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CONDUCTING EVENTS IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

Version 1.0 | 1 NOVEMBER 2020

1. Introduction

AusCycling ('AC') has developed this guide to support Host Organisation (clubs, event organisers) to conduct events in the COVID-19 environment.

This guide is meant to provide advice, suggestions, and options for events of all sizes. Not all elements and recommendations will be applicable to every situation.

Further, we note that this is an evolving situation and each State and Territory will have a different approach and timelines on restrictions which may result in different requirements at various times. Ultimately, public health policy and Federal, State and Territory Government directives will govern the conduct of any events.

2. Preliminary Considerations

In the COVID-19 environment there are a number of considerations that should be taken into account when planning an event:

- **COVID19 Status:** When assessing your event it is critical that you understand the current status of COVID-19 at a national, regional and local level. This does not mean a one-time check – it should be monitored on an ongoing basis. The situation may change at any time and organisers should remain updated with current information.

  State and Territory specific requirements and resources and direction can be found at:
  Australian Capital Territory: https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/
  New South Wales: https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19
  Northern Territory: https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/
  Queensland: https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/
  South Australia: https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/
  Tasmania: https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/
  Victoria: https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus
  Western Australia: https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus

- **Economics**: The changing economic conditions will decrease the disposable income available for discretionary activities. Consider keeping the entry costs as low as possible without decreasing event safety. One way to consider is through the reduction or removal of prize money.

- **Fitness**: While virtual training and racing have been available for some members, racing fitness will have been lost. Event distances should be scaled back initially.

- **Officials**: The number of officials should be limited to only those who are critical to the conduct of a safe event. Any Commissaires in the High Risk categories should not be used until direction form the State Health Departments allows this.

- **Cleaning and Sanitising Requirements**: Taking measures to regularly professionally clean and sanitise any surfaces used. This may add extra time and cost to those putting on an event.

- **Consider an Incremental Return to Normal Operations:** There is a need to have an incremental return over a staged process to normal operations. Any events should slowly progress implementation and if in doubt take a cautious approach.

- **Local Requirements**: Follow the specific measures set by the State and Federal Government at that time about conducting events in a COVID-19 Environment.

3. Pre-Event

There are several measures to be undertaken by the Event Organiser prior to the start of the event including:

- Entries: It is recommended that all entries and payments are taken online or via email/electronic communication. Participants should be reminded, at this time, that their contact information may be made available to the State or Territory Health Department in the event of a positive COVID-19 case from one of the participants.
- Numbers: Consider having the participants provide their own numbers and putting it on themselves or provide numbers which will be permanently be kept by the rider. For a series, use one number for the entire series.
- Starters: Develop a start list that ensures the total number of people onsite does not exceed State or Territory restrictions. No matter the length of the course this should be developed to ensure:
  - There is never more people present than are outlined in the State or Territory restrictions.
  - Consider setting specific arrival times for all participants to ensure maximum numbers are not surpassed (generally not more than 15 minutes prior to their start).
  - Ensure all start lists are posted online and/or sent via email to all participants.
- Contact Tracing: Recommend that all participants download and activate the COVIDSafe App.
- Training: All Commissaires and First Aid Personnel should complete the COVID-19 Infection Control Training.
- Education: Consider signage providing information on:
  - Physical Distancing Guidelines
  - COVID-19 Symptoms
  - Physical Distancing Markings
  - Venue Specific Movements
  - Hygiene Guidelines
  - Medical Locations and Protocol

    Resource: Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Posters

- Prepare a contingency plan for absenteeism among volunteers and staff.

