



GUIDANCE FOR UMPIRES & SCORERS WHEN OFFICIATING SOCIALLY DISTANCED CRICKET MATCHES | 29TH March 2021

To enable recreational cricket to be played, adapted playing conditions have been introduced and this document details the guidance for umpires and scorers who choose to make themselves available.

It is the duty of the umpires to manage these new adapted playing conditions and guidance on operating them and any sanctions are also included.

This guidance is divided into five sections:

- Before the game – guidance for both Umpires and Scorers
- During the game – guidance for Scorers
- During the game – guidance for Umpires
- Additional Advice for Umpires
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – UPDATED 29/03/21

Please read this guidance carefully and should you have any queries, please read the FAQs.

This guidance applies until further notice and is for England only.

Guidance for Wales will be issued in due course.

The ECB ACO insurance scheme will cover anyone who chooses to officiate these matches irrespective of whether they are friendly or league matches, providing the games are played in adherence to Government guidance.

Please note the policy covers public liability and personal accident injury but does not cover any illness e.g. COVID-19

BEFORE THE GAME – UMPIRES AND SCORERS

1. If you are showing symptoms of COVID-19 do not travel to the game and get a test.
2. Officials are encouraged to follow best practice for travel including avoiding use of car sharing and you should arrive changed.
3. Please ensure that you bring your own hand sanitiser and food and drink as the clubhouse may not be open.
4. On arrival at the ground you will need to provide your name & contact details for NHS Test & Trace.
5. The host club are responsible for the implementation of all facility guidelines (including the scoreboard) as well as the provision of hand sanitation gel.
6. The host club are responsible for setting up the stumps which should also have been sanitised; the umpire is responsible for the provision of the bails.
7. All officials are encouraged to wash their hands/hand sanitise before play starts.

DURING THE GAME – SCORERS

1. Where possible, scoreboxes should not be used.
 - As an alternative, the host club to consider providing a gazebo so scorers remain dry even if play continues during light rain.
 - Consider using a small portable scoreboard instead of a full scoreboard, or alternatively have only one scorer inside the scoreboard, with less frequent updating.
2. Scorers should remain socially distant from others at all times and specifically:
 - In the scoreboard if it is large enough for 2 scorers
 - When interacting with any players; ideally players should not be allowed in the scoreboard
 - When interacting with other officials
 - During any interval or break in play
3. Equipment should not be shared including laptops and tablets.
4. Communal scorebooks which are passed from one person to another should be avoided.
5. Scorers will not hold any item of players clothing, sunglasses or any valuables.
6. Scorers will not collect/handle team subs.
7. Leagues using DLS will be advised to ensure that alternative arrangements are in place to calculate the result in the event that the DLS Par Score Tables cannot be produced electronically. Scorers should ensure that they have pen/paper to produce the necessary manual calculations and the outcome should be verified verbally with the umpires.
8. Where Scorer Pro is being used, scorer(s) can produce the relevant Par Score Table and save it as a pdf file that can be emailed to the captains and umpires if this is required.
9. Where D/L is being used, the captains should be encouraged to use the Play-Cricket Scorer Apps to calculate the D/L Par Score. Guidance on how to use the App can be found [here](#)
10. If a walkie-talkie is being used, usage should be kept to a minimum and only used by one of the two scorers. The equipment should be sanitised before use.
11. Scorers should either regularly wash their hands or use hand sanitiser.
12. In the event of rain, scorers should remain in the score box if that is where they are sitting, or return to their own vehicle if there is insufficient outdoor cover from the rain to maintain social distancing.

