



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) & Guidelines for training of sportspersons at swimming pools in a COVID-19 environment

MHA Order No 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 30 September 2020 permits reopening of swimming pools outside containment zones for the purpose of training of sports persons.

I. Scope and Coverage

This SOP applies to all SAI and non-SAI centres wherein training of sportspersons may resume, provided no orders of the local authorities prohibit such facilities to resume operations i.e. micro-containment zones and are meant to serve as safety guidelines for operating the facility in consonance with any other guidelines issued by state government while granting such permission.

This SOP unless directed otherwise is applicable to the following:

- i. Competitive Swimmers to be defined as all sports person not below the age of 12 and engaged in training for purposes of preparing for participating in swimming competition, and shall not include contact sport like Waterpolo, learn to swim or swimming for general fitness.
- ii. Coaches and Support Staff directly responsible for the training of these athletes. Head coach shall ensure that the training is carried out with the minimum required staff only.
- iii. Other Staff engaged in technical, non-technical, administrative, facility management staff (including hostel and mess if applicable) functions.
- iv. Essential visitors other than those mentioned above and if authorised by the centre head (including those from government departments i.e. public health, utilities etc)

II. Protocols and precautions for training (Athletes/Coaches/Support Staff/Facility Management) for Residential and Non Residential

- i. It is the responsibility of the centre head and coach in-charge to ensure complete adherence to training protocols and to secure agreement from respective athletes that any training activity undertaken shall be in full compliance to the protocols mentioned hereunder.
- ii. Obligatory self-declaration (could be in the form of text message) of the infection-free condition by players and staff re-joining the centre shall be provided to COVID Task Force officers before entering the premises.
- iii. All personal training equipment belonging to an athlete shall be disinfected while the athlete is inducted into the training centre.
- iv. Athletes and staff shall be screened before being allowed access to common field-of-play/training facilities. RT-PCR test shall be conducted for new/returning athletes. Public health authorities may be consulted for same regarding Government guidelines and cost of testing.
- v. For residential trainees, they need to produce a negative COVID Report 72 hour/96 hours before arrival to the centre followed by 14 days quarantine period. On the 6th/7th Day of quarantine period, another COVID Test must be conducted. Thereafter, trainees can mix with the other quarantined trainees only and not with other trainees staying in the campus. Only after completing 7 more days, they can mix with other trainees.
- vi. Residential athletes requiring usage of common shower areas shall ensure soaps, towels and any other utility is not shared
- vii. Spitting and clearing of nasal/respiratory secretions on the pool especially during swimming or

at any place within the facility other than toilets shall be prohibited.

viii. Athletes shall also perform hand-hygiene before and after use of all training equipment

III. General Safety Measures

- i. Athletes/coaches/facility staff who begin to cough/sneeze/above normal temperature for any reason, must move away from others until coughing/sneezing dissipates. In case of above normal temperature, a coach or staff member should ask athletes, as they come into practice, specifically listing certain symptoms, and send home those athletes reporting illness or experiencing symptoms.
- ii. Hand-hygiene facilities shall be made available adjacent to swimming pool & deck for use as and when necessary.
- iii. Respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed. This involves strict practice of covering **one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow** and disposing off used tissues properly.
- iv. Use of **Arogya Setu** app shall be made mandatory for all athletes and staff at the centre. The Task Force shall ensure a 100% coverage of *Arogya Setu* among all athletes and staff at the centre.
- v. Prior to resuming training activities at the centres, each athlete shall be educated on COVID precautionary measures, which are to be implemented at the facility and during training.
- vi. Non-residential athletes and residential athletes returning to the centre shall be educated on the existing precautionary measures regarding usage of common facilities within the centre.

