

General COVID – 19 Risk Assessment

Our usual approach to risk assessment provides a useful summary for how we will manage the reopening of venues in relation to Coronavirus.

Traditionally we identify what is/are the hazard(s), who is at risk, what are the control measures, where are the measures documented, and who is responsible for monitoring, recording and reviewing. Given the massive scale of COVID and its implications an even more structured approach has been adopted based on a series of questions.

This risk assessment is to be shared with our campaigners (staff) and supporters (customers/members) alike.

Why is there a need for risk assessment?

Like every employer Active Nation has a general duty to protect the safety of its employees. During the period of COVID-19 this duty is heightened further due to the seriousness of the infection and the ease with which it transmits between people and 'places'.

On 20 March 2020, leisure venues were forced to close by national government. In Active Nation this related to all of our revenue generating venues and was extended to our central support office for the protection of those who worked there.

The workforce was furloughed but those who needed to remain 'at work' were required to work from home.

The situation is unprecedented so there are 'no rules' to follow and we can only work within guidelines agreed with the UK Government, Industry bodies such as UK Active and an interpretation of our general duty under HASAW Act 1974.

Our risk assessment will show how we have assessed the risks and taken control measures to mitigate those risks for our campaigners (staff), Supporters (customers) and Contractors/visitors.

What is the hazard and risk?

In simple terms the identified hazard is the spread of the COVID -19 virus, which is a condition affecting the respiratory system with potential fatal consequences. Whilst the outcome of catching the virus may vary with age, gender, ethnicity and pre-existing medical conditions, the potential will not be underestimated for any employee or visitor.

The risk of the virus being transmitted is difficult to assess. The virus resides in water droplets in the air or on a surface. The water droplets are heavier than air and will float downwards under gravity after being exhaled into the atmosphere by an infected person. It is then known to spread from person to person via:

1. Water droplets (through respiratory exhalation) inhaled from a symptomatic or asymptomatic person (symptomatic – carrier shows symptoms, asymptomatic – carrier shows no symptoms)
2. Water droplets residing on a surface and then transmitted to the body via contact with the face (mouth, nose, eyes)
3. Water droplets potentially transmitted in the air/atmosphere (via fans, ventilation systems)

The risk of transmission from these 3 points is high IF a person visits the venue with symptoms. For supporters we must assume a degree of personal responsibility in not attending if a person is asymptomatic. However, we also recognise that in a small number of cases symptoms may not be manifesting themselves at the point of entry to the venue.

Who is affected?

1. Exhalation and Inhalation of water droplets can be by Campaigners, Supporters and Visitors/Contractors. Our business is based upon mass participation, and by virtue of persuading as many people as possible to be active, we traditionally encourage as many attendees as occupancy fire safety or comfort levels would allow. The proximity of active participants will now be restricted due to social distancing requirements (Currently 2m in June 2020). In some circumstances our campaigners must work in pairs or small groups to provide their service. This will again be impacted by social distancing.
2. In our venues there are many ‘touch points’ where Campaigners, Supporters and Visitors/Contractors physically make contact with their hands and if the virus is on their hands the droplets can be left behind and passed to the next person touching that are. Examples of supporter/visitor touch points include
 - Door handles and push plates, stair rails
 - Exercise and sports equipment
 - Lockers (keys and doors)
 - Shower, tap and toilet flush buttons/handles
 - Lift buttons
 - PDQ machines
3. Examples of Campaigner touch points include all work surfaces, equipment, chemicals, furniture. In effect any surface can be considered as a ‘normal’ contact point for campaigners (and contractors).
4. Water droplets existing in the atmosphere will be temporary as being heavier than air the droplets will quickly drop to a surface. However where the air is being ‘agitated’ or ‘moved’ the droplets will remain airborne for longer and will travel further before settling. This will potentially affect all persons in or around our venues.

Where are they affected?

Active Nation venues include both indoor and outdoor facilities. Outdoor venues are considered to be less risk than indoor because the virus droplets dilute and spread quicker.

