people signing a register. An example might be for gas blender to record by text message to a central co-ordinator their analysis and cylinder number and then the owner texts their analysis and cylinder number to the same person/contact.

Equipment stores

Clubs with their own equipment stores should develop an appropriate protocol to ensure that the cleanliness and hygiene of the equipment and the storage room can be maintained. If the room is an enclosed space then social distancing recommendations should be considered. Clubs should develop a system to allow limited numbers to access the equipment at a time. Suitable cleaning protocols should be in place to ensure that any surfaces which are likely to be touched by different people (eg door handles, locks etc.) can be adequately cleaned and disinfected to protect subsequent users.

Club boats and boatsheds

Club boats stored under cover should not be worked on under cover by more than one person at a time. If routine maintenance requires more than one person then the boat and trailer should be moved outdoors and social distancing measures should be adhered to.

Removing and returning a boat, or other trailed equipment (eg a compressor in/on a dedicated trailer), should follow a protocol to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Options could include where appropriate:

- Towing vehicle manoeuvred into position directly in line with the tow hitch directed by a helper. Tow hitch lowered into position by the helper only avoiding any manhandling.
- Where a boat trailer needs to be manually manoeuvred out of the boatshed before hitching to the towing vehicle the minimum number of people should be used to achieve this safely. They should be positioned at predetermined points around trailer to ensure distancing can be maintained. Marking such positions on either the boatshed floor or the trailer can be done using tape.

Clubhouse social spaces

Currently no restrictions on club social spaces but facilities should follow existing government guidelines for such facilities.

Changing rooms can be considered public spaces and as an indoor space should only be accessible following government guidelines. The requirements to ensure that all surfaces likely to be touched in such spaces can be adequately cleaned and disinfected to protect subsequent users make this difficult to achieve. Consequently, it is difficult to allow such facilities to be open unless adequate cleaning protocols can be put in place.

Toilets and handwashing facilities

Toilet facilities and corridors connecting to them can remain open and the following government guidance is currently available:

“Maintaining hygiene, through handwashing, sanitisation facilities and toilets

To help everyone maintain good hygiene, consideration should be given to:

- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into your arm
- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible
- Enhancing cleaning for busy areas
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection
- Replacing hand dryers with paper towels in handwashing facilities
- Minimising use of portable toilets
- Sufficient provision of automated hand sanitising dispensers in public places”

To be used in conjunction with other guidance including:

- Medical guidance
- Status
- Equipment guidance
- Shore diving
- CPR and rescue procedures
- Diver Training
- Travel Guidance
- Charter boat diving
- RIB diving
- Swimming pool usage
- Etc.