

RETURN TO VOLLEYBALL

FIVB COVID-19 SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR CONTINENTAL CONFEDERATIONS AND NATIONAL FEDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This document is meant to provide guidance to Continental Volleyball Confederations and National Volleyball Federations that are looking to restart volleyball activities at a national and continental level in territories where the governmental COVID-19 restrictions for practicing sport have been lifted.

It is important to continuously review the latest updates about the COVID-19, as the information about the pandemic is ever changing.

These guidelines are not intended to replace guidance and restrictions of governments and public health authorities but should be referred to in combination with such guidance from public health authorities.

GENERAL INFORMATION

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the recently discovered strain of coronavirus.

The health, wellbeing, and safety of each individual in the global Volleyball Family is FIVB's top priority. As such, FIVB is continually monitoring the evolving situation regarding the global coronavirus pandemic in complete coordination with the relevant international and national health and sports authorities, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Key information on COVID-19, preventative measures, symptoms and helpful links can be found on the FIVB web page created to inform, advise and educate its stakeholders about COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.fivb.com/en/thefivb/covid19>. As more information becomes available to the FIVB, it will endeavour to share this information on the web page mentioned.

VOLLEYBALL COMPETITIONS

Most FIVB volleyball competitions have been cancelled in 2020 and re-scheduled for 2021 instead. Current information on international volleyball competition schedules can be found on the FIVB website: <https://www.fivb.com/>.

The FIVB Board of Administration approved that, in principle, all national leagues can return to competition starting on 1 June 2020 to either complete the 2019-2020 season or begin the 2020-2021 season. However, the resumption of national leagues should only start from once it is safe to do so and is subject to the health and safety guidelines issued by national and local authorities. Additionally, the return of each national league is subject to FIVB approval. In accordance with the FIVB Board of Administration decision, a national league must provide FIVB with 1) the beginning and end date of the 2019-2020 season if

applicable, 2) the start and end date of the 2020-2021 season and 3) the comprehensive safety and health protection measures, which should be in line with safety guidelines issued by the national and local authorities, that will be taken by the league in organizing its competition.

National leagues and other organisers of volleyball competitions are required to implement comprehensive safety and protection measures to ensure the health and wellbeing of athletes, fans, staff and all stakeholders involved in organising events. This decision allows volleyball to first resume on a national scale if it is safe to do so.

Generally, a phased approach to the restart process that starts with individual trainings followed by small group trainings then full team trainings and, finally, competitions with other teams is likely the safest approach to the resumption of competitions. The approach taken should always be based on the guidance and permissions given by local public authorities and in consultation with medical experts. Fan attendance is either likely to be prohibited or subject to strict local regulations at the time of the publication of this document so a national league or event organiser should familiarise itself with the local restrictions or requirements in place and train its staff accordingly. Additionally, it is likely that the restrictions related to sporting competitions will vary regionally and nationally so there may be multiple sets of regulations with which a national league or event organiser must familiarise itself.

The guidance provided below is not exhaustive but rather assists a national league or event organiser in its preparation for organising volleyball competitions in the current pandemic. As stated above, this guidance should also be supplemented by guidance from the local, regional, state and national authorities, who will be more familiar with the current conditions in your local communities and countries. The FIVB strongly believes that it is more likely that a national league or other volleyball competition will be organised as safely as possible in the current climate if the national league or event organiser has as much medical information at its disposal.

GUIDANCE FOR THE ORGANISATION OF COMPETITIONS

1. Planning Phase

- Form a COVID-19 Safety Committee including the leadership of the national federation, the event organiser, medical advisors specialized in infectious diseases and sports medicine, government liaison)
- Complete a risk assessment (pros & cons) on organising a competition
- Verify the organisational plan with the local government and public health authorities
- Establish spectator attendance strategy: play behind closed doors or the number of spectators allowed in the venue in accordance with the local regulations and respecting the practice of social distancing
- Map all competition stakeholders and divide operational staff and technical officials in groups
- Prepare informative documents for distribution to the participants regarding local health regulations.
- Develop a medical plan including the continued medical support during the competition, emergency scenarios and the response plan, health clearance and surveillance of players and officials, cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Develop a plan for cancellation in case government requires it.