3.1 Specific Communication Considerations

Participants should have specific communication regarding their participation including:

- Briefing: A virtual briefing or induction document for participants outlining any special practices including:
  - An overview of conditions of participation (numbers, prizing process, arrival times)
  - Provide a reminder on any hygiene practices that will be in place
  - Participants should bring their own food or drink
  - A reminder on 'Get In, Race/Ride, Get Out'
- Provide any participant electronic copies of Australian Government and WHO resources:
  - Good hygiene for coronavirus (COVID-19)
  - Hand washing guidance
  - Keep that cough under cover
  - Self-isolation (self-quarantine) for coronavirus (COVID-19)
  - Advice for people at risk of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- COVID-Safe Coordinator: Consider appointing a COVID-19 Safety Coordinator for the event. This person can be the conduit for all information related to COVID-19 for external parties, participants and staff. This individual can formulate and discuss the current and local impact of the virus, emergency operations plans, and determine how they may impact aspects of your events, such as personnel, security, services and activities, functions, and resources while maintaining coordination with the local health and permitting agencies.
- Volunteers and Officials: Conduct a briefing with all officials and volunteers on the requirements outlining any specific practices including:
  - Hygiene practices that will be in place
  - How to interact with participants
  - Provide files such as operations guides, technical manuals and volunteer assignment sheets electronically

3.2 Event Time Strategies

The focus when planning an event should be on '*Get In, Race/Ride'* and include the following strategies:

3.3 Event Generic

- Sanitising alcohol-based dispensers should be provided near the start and finish.
- Only essential personnel should be appointed to help conduct the event. Commissaires should be limited to the minimum number. Any other volunteers or officials should only be appointed for safety purposes.
- Only essential equipment should be used.
- Food and drink is to be sold/provided in line with State and Territory regulations.
- Create a paperless check-in system to prevent riders from utilising the same writing instrument.
- All non-essential equipment and surfaces are closed off (e.g. benches).
- Riders should be instructed not to hug, high five, touch each other at any point before, during or after their event.
- Provide plenty of bins for riders to throw away their rubbish, and ensure the venue is cleaned thoroughly and regularly.

3.4 Registration

Event Registration is one of first areas that present a risk. Event organisers should consider this when planning for their event, and strive to make sure registration complies with physical distancing requirement. The following are specific recommendations on registration:

- Assign time slots at registration/pickup according to start times.
- Create a dedicated entrance and exit for limited one-way foot traffic.
- Consider whether a safety ambassador/greeter is needed to keep people from congregating and moving in the prescribed manner.
- Provide hand sanitiser stations and instructions for riders at the entrance and exit of registration.
- Place temporary physical distancing on the ground for queues (to the distance required by the State or Territory regulations)
- Provide hand sanitiser for those picking up their registration packs and those staffing the registration.
- Create the required level of physical distancing between staff/volunteers working registration. This may require expanding your normal space requirement and equipment such as tables and tents.

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- Limit physical interaction (paperwork/payment). This may include creating rider packs that allow a handoff without touching the riders hands. All items should be provided in one pack.
- Some larger events may consider the option of mailing numbers or goodies prior to the event.

3.5   Spectators

The close proximity of people cheering on riders is normally a sign of a successful and exciting event, may now not be permitted under COVID-19 restrictions. The initial stages of the return to events in a COVID-19 environment will be discouraged. Once spectators are allowed to return in minimal numbers the following should be considered:

- Provide safe sanitation and facilities for the crowds.
- Implement measures to support compliance with physical distancing in line with State or Territory requirements.
- Put up signage providing guidance on:
  o Physical Distancing Guidelines
  o COVID-19 Symptoms
  o Physical Distancing Markings
  o Venue Specific Movements
  o Hygiene Guidelines
  o Medical Locations and Protocols

Consider:
- Creating engaging alternatives to follow the event including social media and basic streaming.
- Eliminate expos, but provide opportunities for sponsors and exhibitors to otherwise engage through social media and the online event portal.

3.6   Event Specific by Discipline/Event Type

MTB	BMX
• Entry and exit locations (where applicable) should be clearly marked as such. • Eliminate pre-race sign on. A pre-event roll call can take the place of a sign-on. • Feed zones are highly discouraged. In the case where feed zones are used the recommendations in section 3.7 should be followed. **XCO, OT and CX Specific** • Call up boxes to be large enough to accommodate the required physical distancing requirements • Grid distancing set to at least minimum requirements (boxes and rows) at start. **DH/GE Specific** • Shuttle service can be used after a sport-specific structured risk assessment & mitigation process is undertaken.	• In staging ensure that the width of each chute is as wide as possible, but no less than 1.5m to ensure social distancing in staging. • Ensure that only 1.5m is maintain between races in staging and on the start gate • Riders to disperse immediately after the finish. No congregating at the finish line • Ensure that marquees set around the track are set 1.5m apart and encourage only members from the same household to share a tent, or a limit per tent. Avoid larger style marquees such as 6mx3m. Tents should be position away from the track with at least 2 metres exclusion zone from the track • Strongly consider block racing, with age groups assigned to blocks based on entries to minimise patrons on site. • Consider not placing results and start lists on results boards to avoid crowding. • Publish all results online.