IV. Protocols and precautions at Swimming Pools



Maximum Pool Capacity / Batch

- 50 M 10 lane – 20 Swimmers
- 25 M / 50 M 8 lane - 16 / 16 swimmers

- Increase water sanitation level by maintaining chlorine level in the water at 2.0 PPM along with 7 to 7.40 pH of water. Filtration plant must be operated for the entire duration of the practice and 2 hours before and after the session.
- Chlorine levels in the pool will be measured 45 min before start of practice. Water samples for chlorine level checks will be drawn uniformly from multiple points in the pool. logbook of reading will meticulously be maintained and verified by head coach before permitting swimmers to enter the pool.
- Toilets and showers will be off limits. In case swimmers required to use toilet facility at pool, coaching staff shall ensure not more than one person is in the toilet at same time.
- All toilets attached to pool will be sanitised as per the protocols laid out as part of the facility management protocols in the main guidelines.
- If possible, outdoor shower may be installed and swimmers will shower before and after entering the pool
- Dryland work must be shifted to outdoors and use of gymnasium restricted as far as possible. Swim Coach must follow guidelines prescribed in the main document when recommending use of gym to their swimmers.

V. Protocols and precautions at Facility (Swimming Pool Management)

- A COVID Task Force shall be constituted at each training centre to guide and monitor all trainees, coaches and staff within the centres. The Task Force shall be responsible for overall implementation of protocols outlined in this SOP.
- Swimming pool operators should have a dedicated officer responsible for COVID 19 considerations, making sure that they are up to date with central or local government recommendations.
- The Task Force shall include Facility In Charge (as Chairman), COVID officer and Chief Coach as members.

- iv. The Task Force shall work closely with the coaches and support staff to define guidelines and protocols to conduct the training in the COVID environment.

VI. SWIMMING SAFELY

A. PREPARING TO SWIM

- i. Use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available before going to the pool.
- ii. Do not share equipment.
- iii. Wear your suit to and from practice. Change in your respective room.
- iv. Bring a full water bottle to avoid touching a tap
- v. If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve/arm
- vi. Arrive as close as possible to when activity begins.
- vii. Avoid touching gates, fences, benches, etc. if you can.
- viii. Do not attend practice if you do not feel well.
- ix. Shower before entering pool if outdoor shower available on pool deck.

B. WHEN SWIMMING

- i. Follow directions for spacing and stay at least six feet apart from others.
- ii. Do not make physical contact with others or giving a high five.
- iii. Try not to take water in your mouth while swimming and if you need to spit do so in the gutter
- iv. Avoid physical contact with other swimmers when taking a break.
- v. Coaches are advised to follow workouts to maintain basic fitness and endurance of the swimmers. High intensity workouts which may reduce athlete's immunity should be avoided.

C. AFTER SWIMMING

- i. Leave the facility as soon as reasonably possible after practice.
- ii. Wash your hands thoroughly or use a hand sanitizer after leaving the pool.
- iii. Do not use the locker room or changing area.
- iv. Shower at one you reach your respective room.

Annexure 1

COVID-19: Guidelines on disinfection of common public places including offices¹

1. Indoor areas including office spaces

Office spaces, including conference rooms should be cleaned and disinfected every evening after office hours or early in the morning before the rooms are occupied. Prior to cleaning, the worker should wear disposable rubber boots, gloves (heavy duty), and a triple layer mask.

- i. All indoor areas such as entrance lobbies, corridors and staircases, escalators, elevators, security guard booths, office rooms, meeting rooms, cafeteria should be mopped with a disinfectant with 1% sodium hypochlorite or phenolic disinfectants.
- ii. High contact surfaces such elevator buttons, handrails / handles and call buttons, escalator handrails, public counters, intercom systems, equipment like telephone, printers/scanners, and other office machines should be cleaned twice daily by mopping with a linen/absorbable cloth soaked in 1% sodium hypochlorite. Frequently touched areas like tabletops, chair handles, pens, diary files, keyboards, mouse, mouse pad, tea/coffee dispensing machines etc. should specially be cleaned.
- iii. For metallic surfaces like door handles, security locks, keys etc. 70% alcohol can be used to wipe down surfaces where the use of bleach is not suitable.
- iv. Hand sanitizing stations should be installed in office premises (especially at the entry) and near high contact surfaces.
- v. Carefully clean the equipment used in cleaning at the end of the cleaning process.
- vi. Remove PPE, discard in a disposable PPE in yellow disposable bag and wash hands with soap and water.

