

FENCING EQUIPMENT - CLEANING GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS

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1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document sets out the recommended equipment cleaning protocols and measures for community fencing clubs under the wider COVID-19 health measures.

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

As a reminder the best way to reduce transmission is to regularly clean/sanitise hands, fence in a well-ventilated space, avoid close contact as much as possible and avoid touching your face.

BF regularly reviews the evidence on COVID-19 (C19) transmission in the community via fomites (inanimate materials). BF continues to apply 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 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. **It is recommended that** 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 manufacturer's 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 in line with the protocols in section 4.2 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.

It is recommended that clubs **continue to** 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. Not all equipment needs to be disinfected/quarantined as in some cases the risk of transmission has been assessed as low (see section 4.2). Clubs may choose to adopt additional quarantine or disinfecting measures. Regular use of hand sanitisers remains one of the most effective protocols for reducing risk of transmission from surfaces.

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 operate additional cleaning protocols measures if they can quarantine their equipment between sessions.

4.2 SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT PROTOCOLS FOR SHARED EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Protocols for Sharing
Jacket/ Breeches/ Plastron	Can be shared between sessions with no quarantining or disinfecting. Good practice is that kit is clean and dry before use.
Gloves	3 day quarantine OR Wash with detergent Strongly recommended that members are advised to purchase their own gloves if they can.
Chest protectors	Can be shared between sessions with no quarantining or disinfecting.
Lames	Can be shared between sessions with no quarantining or disinfecting. Good practice is that lames are dry before use
Masks:	3 day quarantine OR Disinfection procedure - inside and out. Any removeable padding should also be washed regularly according to manufacturer instructions.
Body Wires	Encourage participants to regularly use hand sanitisers when touching shared equipment.
Spools, scoring boxes, ground wires:	Encourage participants to regularly use hand sanitisers when touching shared equipment.
Weapons (metal or plastic)	Encourage participants to regularly use hand sanitisers when touching shared equipment. Consider using disinfection procedure on handles in same day, multi-user situations.
Coaching Plastrons /Sleeves	Can be shared between sessions with no quarantining or disinfecting. Good practice is that kit is clean and dry before use. Please follow the manufacturer instructions for cleaning/wiping down.