• Loading and start: Provide queuing that maintains the required physical distancing requirements.
• Separate vehicle load times to maintain physical distancing requirements at shuttle loading area.
	• Consider areas of the venue where only riders can congregate, i.e no parents or supports in registration, finish line or staging
	• Carefully consider practices when operating club canteen, including
	   ○ One entry line and 1 exit line
	   ○ Minimize canteen staff and base this off social distancing requirements
	   ○ Gloves to be work at all times by canteen workers
	   ○ Minimize cash transitions wherever possible. After accepting cash, hands should be sanitized
	   ○ Do not offer seating around canteen or food stores
	   ○

Individual Timed Events (Time Trials, Track Timed Events)	Mass Start Events (Criteriums, Road Races, Handicap, Gran Fondo)	Mass Start Track
• Bike Check should not be conducted. • Do not provide chairs for riders to sit instead they must stand while waiting for their start. • Rely on a start clock beeper with the start official distanced from the rider. • Do not post start list sheets. Instead electronic reminders (e.g. email, facebook, text message, WhatsApp) with rider start time. **Track Specific** • If using start gates they should be disinfected between riders. • If not using start gates the holder should be from the same household or one holder should be used for all riders. **Road TT Specific** • The Start and finish should be at different locations.	• Riders entering the course should not interact with riders exiting the course. • Entry and exit locations (where applicable) should be clearly marked as such. • Eliminate pre-race sign on. A pre-event roll call can take the place of a sign-on. • Consider course features and designs that eliminates the advantage of riding in groups. • Use one long lap (instead of a short circuit) to eliminate crowding at the finish line. • Ensure there is someone responsible for ensuring people exit the course and '*Get Out*' at the end of the event. **Gran Fondo Specific** • Consider creating a larger start window and letting riders start at their own time within this window. • Assign riders windows to start in smaller groups and avoid multiple groups at the start at one time. **Aid Station Specific**	• Restrict the number of people allowed in the infield at one time. • Re-organise the traditional program to have access to the velodrome by having different ability or age groups racing at different times. • Provide hand sanitising stations throughout the infield. • Restrict or limit spectators by assigning seating to provide the required distance. • Create one-way travel to the spectating areas to prevent congestion. • Consider eliminating rail starts and allow riders a specific number of laps to bunch for a start or clean the rail after each start. • Modify sprint tournaments to timed sprints only while using non-head-to-head bracket style competition.

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• The start area has marked points where each participant who is waiting will stand to the required physical distance. • Start your fastest fields first and your slowest fields last. • Start your fastest rider per field first and your slowest rider per field last. • Create start times that will allow riders to keep apart on course. • Create physical distanced zones in which riders will queue prior to their start. • Create specific start area arrival times to eliminate crowding. • Eliminate holders and require all riders to start with a foot on the ground.	Aid Stations should follow the following recommendations: • Provide bike parking that is adequately spaced in line with physical distancing requirements. • Provide hand sanitiser and instructions for use for all riders at every aid station. • Riders are required to sanitise their hands prior to picking anything up and before they depart the aid station. • Post signs asking riders to remove cycling gloves while in aid station. • Provide hand sanitiser along with instructions for use to staff/volunteers working aid stations. • For shorter events, only individual servings of water should be provided. • Food management should follow the hygiene provisions set by the local health authorities. • The ground should be marked with temporary markings in line with physical distancing requirements to delineate adequate spacing between riders as they line where required. • If self-serve, a rider should not be in position to touch anything other than what they have selected. • Assign separate teams to serve and for collecting used bottles and other disposable items. • Volunteers should have the ability to serve without touching a rider. • It is highly discouraged that any events have a race convoy in the COVID-19 Environment unless they are National Level or above. Convoy specific recommendations include: **Feeding From a Vehicle** • Feeders should use hand sanitiser before and after the event and to use gloves while feeding.	

