

COVID-19 Risk minimisation: Guidance for Rowing Clubs

Rowing Australia (RA) would like to provide the following guidance for State Associations and Clubs as COVID-19 restrictions are eased nationally and community and high-performance sport is able to resume. This is occurring in a phased manner in line with the [AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport document](#).

Whilst we welcome the opportunity to return to rowing, we must proceed cautiously and must not endanger public health or participants' health in the process. Furthermore, we must remain agile in the application of measures to manage the risk to health so that we can move quickly as things change.

It is important to note that each State/Territory has a different disease burden and as a reflection of this, there are different Departments of Health led approaches across Australia with regard to easing of restrictions, and what is permitted. State Associations and Clubs must refer to their local Health Departments for advice on what is allowed in their jurisdiction.

In order to guide safe return to rowing, RA has put together a summary below of the key risk areas related to our sport, and some recommendations for minimising the impact of each risk. We have made these recommendations in accordance with the AIS Framework's level B and C sporting activity guidelines.

It is important to highlight upfront that a critical part of risk minimisation for all sports, including rowing is that **anyone who is even mildly unwell should stay at home and arrange a medical review. Do not attend a training venue even if you are only mildly unwell or think your symptoms are due to something else. This illness is most contagious early on, and we must all be vigilant with this rule.**

It is also important to note that this document is intended to be a guide and is by no means exhaustive. Clubs must consider their State/Territories own guidelines together with their own unique circumstances and available resources. The Clubs governance body should consider these circumstances when making a decision on when it is appropriate to reopen and the measures that are put in place to manage the risks associated with COVID-19.

Some of the key COVID-19 related risks relevant to rowing

1. Contact with people in the club/shed environment
 - Large numbers of athletes training out of each club
 - Shared bathrooms, change rooms
 - Closed indoor spaces for boat storage
2. Aerosolisation during training
 - Training in crews poses risk of droplet transmission
 - High expiratory flow with increased effort of breathing means there is greater droplet dispersal
 - 1.5m spacing not maintained between athletes in most crew boats
3. Contact with shared equipment for fomite mediated transmission
 - Shared boats and oars
 - Shared erg and gym equipment

Some strategies to manage the risks

	<u>Level B</u>	<u>Level C</u>
Minimising risk through contact		
Physical distancing within Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.5m between athletes and staff when off water - Staggered access to Club in groups of 10 or less 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.5m between athletes and staff when off water
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No access to indoor training - No athlete access to office/admin areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand sanitiser prior to entry to Club, kitchens, bathroom - Small group using facility at a time where possible and distancing maintained. - Minimise athlete access to office/admin areas
Kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kitchen: Club kitchens can be accessed providing daily professional clean is available and cleaning between users is maintained.
Changerooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrive ready to train. - Access only for storing bags and changing after sessions. - No Shower access: Shower at home after session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changerooms: access staggered such that distancing maintained.
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toilets may be accessed. Increased cleaning, daily as minimum and limit access to maintain distancing. - Soap and paper towel or air drier - No shared handtowels - No touch soap and sanitiser if possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As for B
Training groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training split into groups of 8 athletes and 2 staff (max 10 group size) on water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No restrictions
Minimising risk due to aerosolisation		
Boat class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - single sculls - pairs/doubles from the same household <i>may</i> be allowed in some states. This should be confirmed with local authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small boat training preferred - Larger boats providing local authorities permit