Outdoor venues include:

- Outdoor Sports Centre (team sports pitches, tennis courts, athletics track, Active Warrior equipment, walking and cycling areas)

- Recreational Parks in Southampton
- Artificial ski slopes
- SWAC sailing centre
- Woodmill Outdoor Activity Centre (high ropes, climbing wall, kayaking, fishing lake)
- 3G artificial football pitches (Birchwood, Yarborough, Clayton Green, Etwall, OSC)
- Tennis courts (Etwall, Yarborough)

Touch points at these locations will be where the risk is heightened of transmission (doors/gates, equipment, balls, ropes, protective clothing such as harnesses and lifejackets).

Indoor venues include:

- Gyms
- Exercise studios (Group Exercise, Spin Studios)
- Swimming Pools
- Sauna/steam rooms
- Sports Halls
- Ancillary rooms (including crèche, meetings, education, activity space such as dry dive,)
- Squash courts
- Changing rooms (incl showers, sinks, toilets)
- Standalone toilets
- Coffee lounges and kitchens
- Trampoline park
- Soft play areas
- Climbing Walls
- Reception and sales areas/desks
- Offices and staff rooms
- Store and plant rooms
- Corridors
- Lifts
- Company vehicles (cars, van, tractors)

When are they affected?

Any time we open our venues the risk exists to all 3 types of Who Campaigners, Supporters and Contractors/Visitors. Current understanding is that the virus cannot survive on any surface for longer than 72 hours, so a closed venue can be considered to be 'No risk' if that timescale has expired.

How are the risks mitigated?

A 'one size fits all' set of control measures will not be appropriate.

We will be led by guidance from UK Active as the principal representative body of the industry; Active Nation will adopt the UK Active Safety Plan. The re-opening and operational framework will be the basis of our venue specific control measures.

Our goal will be to reflect UK Active's Safety Plan objectives:

1. Avert the number of infected people visiting the 3 facilities – staff, customers, contractors
2. Prevent people 'carrying' the infection into or around the venue, eg on hands

3. Limit the number of people in the venue (facilities) to reduce risk of transmission
4. Follow social distancing guidelines to reduce airborne viral transmission
5. Reduce the risk of viral transmission from surfaces and equipment
6. Reduce the risk of transmission to vulnerable or high risk staff and users.

In principle, our campaigners work will be arranged to minimise physical contact with supporters.

Step 1 – can we avoid physical contact with supporters?

Step 2 – if not can the interaction be done from more than 2m away?

Step 3 – where this is not possible the campaigner will be provided a suitable face mask to minimise transmission of the virus?

In principle, our campaigners will avoid touching surfaces to minimise touching the virus and then transmitting to their face. ALL campaigners will be reminded of the availability of hand washing facilities and hand sanitiser stations and the need to wash hands frequently.

Step 1 – can the campaigner ONLY touch objects they are exclusively responsible for (eg pens, paper, keys)?

Step 2 – if not, can the campaigner easily, conveniently and quickly sanitise the touch point?

Step 3 – where this is not possible or feasible, campaigners will be provided with suitable gloves AND required to wash hands after touching surfaces

Active Nation will assess the provision and location of hand washing facilities and hand gel sanitizers on a venue specific basis. Use of advanced cleaning treatments (such as biofilm technology) will be considered and used to reduce risks further. Staff toilets will be exclusively identified with single occupancy arrangements provided; campaigners will be responsible for pre-cleaning of toilets individually and before each use as appropriate.

For activity use, each venue will:

1. Design and refine a programme of activities identifying limits of occupants based upon social distance requirements
2. Define a route for entry, access and exit to facilities hosting activities. Toilets will be identified for supporters and arranged for single occupancy, and a regular cleaning regime developed.
3. Develop a COVID aware plan for each activity, to manage queuing (to allow for social distancing) allowing for pre-cleaning of any equipment, minimal touch points, sanitiser provision, etc
4. Review and refine plans as different facilities come online