



WEST AUSTRALIAN  
FOOTBALL COMMISSION INC.

# GUIDELINES FOR A RETURN TO TRAINING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



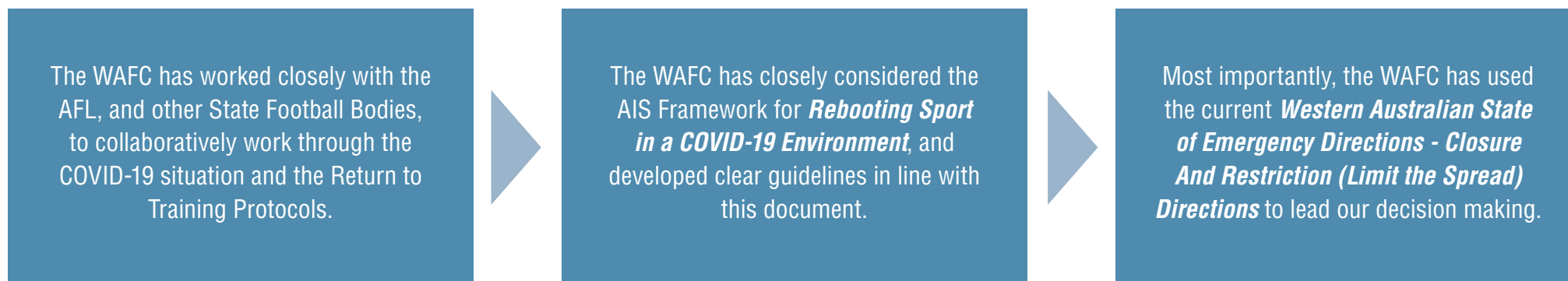
# BACKGROUND

- The AFL and State Bodies, in consultation with the Australian Government, State Governments, World Health Organisation and the AFL's Chief Medical Officer, made a recommendation in March to postpone all AFL community club competitions currently operating and those scheduled to begin.
- On 15 March 2020, the Minister for Emergency Services in Western Australia declared a state of emergency as a result of the pandemic caused by COVID-19. As a result, the WA State Government developed directions that closed and restricted mass gatherings and led to the postponement of football in Western Australia.
- This postponement of Football took effect from 20 March 2020, and is in effect until at least 31 May 2020.
- The decision to postpone community football in WA was made in line with the WA State Government with the aim to protect participants, spectators, coaches, umpires, and volunteers and to help mitigate risks of COVID-19 spreading in the wider WA Community.
- On May 10th 2020, the Premier of Western Australia announced a Roadmap for WA that outlined a process for the easing of restrictions. As such, the WAFC has also established a clear roadmap for a Return to Training and Return to Play which has been established in consultation with the AFL, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, WA Health authorities and the WA Police. The documents and checklists provide clear direction for all football clubs across Western Australia, and we ask that all clubs work in the right manner to ensure that we get football back sooner rather than later.



# PROCESS

Football plays a significant role in the Health and Wellbeing of so many participants across Western Australia, and positively footballers of all ages can return (in small groups) to training. The WAFC has followed a comprehensive process in developing the Return to Training protocols.



The WAFC has also taken advice from, and briefed the following Government agencies on the preferred protocols for a Return to Training from a football perspective:

- Health Department,
- Department Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries,
- Department Premier & Cabinet – Health Advisor,
- WA Police – Deputy Commissioner of Police,
- WALGA.

**It is important to note that although Return to Training in small groups is now permitted, it will still be some time before football Returns to Play with a number of government restrictions required to be lifted before this occurs.**

# RETURN TO TRAINING

## Football Training can resume if the following protocols are in place:

1. Clubs / teams strictly adhere to the maximum of 20 participants (inclusive of coaches), as per the current State Government restrictions, and following the principle of *'Get in, Train, Get out'*.
2. Strictly no physical contact between players can occur (i.e. no tackling, no bumping, no marking contests, no match simulation drills).
3. Social distancing of 1.5m must be maintained at all times, along with ensuring only 1 person per 4sqm.
4. No access to club rooms, changerooms or wet areas can occur.
5. Footballs can be used for small group training, however no additional equipment (i.e. bump bags, weights, etc.) can be used during training sessions.
6. A log, or register, of all participants in attendance at each training session **MUST** be maintained and available upon request by either the WAFC or Health authorities.
7. The Return to Training hygiene practices outlined in this document are to be strictly adhered to.
8. Online education is completed by coaches, presidents and other club personnel that can be accessed **HERE**.

