

Updated advice for the Community Sport and Recreation Sector from the Chief Health Officer

Updated Wednesday 19 August 7:00pm

This document contains advice to support the sport and recreation sector interpret and apply the recommendations outlined in the letter from the Chief Health Officer, dated 14 August 2020.

View the Letter [HERE](#).

Advice on ceasing activities that result in mixing of participants from different regions

Community Sport –Team and Individual Competitions and Leagues

- The principle is to restrict activities to local competitions to avoid inter-mingling and potential community transmission.
- Competitions should be run within the local district, zone or association boundaries determined by State Sporting Organisations or the Peak Body for the respective activity.
- Competitions may run across local government areas within these boundaries, but if there are enough teams or players within one LGA, a more local competition should be considered.
- For land-based sports in greater Sydney¹ there should be **at least eight (8) 'regions'** determined by the SSO/SSOD, but ideally more. The regions may differ between sports and may align to existing zone, district or association structures.
- For water-based sports in Greater Sydney (i.e. Sydney Harbour or beach-based sports), there should be **at least three (3) 'regions'**, determined by the SSO/SSOD, but ideally more. The regions may differ between sports and may align to existing zone, district or association structures.
- In regional NSW (ie outside of Greater Sydney), existing competition structures or scheduling should aim to minimise the need for overnight travel. If overnight travel is required in order to participate in sporting activities in regional NSW, car pooling or other shared transport arrangements should be avoided. The use of shared accommodation facilities that would lead to mixing of people from different households should also be avoided.
- If participants are members of a club not located within their local area, they should consider whether it is necessary to participate in club activities at this time.
- It is acknowledged that associations and districts across Greater Sydney and regional NSW may need to maintain their existing arrangements with neighbouring associations or districts to ensure there are enough teams to participate in a competition.

¹ Greater Sydney is defined by the Greater Sydney Commission with the Local Government Areas found at - <https://www.greater.sydney/district-plans>

Community Sport – Activities requiring specialised facilities

(e.g. Ice Skating Rinks, Sydney International Regatta Centre, Sydney International Equestrian Centre, Athletics Tracks etc.)

- People may need to travel to specialised venues to participate in their sport. In these cases, people in regional NSW should limit their travel to venues within their region and people in Greater Sydney regions should limit their travel to venues within Greater Sydney.
- Activity organisers should put structures, schedules and booking systems in place to ensure that mixing of participants across regions is minimised. For example, for specialised venues in Greater Sydney:
 - Rowing NSW may choose to host an inter-club racing meet at the Sydney International Regatta Centre where clubs from the North-East of the Harbour Bridge race in the morning, the venue is then cleared of participants and races are held for clubs South-East of the Bridge in the afternoon.
- Participants should drive directly to the venue, compete, and then return to their homes following the activity. Avoid social gatherings before and after the activity, and car pooling or other shared transport arrangements.
- Participants should not be travelling into Greater Sydney from regional NSW to participate in activities nor travelling across regions in regional NSW.
- If participants are members of a club not located within their local area, they should consider whether it is necessary to participate in club activities at this time.

Semi-Professional Sport

- SSOs, SSODs or the sanctioning body for the respective activity will be responsible for determining which of their competitions are considered to be semi-professional, noting these competitions should involve a level of player payment and/or other remuneration.
- Semi-professional sport may continue their existing competition activities with a COVID Safety Plan in place, and must encourage full compliance with all elements of the plan.
- NSWIS training and competition activities may continue under the recommendations, in line with the NSWIS COVID-19 Safety Plan.
- Organisations planning semi-professional summer competition fixtures (e.g. Grade Cricket) should consider scheduling of teams that are located close to each other at the beginning of the season to prevent the movement of teams and participants across Greater Sydney and regional NSW, or between Greater Sydney and regional NSW.
- If participants are members of a club not located within their local area, they should consider whether it is necessary to participate in club activities at this time.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are these additional recommendations being put in place for community sport?

Since the return of community sport on 1 July, we have seen an increased number of COVID-19 cases in NSW.