DURING THE GAME – UMPIRES

1. Umpires should remain socially distant from others at all times and specifically:
 - At the toss
 - When interacting with any players
 - When interacting with other officials
 - During any interval or break in play
2. Umpires will ensure that all players maintain social distancing during the match and in particular, when players are fielding, discussing tactics, having refreshments or celebrating the fall of a wicket.
3. No sweat or saliva on the ball is allowed under any circumstances.
4. Umpires will not deliberately touch the ball at all during play.
5. The ball will be returned direct to the bowler either on the full or rolled along the ground. It should not be passed around the field.
6. The umpires will not collect the ball at a fall of a wicket or at any breaks; instead, the ball will be returned to the base of the stumps.
7. Only umpires should replace bails and remake the wicket including after any attempted stumpings or run outs.
8. Umpires will not provide bowlers markers or cloths for drying the ball.
9. Players will be required to sanitise their hands after every 6 overs; the umpires should call “time” after every 6 overs to facilitate this.
10. At each break, it will be the responsibility of the fielding Captain to sanitise the ball before play recommences. The umpires should ensure that this happens and manage these breaks by waiting until the end of the over or a fall of a wicket.
11. The umpires should sanitise their own hands at every drinks or innings break and after every contact with stumps or bails.
12. Umpires will not hold any item of players clothing or sunglasses. The players will need to place these themselves beyond the boundary.
13. There is no requirement for officials to wear any form of PPE although some individuals may wish to do so.
14. Scientific research has shown that there is a minimal risk of infection when the bowler fleetingly passes the umpire so there is no need for the bowler’s end umpire to change his normal position or to move into position once the bowler has passed by.
15. Bowlers returning to their mark should maintain social distancing when passing the umpire.
16. Bowlers should maintain social distancing when making any appeals.
17. If a walkie-talkie is being used, usage should be kept to a minimum and only used by one of the two umpires. The equipment should be sanitised before use.
18. In the event of rain, umpires must remove the stumps and bails before the covers are pulled on. Umpires should return to their own vehicle if there is insufficient outdoor cover from the rain to maintain social distancing.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE FOR UMPIRES

ECB has worked with MCC on the necessity to alter any Laws or Playing Conditions to enable recreational cricket to take place during the COVID-19 pandemic. MCC has clarified that it will not change any of the Laws of Cricket in response to the crisis, feeling that amending Playing Conditions is a better route to take.

ECB and MCC have discussed how new regulations may be applicable to various levels of the game, and both bodies are pleased to offer the advice below as a means of getting cricket played.

In order to effectively manage cricket through this phase, Officials will be empowered to ensure measures are adhered to through appropriate interventions designed by the ECB Association of Cricket Officials (ECB ACO). In essence, this means that instances of breaching of the measures will be dealt with Under Law 41 (Unfair Play). However, Law 42 (Unacceptable Conduct) remains as an option if umpires believe conduct is unacceptable.

Prior to Play – Umpires will have read the ECB guidance and conduct normal pre-match protocols and check pitch for ‘batting line’ markings

At the Toss – Captains will be advised of their responsibilities for directing their team on and agree the following:

1. No sweat or saliva on the ball is allowed
2. Players to maintain social distance at all times.
3. Ball to be returned directly to the bowler (On the full or rolled along the ground)
4. Not to remake the wicket once the ball has become dead, this is the role of the umpire.
5. Players to ensure that any drinks, sweaters or other paraphernalia to be placed at least 1m from boundary edge where at all possible.
6. Hygiene breaks will take place every 6 overs (A wicket break can be used to restart the process).

Captains should be made aware that any breach of the above could result in a first and final warning and any subsequent transgression will result in the award of 5 penalty runs.

During Play – Umpires will not deliberately come into contact with the ball. Any breach of 1-7 above, will result in a first and final warning, under Law 41.

If deemed Unacceptable Conduct, penalties under Law 42 shall apply.

- A player intentionally moving within 1 metre of anyone else for non-cricketing purposes will be treated as a Level 3 offence
- A player intentionally spitting or coughing at and within 2 metres of, another person will be treated as a Level 4 offence

After Play – Umpires are to leave the stumps in the ground, bails on the ground (if they’re not their own) next to the stumps and leave bowling markers for the Club Representative to collect.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) – UPDATED 29 MARCH 2021

Do we need 'batting lines' for the batters during match play?