# HYGIENE FACTORS FOR A RETURN TO TRAINING

## Hygiene Protocols for a Return to Training

- Alcohol based hand sanitisers must be available for all teams training sessions, with players encouraged to use prior, during and following training.
- There is strictly to be no sharing of water bottles or towels, and it is important to clean and disinfect these items following each training session. Players should disinfect mouth guards after each session.
- Players and coaches should avoid spitting or clearing nasal passages at training.
- Avoid high fives, hand shakes or other physical contact.
- Changerooms, Club Rooms and wet areas are not to be utilised for training i.e. players should arrive at venue in football gear ready to train.
- Footballs to be wiped with antibacterial wipes or alcohol-based sanitiser prior to and after training sessions.
- Players are responsible for their own strapping if required. No player massages allowed.
- If you, or people you have been in contact with are sick, please DO NOT attend training and advise the football coach.

## General Hygiene Practices

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home and seek medical treatment when you are sick
- Cover your mouth to cough or sneeze

**Clubs must ensure that these hygiene protocols are in place for all teams that are training.**

**If these protocols cannot be achieved then training should not proceed.**

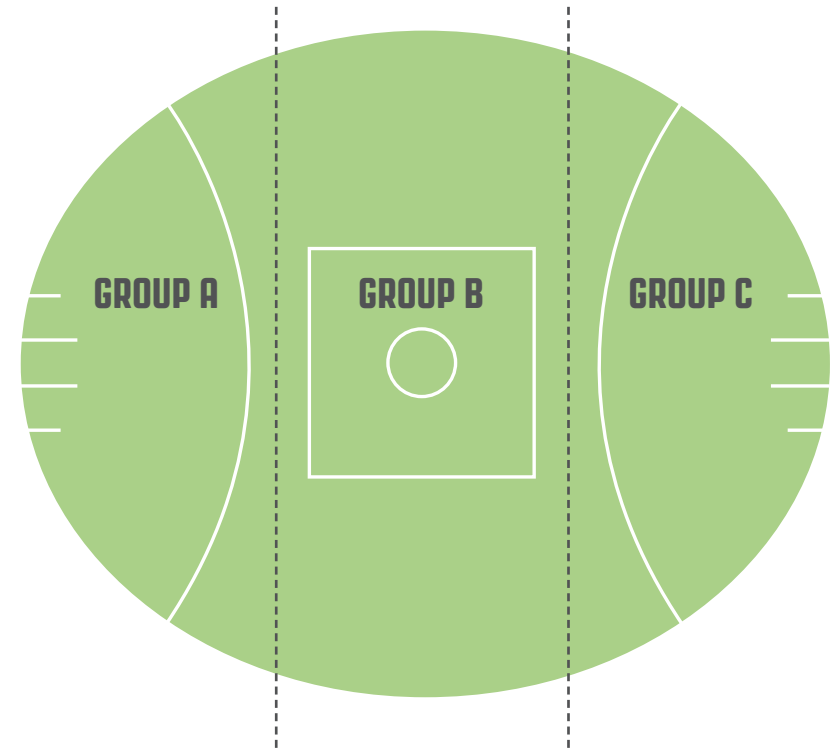


**THE WAFC STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT CLUBS AND PLAYERS UTILISE THE COVIDSAFE APP TO ASSIST WITH TRACKING THE VIRUS.**

# SMALL GROUP TRAINING PROTOCOLS

In order to ensure that clubs / teams adhere to the strict protocols required to Return to Training, the following will be required:

- As of 18th May 2020, and as approved by the WA State Government, a maximum of three (3) smaller groups of 20 can train on any one oval, at any one time, with groups at either end of the ground, and one in the middle.
- No full ground exercises are to be conducted where the three groups cross over or come in contact with each other. The groups must maintain separation, and footballs must not be shared or transitioned between the groups.
- Clubs must introduce a staggered training schedule for the groups of 20 max that may include different start times, different days and /or different locations. Participants must remain in the same group, and not switch groups.
- Where possible ensure that there is a gap between training times to limit the potential for a crossover of training groups at the same venue. Training times may need to be shorter to accommodate this requirement.
- Players should arrive at the venue in the gear ready to train as no changerooms or club rooms will be available.
- Training must not include small sided games or match simulation where players may make contact with each other.



## Please Note:

Clubs must limit spectators at training sessions with it recommended that junior players are dropped off, or only a maximum of 1 parent/ carer present. Spectators/parents will count as part of the maximum 20 participants. Spectators must also observe 1.5m social distancing.

# EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

As clubs, and leaders in the community, it is important that all participants, coaches, volunteers and parents are educated in the key principles of the Return to Training protocols, and the required hygiene practices required for football.

As such, the following education processes must be undertaken by clubs:

- Clubs must brief coaches, and club officials, on the requirements of Return to Training in order to ensure that they reinforce the protocols consistently.
- Club must brief participants on the protocols and expectations prior to training.
- WA Government Health, and WAFC COVID-19 resources to be prominently displayed outside all venues.
- All club/team First Aid Personnel should complete the Australian Government COVID-19 infection control training available online via <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>
- All players, volunteers and families are encouraged to download the COVIDSafe App.

## Participant Briefing (players, coaches, volunteers, parents, etc)

Prior to the recommencement of training, clubs should provide a briefing to all participants, coaches, volunteers, parents that includes:

- Intended training dates, times and procedures established to limit team cross-over on ovals.
- Hygiene practices that have been implemented by the club, including hygiene procedures around the venue and equipment.
- Hygiene expectations of all participants.
- What to do if you are feeling unwell or have been into contact with people who are sick.
- Opt-out options for individuals who may not yet feel comfortable returning to training, and alternative training options available.
- Measures that the coaches are taking to prevent physical contact of players (i.e. social distancing guidelines, etc).
- Restrictions on support staff (i.e. assistant coaches, trainers, etc).
- Restrictions that are in place on club rooms, changerooms, club gyms, etc.
- Restrictions on people attending the training venue – i.e. limited spectators, parents, etc.

## Coaches Briefing

Clubs should also brief all coaches on the required expectations as leaders within the club environment, including:

- Importance of the required hygiene protocols and practices.
- Limiting crossover of teams.
- No use of changerooms, club rooms and club gym facilities.
- No match simulation or small sided games where incidental contact can occur.
- Understanding what are acceptable skills and drills for training.
- Responsibility as Leaders to influence behaviour change in this period.

# CLUB REQUIREMENTS

## All Football Clubs play an important role in:

- Reducing the spread of COVID-19
- Promoting good hygiene practices amongst players and officials;
- Adhering and promoting the State Government Requirements around social distancing, and gatherings; and
- Following the clear protocols and requirements around Return to Training.

It is important that clubs are respectful in adhering to the protocols outlined as part of Return to Training, as they form part of the current Government directions, and sanctions can be applied to individuals and to clubs if they are in breach. By every club, and individual playing their part in adhering to the protocols, will mean that football would have played its part in the community through a commitment to community health outcomes, but will also improve the opportunity for football to return to play sooner.

### **Please Note:**

Individuals can be imprisoned for up to 12 months, or fined up to \$50,000, whilst football clubs can be fined up to \$250,000 for breaching an enforceable direction as set by the Commissioner of Police. These directions form a key part of the Return to Training protocols.

Clubs found to be in breach of the Return to Training protocols may also be sanctioned by the league by way of fine or suspension. However in saying this, we would ask that all clubs do the right thing and play their role in ensuring that the protocols are met, so that we can get all participants across Western Australia back playing football again soon.