2. Competition Venue/ Training Venue / Fitness Gym

- Review venue plans and stakeholder flows to allow social distancing and avoid crowded areas.
- Define social distancing plan including signage at the entrance, guideline for seating, limited facility access (i.e. toilettes, changing rooms, showers, technical officials' area).
- Develop venue cleaning plan and medical waste management
- Establish equipment sanitizing protocol / sanitize ball after each rally
- Assess venue ventilation system and facilitate fresh air flow through the venue
- Coordinate Fitness Gym is available to Teams to be attended in small groups.
- Ensure venue attendance is monitored to comply with local government restrictions
- Reinforce personal hygiene and apply signage reinforcing safety messages
- Develop a management protocol for at-risk individuals (warning signs / no entry policy in case acute viral illness symptoms)
- Review mixed zone operation to separate teams from the media and allow social distancing, and find alternatives to team photo taken on the court
- Allocate trained security and spectator management staff

3. Travel and accommodation

- Plan the accommodation and travel routes/ times carefully.
- Avoid crowded situations, and schedule arrivals/ departures of teams and officials in smaller groups and one group at a time.
- Prepare seating arrangements and disinfect transportation vehicles (buses for teams and officials)
- Arrange for single hotel rooms for each stakeholder (player/ team official or technical official) where possible
- Ensure sanitizing procedure and equipment is available at transportation vehicles and at the hotels
- Ensure catering hygiene practice and avoid buffet style catering
- Avoid large group seating arrangements during meals
- Ensure sufficient space for meetings to adhere to the social distancing regulations

4. Medical Control

- Define the illness treatment facility closest to the venue
- Conduct daily health check for players, officials and staff
- Provide first aid and medical services
- Perform testing based on the advice of the COVID-19 Safety Committee, specifically the medical advisors in the committee, and local health authorities
- Provide an isolation room for suspected COVID-19 cases
- Persons who feel unwell and/or show COVID-19 symptoms should stay at home and not attend the competition
- Nominate a Hygiene Officer in charge of monitoring hygiene protocol applied at the venue and the hotel (if applicable)
- Ensure availability of hand sanitizers at the competition venue/ hotel / training facilities / gym for all stakeholders (spectators, teams, officials)

5. Information and education

- Medical personnel and Hygiene Officers require special training
- Notify teams and technical officials of their roles and safety protocols
- Supply information on COVID-19 prevention for all stakeholders (spectators, participants, technical officials)
- Signage reinforcing safety guidelines at the venue and the hotel (if applicable)

GUIDANCE FOR TEAMS

1. Medical condition

- Be aware of the COVID-19 symptoms
- Notify your doctor if you feel unwell
- Do not attend any team activity (training or competition) if you are unwell
- Return to team activity only after cleared by your doctor

2. General safety measures for the team

- Educate all team members regarding COVID-19 and preventative measures
- Have a trained medical official with the team
- Provide medical monitoring for illness and fever
- Establish a regular testing plan for COVID-19 protocol / test all members of the team which should be submitted to the COVID-19 Safety Committee for approval.
- Ensure the all team members have a medical insurance covering evacuation and treatment expenses
- Do not gather in hotel rooms but use designated rooms for meetings
- Follow hygiene practices and use hand sanitizer regularly, especially during substitutions and breaks

3. Safety protocol for team training /fitness training or at competition venues

- Notify all team members of the medical safety protocols applied at training venues, competition venues, during travel and stay at a hotel
- Start with “one on one” training or train in small groups and allow only necessary team personnel with the team
- Follow equipment sanitizing protocol / sanitize balls during team trainings
- Do not hug and group on the court after each rally and do not shake hands before and after the match
- Define flow of the court switch after each set to avoid crossing the opponent team. All team members should follow the same flow
- Keep your distance when seated on the bench or travelling on the bus
- Avoid using changing rooms and showers at training or competition venues
- Avoid close contact where possible: maintain social distancing (1.5m) when not playing
- It is strongly advised to avoid the use of shared equipment, i.e. towels, water bottles, etc.

GUIDANCE FOR TECHNICAL OFFICIALS

1. Medical condition

- Be aware of the COVID-19 symptoms
- Notify your doctor if you feel unwell
- Do not attend a competition if you are unwell
- Return to officiating only after cleared by your doctor

2. General safety measures for the technical officials

- Be aware of COVID-19 information and preventative measures
- Follow the medical safety protocols applied at competition venues, during travel and stay at a hotel
- Avoid close contact where possible: maintain social distancing (1.5m)
- Follow hygiene practices and use hand sanitizer regularly

3. Safety protocol for technical officials at the competitions

- Eliminate handshake before and after the match
- 2nd Referee to walk to the middle of the court during side switch to avoid contact with the teams during the set breaks.
- Ensure the teams' flow of the court switch after each set to avoid crossing the opponent team. All team members should follow the same flow.
- Follow equipment sanitizing protocol / sanitize ball after each rally
- Do not use changing rooms and showers at competition venues, arrive at the venue dressed for the competition
- It is strongly advised to avoid the use of shared equipment, i.e. officiating equipment, towels, water bottles, etc.
- Do not gather in hotel rooms but use designated rooms for meetings
- Keep your distance when seated on the bus, during meetings, or meal.

The FIVB reserves the right to revise, update or supplement these Guidelines at any time in the future based on new information that it receives related to COVID-19.

REFERENCES

WHO COVID-19 Pandemic information <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Australian Institute of Sport COVID-19 information: https://ais.gov.au/health-wellbeing/covid-19#covid-19_and_sport_faq

FIVB website: <https://www.fivb.com/en/thefivb/covid19>