	- One person should be appointed as the only feeder in each vehicle. - Bottles are not to be shared or carried to a rider by a teammate. **Mechanical Assistance** - Riders should carry the equipment necessary to fix any minor mechanical issues (e.g. flat tyre). - If neutral spares are used the following is recommended: - A wheel should be disinfected before use - The neutral mechanic should use hand santiniser before and after any repair - Any returned wheels should be disinfected after use. **Sag Wagon (Vehicle Collecting Riders Unable to Complete the Course)** - Ensure the vehicle is large enough to accommodate the physical distancing requirements should riders need to be picked up. This may require additional vehicles. - Develop a process for loading bike into vehicle (e.g. rider must load own bike or one person is allocated to this task)	

3.1 Feed Zones (Road and MTB)

Feed zones are highly discouraged in a COVID-19 environment. It is recommended these are only in place for events that are UCI Sanctioned. For those events with a feed zone the following are recommended:

- Provide hand sanitiser and instructions for use for all feeders.
- Feeders should use hand sanitiser prior to entering and exiting the feed zone.
- Limit the feed zone to one (1) feeder per rider in the current field or three (3) per team (whichever is less).
- Provide times for when feeders can be in the feed zone with credentials for timed access.
- Place temporary markings on the ground, creating boxes providing gap between feeders to the physical distancing requirements.
- Provide a one-way travel lane for feeders to get in and an alternative way out of the feeding box.
- Require athletes to dispose of bottles or wrappers after the feed zone in the Litter Zone to prevent feeders from leaving their spaces and to prevent spray from discarded bottles.
- Station one person in the 'Litter Zone' with the appropriate safety equipment to clean up.

- All disposed bottles should be put directly into the bin.
- No neutral water should be offered unless deemed a safety issue due to weather.

4. Post-Event

At the end of the activity participants should '*Get Out'*. The specific protocols include:

- All equipment and surfaces used to conduct the event must be disinfected in line with health standards.
- Presentations and prizing should be conducted virtually or not conducted at all (i.e. prizes sent at a later date).
- Warm downs should only occur if physical distancing can be maintained.
- Do not organise an end of activity meal or other social activity.
- Post any results online not at the venue.

5. Medical Protocols

It is now more important than ever to include your event first aid provider in the planning process before the event.

For major events contact the State or Territory Health Department to ensure that the event is operating within the outbreak response and mitigation plan. Contact the local hospital to alert them of the event, and ensure they have the capability to handle trauma patients during a pandemic. Their inability to handle non-COVID-19 patients from your event could have a major impact on the safe management of the event and eliminate the ability to hold an event.

- Identify the individual who will be designated to handle any suspected COVID-19 cases.
- Identify a medical area and determine size.
- Determine cleaning procedures for high touch points in the medical area.
- Determine the protocol medical staff will take if they receive a patient.
- Determine the additional steps the medical team will take to protect themselves and the participants.
- Work with your medical team to determine PPE needs.
- Communicate medical protocols with staff and volunteers.
- Inform participants with any special medical protocols, before the event.
- Clearly identify your medical station on site.
- Designate an isolation area for anyone at the event who develops COVID-19 symptoms. Develop a response plan for anyone who may develop COVID-19 symptoms during the event.

6. Who should not attend?

To ensure the health and safety of all participants no participants are to attend if they have had any illness or symptoms of COVID-19. Participants must not attend if in the last 14 days they have been unwell or had close contact with a known or suspected case of COVID-19 (cough, sore throat, fever or shortness of breath), even if mild. Participants must leave immediately if they demonstrate any symptoms of COVID-19 during the event.

A number of groups have been identified by Federal and State Departments of Health as having a higher risk of contracting the COVID-19, or of serious illness if they were to contract it. These include but are not limited to:

- Anyone identified as being in a high risk group.
- Anyone with concurrent medical conditions including; respiratory or cardiac disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity and immunosuppression due to disease or medication.

It his recommended that individuals who are in the high risk group not attend mass start events event unless the Health Department restrictions allow.

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