

FENCING EQUIPMENT - CLEANING GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS

Last Updated: 9th April 2021

Contents

1. Purpose of Document.....	1
2. Responsibilities	2
3. General Advice on Fencing Equipment Usage and Sharing	2
3.1 Personal Equipment	2
3.2 Shared Equipment	2
4. Fencing Equipment - Cleaning Protocols	3
4.1 General Points.....	3
4.2 Specific Equipment Protocols For Shared Equipment.....	4

1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document sets out the equipment cleaning protocols and measures to be put in place at community fencing clubs in to allow for training under the wider COVID-19 health measures.

It is likely that any reduction in the 2m social distancing and resumption of more traditional activities (such as lessons and sparring) will require clubs/coaches to put in place additional mitigation strategies to reduce the risk of transmission.

Cleaning protocols are one way to reduce risk and it is expected that the information in this document will form part of the mitigation planning within your Club Risk Assessment.

Robust evidence that COVID-19 (C19) is transmitted in the community via fomites (inanimate materials) is limited. A few studies have reported virus survival times on various materials, however results are variable. Until further data is published, BF have applied a precautionary principle to these guidelines, in other words we have erred on the side of caution, taking into account possible harm.

As further data becomes available these guidelines and protocols may be subject to change.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

Individuals - it is the responsibility of the person that owns (or is renting) equipment to clean it in accordance with the guidance and follow any additional instructions given by the club for using any shared equipment (eg spools, boxes).

Clubs – It is the responsibility of the club to

- communicate this guidance to all members as appropriate.
- establish and implement club protocols for any shared equipment either during sessions eg spools/scoring equipment or between sessions.

3. GENERAL ADVICE ON FENCING EQUIPMENT USAGE AND SHARING

3.1 PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

All fencers should, wherever possible, use and touch only their own personal fencing equipment. Personal equipment should not be shared within a session. Personal fencing equipment includes all items of clothing, masks, gloves, lames, chest protectors, weapons, swords and bodywires.

It is recommended that all non-fencing personal clothing (t-shirts, undergarments, socks etc) should be washed and cleaned between sessions according to the manufacturers instructions.

Fencers that own (or are renting) their own personal equipment are expected to maintain hygiene standards:

- Clothing (breeches, jackets, socks, gloves, etc) should be clean on arrival and washed on a regular basis.
- Recommended cleaning protocols for other equipment (see below) should be followed.

3.2 SHARED EQUIPMENT

Clubs must establish suitable cleaning/hygiene protocols for situations where:

- non personal equipment has to be touched by more than one person within a session (eg spools, scoring boxes)
- personal equipment is being shared between sessions.

Where personal equipment must be shared (between sessions only) it should be cleaned/quarantined following the instructions below.

It is recommended that clubs seek to implement strategies to reduce equipment sharing – for example allocating equipment to individual members, renting out masks/jackets/breeches for exclusive use for a term. Allocated/rented kit should be taken home and cleaned on a regular basis unless the club provides an alternative option under these guidelines.

4. FENCING EQUIPMENT - CLEANING PROTOCOLS

4.1 GENERAL POINTS

Disinfectants and a temperature of 70 degrees Celsius or more are the most effective ways to inactivate the C19 virus on surfaces. As high temperature washing is likely to damage fencing equipment it is not recommended. Therefore, the advice for cleaning equipment is based on a combination of quarantine periods and use of suitable disinfectants.

Manufacturer instructions – Before undertaking any cleaning *you must check manufacturer instructions* as not all types of products can be washed or cleaned using the protocols below. This may mean that certain types of equipment cannot be currently used – eg leather gloves that cannot be washed. In those instances the minimum quarantine time should be followed. BF is not liable for any issues that arise out of following manufacturer instructions, or the protocols below.

Disinfectants - Before use check that the disinfectant is virucidal as well as anti-bacterial; bleach is not recommended for fencing kit. If using disinfectant on clothing, use ones recommended for use on fabrics. Please always read the label on the disinfectant and take the appropriate precautions for safe use.

For items that cannot be put in the wash it is recommended to follow a **disinfecting procedure**:

- Step 1: wipe down carefully using a clean cloth/paper towel soaked in disinfectant
- Step 2: leave for 2-3 minutes
- Step 3: if necessary wipe of any excess disinfectant with another clean cloth/paper towel
- Step 4: Dispose of the paper towel (or if using cotton cloths these can be washed at high temperature)

We do not recommend the direct use of disinfecting spray on equipment, particularly for items that have metal and are part of the scoring equipment. If using a spray it should be sprayed onto the cleaning cloth before use.

More general guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

All equipment - Leaving equipment in quarantine (unused, untouched – eg in a kit cupboard) for 3 days for all materials is a sufficient risk reducing measure. Clubs that only use their equipment for 1 session a week (or 2 sessions, at least 3 days apart) do not have to introduce additional kit cleaning measures if they can quarantine their equipment. However, participants may be more likely to confidently return to sessions if additional cleaning measures are implemented.

Fencing Equipment Cleaning Protocols

4.2 SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT PROTOCOLS FOR SHARED EQUIPMENT

The table lays out options – these are either/or. If Option 1 is chosen (eg a plastron is quarantined for 2 days) there is no need to do Option 2 (washing) as well.

Equipment	Option 1: Quarantine (days)	Option 2:	Additional Notes
Jacket/ Breeches/ Plastron	2	Wash after use at normal temperature	
Gloves	3	Wipe or spray with disinfectant. Then rinse or wash.	Strongly recommended that members are advised to purchase their own gloves if they can.
Chest protectors	2	Disinfection Procedure	Clean inside and out.
Lames	2	Disinfection Procedure	Clean inside and out.
Masks:	3	Disinfection Procedure	Clean inside and out. Any removeable padding should also be washed regularly according to manufacturer instructions.
Body Wires	3	Disinfection Procedure for all touched areas	
Spools, scoring boxes, ground wires:	3	Disinfection Procedure for all touched areas (end of session only)	Option 3: Hand sanitisers used before and after any touching of equipment including changing connections within sessions.
Weapons (metal or plastic)	3	Disinfection Procedure for all touched areas	Take additional care to fully dry metal areas
Coaching Plastrons /Sleeves	3	None	Please follow the manufacturer instructions for cleaning/wiping down. We do not recommend that coaches share any coaching plastrons without a 3 day quarantine period.