Marked batting lines are not required in 2021. Batters should remain socially distanced from other players and the umpire at all times and run on opposite sides of the pitch.

In 2020, the interval between sanitation breaks during match play was 6 overs or 20 minutes whichever ever was sooner. Has that guidance changed in 2021?

Yes, for match play, the interval is now 6 overs only. The 20 minute interval applies for training sessions.

You mention Scientific Research regarding the minimal risk of infection when the bowler fleetingly passes the umpire. Can I see the evidence please?

The ECB Chief Medical Officer has released this statement which you can read [here](#)

Are we still using Team Cards?

Yes, but to minimise contact we are suggesting the handing over of Team Cards can safely be achieved by the following:-

- *The person responsible for the team takes a photo of the completed card and forwards it to the umpires by email or other messaging service.*
- *The umpires can take a photograph on their device of the completed cards left in a place agreed with the person responsible for the team.*
- *The person responsible for the team can provide a signed list that umpires can copy onto a team card.*
- *Alternatives are possible as long as they provide the details available on the team card.*

What should we do as an official if we see that the guidance may not be being interpreted correctly?

The purpose of the guidance is to keep everyone involved in cricket safe and healthy. We will all see examples of good practice that we can share with clubs who need support to implement the guidance effectively. We need to work together to ensure we can all train and play as safely as possible and in line with all guidance provided.

Some of these changes – particularly the hygiene breaks – slow the game down and affect its flow. How can we make these less disruptive?

Our number one priority is protecting public safety, some adaptations will affect the natural flow of the game, but they are a small price to pay for having the opportunity to play cricket. We should not be looking to speed past important health and safety measures. As we become more familiar with the adaptations, they will have a less noticeable impact, and clubs can share best practice for safe adherence such as players carrying individual containers of hand sanitiser for hygiene breaks.

In the event there is a local lockdown and cricket is suspended, would I still be insured if I officiated at a match during the lockdown?

No. You would not be covered as it would be in contravention of Government guidelines.

Can my league make me umpire if I don't want to?

No-one can force you to do so. ECB ACO have suspended umpire grading for 2020 so your grading will not be affected if you do not umpire.

What about the coin toss?

It is the responsibility of the home team Captain to provide the coin and for umpires to supervise the coin toss. The toss should be completed whilst complying with social distancing.

Who is responsible for the spare balls?

The host club will provide sanitised spare balls and they should be left off the field until needed. The chosen spare ball should be cleaned by the fielding Captain before use.

Should a player apply sweat or saliva to the ball, either deliberately or out of habit, is the ball to be changed for a spare?

The umpire should ask the fielding captain to sanitise the ball and play recommences with the existing ball.

When operating with 'batting lines' whose responsibility is it to move when a fielder may be stationed in direct line of the runner?

The batter must avoid the fielder. The fielder must not impede the batter when running unless moving to field the ball or back-up a throw.

If a player fails to run within a 'batting lane' what does the umpire do?

This is covered under Point 2 in the additional advice for umpires (At the Toss) and can be covered under Law 41 Unfair Play

Where does the ball need to be once a wicket has fallen?

At the bowlers' end by the stumps.

During rain breaks who is responsible for the ball in use?

Fielding team Captain.

Our scoreboard is a manual one with strings to pull and it takes two scorers to work all the numbers. What should I do?

If you have to use that scoreboard only one scorer should be seated inside if you cannot sit 1m+ apart. Only display the minimum requirement, which is total runs, wickets, and overs.

I use a Linear back-up sheet when I score on PCS Scorer PRO. Should I still do that?

You should bring a pre-prepared sheet with you and ensure that you are the only person handling that sheet. No printing should be done at the match.

I'm concerned that if I score from a gazebo or outside the scoreboard, I will not be able to stop players coming to look over my shoulder at their statistics.

The guidance is clear. Players must refrain from approaching scorers and should maintain social distancing at all times.

Who can I contact for any other questions?

Please email any further questions to ecb.aco@ecb.co.uk