Ergo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor ergo only - In groups of 8-9 athletes and 1-2 staff (max 10 group size) - 1.5m spacing maintained, one person per 4msq. - All sessions must be supervised to ensure distancing and hygiene measures maintained. - Hand sanitiser prior to session - Ergo disinfected after use - Cleaning log maintained by club with sign off after each session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.5m spacing maintained, one person per 4msq. - All sessions must be supervised to ensure distancing and hygiene measures maintained. - Hand sanitiser prior to session - Ergo disinfected after use - Cleaning log maintained by club with sign off after each session
Minimising risk due to shared equipment		
Gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No access to gym 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to gym with additional cleaning of facility and equipment (see appendix)
Ergo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cleaning and disinfecting between users (see appendix) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As for B
Increased cleaning of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change rooms, surfaces and objects in other relevant spaces should be cleaned between exercise sessions with disinfectant - Cleaning of equipment with disinfectant must take place between users for shared boats, oars, ergos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As for B
Increased access to hand sanitiser gel throughout facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand sanitiser gel in boatsheds, toilets and gym Ideally no touch dispenser - Athletes and staff to carry own hand sanitisers at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As for B

In addition to the above strategies, Clubs should consider other general measures to reduce risks including:

- Nominating a **COVID-19 Safety Officer** or key contact to make sure the club is familiar with State/Territory restrictions and guidelines regarding COVID-19
- Testing communication links with local, regional and State/Territory based medical advice hotlines etc
- Keeping registers of non-club members and visitors to the Club to ensure contact tracing can be implemented
- Ensure the Club has access to adequate supplies of Personal Protection Equipment, hand sanitiser and other cleaning materials
- Ensure supply agreements (cleaners, janitors, boat builders and maintenance workers) have been updated taking into consideration changes brought about by COVID-19
- Any tasks that can be done at home, should be done at home (e.g. recovery sessions, online meetings)
- Clearly communicate risk minimisation measures with Club users/members
- Recommend members/users sign off on an understanding of current limitations
- Clear signage should be placed around venue to remind users of measures/limitations in place (see appendix)
- Consider spaces that can be used to isolate someone until they can be transferred for medical review if they become unwell during a training session
- Measures to encourage distancing of at least 1.5m is maintained by members attending facility
- Markers on floors
- Stagger access to boats
- Place boats that will be accessed together in different areas of shed
- There should be no unnecessary body contact (e.g. hand shaking)
- Stagger training time/access to reduce in-person contact between athletes and other administrative staff
- Recommend use of checklist for Clubs to complete prior to opening
- Checklist for athletes using clubs

COVID-19 Safety Officer

In appointing a COVID-19 safety officer (CSO) for each training session to oversee the session and ensure that restrictions outlined above are adhered to, including group sizes, distancing measures, access limitations, hygiene measures and cleaning of facilities and equipment is completed between groups/users. The CSO could also be responsible for monitoring stock levels of soap, sanitiser, disinfectant and other consumables related to maintaining the cleaning and hygiene in the club environment. This role could be one person or a rotating roster. This individual should maintain distancing measures at all times. Provisions should be made for an on call/back up CSO in the event that the CSO is unwell.

Vulnerable Groups

Some groups may be more at risk of COVID-19 infection and or more at risk of severe illness if they are infected. Clubs must give special consideration to how these groups can be protected. Athletes and other personnel with concurrent medical conditions such as respiratory or cardiac disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity and immunosuppression due to disease or medication may be at increased risk. Other groups that require special consideration include individuals over 70 years of age, carers for or a household contact of a vulnerable person, athletes with suboptimal access to medical care (e.g. remote) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

Appropriate measures will depend on the individual circumstances and the club environment and resources.

Individuals who have a medical condition, are on medications or for other reasons may be at increased risk, should consult with their medical practitioners to determine what measures may be appropriate for them. Specifically they should consider whether it is safest for them to avoid the club environment altogether until the community COVID-19 risk is further reduced.

Potential interventions at a club level to support vulnerable individuals include:

- Delaying a return to sport for those groups
- Training scheduled at designated 'lower risk' times (i.e. with no one else around)
- Staff working off-site where possible
- Exclusion of 'high risk' athletes and other personnel from the training environment.

Appendix:

[AIS Framework](#) – this page is regularly updated with resources that may be relevant to some clubs and high performance athletes.

[Coronavirus Resources – Federal Health Department](#)

[Cleaning protocol](#)

[Signage for hand hygiene](#)

[Worksafe Australia – Checklists and Resources](#)

[General signage](#)