It is essential we implement a range of additional measures across industries and sectors where there is a high risk of community transmission, or where many people may come into social contact with others that they do not usually mix with.

Why is there a concern about mixing participants from zones?

We have seen over the past few weeks how easy it is for the virus to be transmitted across local communities by people going about their regular activities prior to testing positive for COVID-19.

By bringing people together from different regions of Greater Sydney and more broadly across NSW, there is an increased risk of introduction of new infections into communities, as well as ongoing community transmission once established.

Community sport is one of several sectors and industries where there is increased interaction of people from outside their local communities, therefore these additional recommendations aim to limit this interaction to minimise the risk of community transmission.

Why are additional restrictions being placed on community sport?

Sport brings together a range of people from across different communities, increasing the risk of community transmission.

The public health advice is that these additional recommendations are needed for a period of 6 weeks in the first instance, to reduce the risk of community transmission.

Our competition has already commenced, our scheduling has been finalised and our fixtures and activities take place across multiple locations and regions – what should we do?

You should consider what steps you can take to cease activities that result in the mixing of participants and staff from different regions, in line with the advice above. This may require the postponement or cancellation of fixtures including but not limited to regional or state championships or competitions. Alternatively, it may be possible to alter or split a competition or event so that fixtures remain local.

It is acknowledged that associations and districts across Greater Sydney and regional NSW may need to maintain their existing arrangements with neighbouring associations or districts to ensure there are enough teams to participate in a competition.

Does this affect competitions that are played across local government areas?

Competitions may run across local government areas within these boundaries, but if there are enough teams or players within one LGA, a more local competition should be considered.

What does this mean for scheduling of upcoming finals and events?

The additional recommendations are anticipated to remain in place for the next six weeks.

Organisations may need to consider the scheduling of finals in the context of these additional recommendations.

Will this be updated in the COVID-19 Safety Plans as a requirement for community sport organisations?

At this time, the recommendations relating to limiting mixing across regions have not been included in the COVID-19 Safety Plan checklist for community sport. The safety plan will be updated to include the advice in relation to limiting spectator numbers to a single parent where the child requires parental supervision during the sporting activity, and to avoid group singing or chanting (including cheering).

NSW Health is seeking the cooperation of community sport organisations in complying with these additional recommendations. Should community transmission continue or increase, the Public Health Orders and COVID-19 Safety Plan requirements may be reviewed and amended accordingly.

Why is there such a short time frame to implement the additional recommendations?

We are at a critical time in the pandemic. It is essential that we act quickly and implement additional measures to protect local communities from the risk of community transmission.

What does this mean for inter-region or state championship events scheduled for the October Long weekend and beyond?

Community sport organisations should consider contingency plans for postponement for events and activities on the October long weekend in case the recommendations remain in place for more than 6 weeks.

Summer season activity organisers should consider contingency plans aligned with these additional recommendations.

NSW Health will continue to monitor and evaluate the situation over the next six weeks and provide further advice as the situation evolves.

Are there any changes to the current gathering sizes?

No, at this point in time there is no change to the current gathering size restriction of 500 people at community sport activities.

For local activities, they include a requirement to limit spectators to one parent only, where the child requires parental supervision during the sporting activity.

How are sports supposed to monitor the one parent per child rule at open sports grounds and venues?

Community sport organisations should already be considering measures within their COVID Safety Plans to minimise spectators at community sport. This may include communicating in advance with parents, erecting signage in the carpark around the grounds and through PA announcements at the venue.

If I arrange my own accommodation rather than using communal or residential accommodation facilities, is it OK to part participate in multi-day activities?

Community sport organisations should cease activities that result in the mixing of participants and staff from different regions. In general, if your activity is going to result in travel that requires participants to stay overnight, then it is recommended that the activity should cease for 6 weeks.

In regional NSW (i.e. outside of Greater Sydney), existing competition structures or scheduling should aim to minimise the need for overnight travel. If overnight travel is required in order to participate in sporting activities in regional NSW, car pooling or other shared transport arrangements should be avoided. The use of shared accommodation facilities that would lead to mixing of people from different households should also be avoided.