2. Outdoor areas

Outdoor areas have less risk than indoor areas due to air currents and exposure to sunlight. Cleaning and disinfection efforts should be targeted to frequently touched/contaminated surfaces as already detailed above.

3. Public toilets

Sanitary workers must use separate set of cleaning equipment for toilets (mops, nylon scrubber) and separate set for sink and commode). They should always wear disposable protective gloves while cleaning a toilet.

Areas	Agents / Toilet cleaner	Procedure
Toilet pot/ commode	Sodium hypochlorite 1%/ detergent Soap powder / long handle angular brush	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Inside of toilet pot/commode - Scrub with the recommended agents and the long handle angular brush. ii. Outside - clean with recommended agents; use a scrubber.

¹MoHFW website

Areas	Agents / Toilet cleaner	Procedure
Lid/ commode	Nylon scrubber and soap powder/detergent 1% Sodium Hypochlorite	iii. Wet and scrub with soap powder and the nylon scrubber inside and outside. iv. Wipe with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite
Toilet floor	Soap powder /detergent and scrubbing brush/ nylon broom 1% Sodium Hypochlorite	i. Scrub floor with soap powder and the scrubbing brush ii. Wash with water iii. Use sodium hypochlorite 1% dilution
Sink	Soap powder / detergent and nylon scrubber 1% Sodium Hypochlorite	i. Scrub with the nylon scrubber. ii. Wipe with 1% sodium hypochlorite
Showers area / Taps and fittings	Warm water Detergent powder Nylon Scrubber 1% Sodium Hypochlorite/ 70% alcohol	iii. Thoroughly scrub the floors/tiles with warm water and detergent iv. Wipe over taps and fittings with a damp cloth and detergent. v. Care should be taken to clean the underside of taps and fittings. vi. Wipe with 1% sodium hypochlorite/ 70% alcohol
Soap dispensers	Detergent and water	vii. Should be cleaned daily with detergent and water and dried.

Note: 70% Alcohol can be used to wipe down surfaces where the use of bleach is not suitable, e.g. metal. (Chloroxyleneol (4.5-5.5%)/ Benzalkonium Chloride or any other disinfectants found to be effective against coronavirus may be used as per manufacturer's instructions)

4. Recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Wear appropriate PPE which would include the following while carrying out cleaning and disinfection work.

- Wear disposable rubber boots, gloves (heavy duty), and a triple layer mask
- Gloves should be removed and discarded damaged, and a new pair worn.
- All disposable PPE should be removed and discarded after cleaning activities are completed.

Masks are effective if worn according to instructions and properly fitted. Masks should be discarded and changed if they become physically damaged or soaked.

Annexure 2

Precautions for gymnasium/physiotherapy room/medical centre

- i. Use of gym shall be avoided/ limited to inescapable requirement; and as far as possible exercise shall be allowed using personal equipment, which shall not be shared by any other trainee.
- ii. If exercising in gym is deemed necessary, distancing norms of 1.5 to 2 metres shall be adhered to at all times and it shall be ensured that no utility like towel, water bottle etc. is shared
- iii. The use of gym shall be allowed in specific time slots, allowing sufficient time for disinfection between two slots, and the maximum number of people allowed to use the gym at a time shall be determined by the COVID Task Force of respective centre
- iv. Use of the fitness equipment shall be permitted only while wearing gloves and face mask and under consequent use of disinfectants afterwards. Use of the fitness room shall be permitted only in small groups of maximum 5 people under observance distancing norms.
- v. Each gym equipment shall be disinfected after every single use. Additional staff shall be appointed for proper disinfection of the gym equipment prior to continuous usage.
- vi. All physiotherapy/massage shall be avoided unless absolutely necessary. In case physiotherapy is deemed necessary, the following shall be exercised –
- vii. Athletes must take a proper shower before physiotherapy/massage
- viii. Athletes shall be treated individually in spacious, ventilated rooms. If necessary, additional rooms may be opened with disinfected examination couches.
- ix. Both the physiotherapist and the athlete shall sanitize hands prior and after the therapy session using sanitizers placed within treatment room
- x. Both physiotherapist and athlete shall wear facial masks during the treatment session
- xi. Physiotherapist shall use disposable gloves, discarding them after each therapy session
- xii. Physiotherapist shall avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth of the athlete
- xiii. Athletes shall carry their own towel for the therapy session
- xiv. Medical equipment such as ultrasound/ shockwave/etc. shall be used economically and only after prior and subsequent disinfection.
- xv. Recovery areas including sauna, hydrotherapy etc. shall be made inaccessible during this period
- xvi. Services of a masseur/ masseuse may be utilised preferably only once high intensity training starts or wherever recovery is an issue. Additionally, services utilising recovery equipment/ massage table/ game ready shall be resumed only after proper disinfection.
- xvii. All Medical Room furniture in each room shall be sterilized prior to 8.30 am and then once again at 11 am.

- xviii. Patients entry door into the building complex shall have a wall installed hand sanitizer which must be used by every patient before entry.
- xix. Athletes shall resort to tele-consultation as much as possible and not visit the medical centre unless it is a case of emergency.
- xx. Screening of all patients shall be done at the entrance at separate tables placed in the waiting area.
- xxi. General medical check-up shall be conducted every weekend for all athletes and support staff including mess and horticulture staff, grounds men, security etc) till situation stabilises. Medical register shall be maintained and checked regularly to track all personnel who may be susceptible to virus by virtue of respiratory illness or other relevant ailments.
- xxii. All medical staff including Doctors, Nurses, Medical attendants, shall be advised to wear all necessary PPE like goggles, face shield, mask, gloves, coverall/gowns (with or without aprons), head cover and shoe covers while handling a suspected COVID-19 case.
- xxiii. Medical centre shall be operated in close coordination with local hospitals and treatment centres equipped with COVID19 testing and treatment. All concerned cases shall be dealt with as per guidance of these centres.
- xxiv. Medical centre shall maintain close coordination with COVID Task Force and have direct access to COVID19 Helpline.

Annexure-3

General Guidelines

- i. Any training equipment used shall be disinfected before next usage.
- ii. No spectators shall be allowed within training centre at any time. **“Pick up” and “Drop off”** will be strictly at the gate and monitored by the security staff.
- iii. Compulsory screening will be performed of all persons visiting the centres. The security personnel manning the entry gate at each shift shall be trained to perform the thermal tests and conduct screening based on any obvious symptoms.
- iv. Provisions would be made for multiple hand washing stations at different locations including entry point, gymnasium, swimming pool, hostel etc and hand sanitizers for the use of athletes/coaches/ employees.
- v. Deep cleaning of all drinking and hand washing stations, washrooms, showers and lavatories shall be ensured.
- vi. All packed supplies delivered at centre shall be placed in an open area for a period of 24hrs (cardboard packing) or 72 hours (plastic packing) before usage. Unwrapped items like fruits or vegetables shall be washed under running water immediately after being delivered at centre. Fruits and vegetables may be soaked in diluted vinegar, salt or lemon water for few hours and left to dry prior to consumption if applicable.
- vii. Cooking of common item where applicable by multiple individuals shall be avoided and food handlers shall be quarantined as per norms upon returning to centre, working on a rotational roster.
- viii. CCTV monitoring shall be ensured to detect crowding at swimming pool, gymnasium, medical, physiotherapy centre, hostel, dining area where applicable etc.
- ix. Provisions must be made for display of Posters/standees/AV media on preventive measures against COVID-19 at prominent places in the SAI and non-SAI centres.
- x. Display State helpline numbers and also numbers of local health authorities at reception, medical unit and hostels.
- xi. **All waste bins will be required to have “Yellow” Plastic garbage bags (yellow colour is designated as biohazard).** Athletes, coaches and employees should be advised to dispose of used face covers / masks in these bins placed in common areas.
- xii. In case of positive result, COVID-19 is a notifiable disease and Local public health authorities must be immediately informed and steps taken as per instructions of the health authorities.

Swimming Pool Operators shall ensure they are continuing to comply with the following (as applicable) guidance and standards:

- WHO guidelines for swimming pools
https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/safe-recreational-water-guidelines-2/en/
- Resources published by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare may be found on the following link - <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>
- <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Guidelinesonyogainstitutesandgymnasiums03082020.pdf>
