



## Policy on face coverings in RDA for COVID-19

Those leading and sidewalking are now permitted to wear face coverings during sessions if they so wish as we have now received updated advice on use of face coverings at low intensity exercise. This is not a substitute for social distancing and so [consideration needs to be given to maintaining the required distance, for your area of the UK. More information on sidewalking and social distancing can be found \[here\]\(#\)](#) Volunteers, coaches and participants continue to be able to wear face coverings outside of ridden sessions, e.g. quiet corners, stable management sessions.

We would not recommend riders to wear a face covering during ridden sessions as this could impede communication between rider and coach/ volunteers and due to the level of exercise involved for some of our riders. However, they can now choose to do so if they feel more comfortable and by wearing a face covering this would enable them to feel safe to come back to RDA sessions. Any face covering must not interfere with their safety on the horse (i.e. no loose elements to it).

### Wearing of face coverings

The face covering required to be worn in close proximity situations (see guidance around [close proximity situations](#)) OR those worn by choice by a volunteer, sidewalker, leader or rider must be:

- clean at all times
- worn covering the nose and mouth at all times, not around the neck or elsewhere as this risks cross contamination
- only handled using the straps (not touching the mask element)
- stored safely, for example in a ziplock bag for later reuse if reusable.
- washed if they get dirty or wet, they should not be reused if they are dirty or wet
- used only once if the disposable type. These should be disposed of carefully by double bagging the waste. Please be aware of the additional waste this creates.

If you choose to wear a face covering, you should bring this with you. If you are required to wear a face covering for close proximity situations you should either bring your own clean face covering with you or work with your RDA group who can provide disposable face coverings specifically for this purpose.

One analogy is that if you are using reusable face coverings you should treat this like your underwear(!): clean mask every day, wash them at least 40 degrees if reusable, don't share them with other people and try to learn not to touch them whilst wearing them!

Please ensure you watch this WHO video before wearing a face covering in RDA and you encourage all those in your sessions to watch this prior to wearing a face covering with your group. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN\\_WTk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN_WTk)

### Government guidance on face coverings indoors/ in enclosed settings

Respective government guidelines are detailed below. Please note this only applies to indoor or enclosed spaces and therefore does not apply to the majority of RDA activities which take place outdoors or in well-ventilated covered arenas.

In **Wales**, wearing face coverings is now a legal requirement indoor public places, which include sports facilities. In indoor environments you will need to wear a face covering when you go there, and you will

need to keep it on depending on what you are doing. If you are preparing to exercise, changing or undertaking any activity that isn't strenuous, especially when in close contact with other people, you will need to wear a face covering. [Face coverings must be worn in RDA if breaching social distancing for a specific purpose \(see information on social distancing in Wales for further information\).](#)

In **England** sports facilities do not require face coverings to be worn, but when not engaging in sport and physical activity, visitors should be encouraged to wear masks in enclosed public areas where possible and practical. [In RDA, face coverings can be worn but are not a substitute for social distancing and must be worn when coming into closer proximity than social distancing would normally permit.](#)

In **Scotland** a face covering must be worn by all people when in indoor communal areas, except where an exemption applies, or where there is a 'reasonable excuse' not to wear a face covering such as eating or drinking and exercising/undertaking physical activity. Or if you have a health condition or you are disabled, including hidden disabilities such as autism, dementia or a learning disability. [In RDA, face coverings must be worn if breaching social distancing for a specific purpose, or for the 1 side walker who is not in the rider's household/'bubble.'](#) Face coverings can be worn in sessions by others, but they are not a substitute for social distancing.

In **Ireland** there is no requirement to wear a face mask in indoor areas where you are undertaking exercise or if you have a reasonable excuse not to do so (includes disability). [In RDA, face coverings can be worn but are not a substitute for social distancing.](#)

**Isle of Man:** There is currently no community transmission in the Isle of Man, therefore face coverings are not required/recommended for the general population, except when mandated under a Direction Notice, travelling to/from the Island, and within the ports.

**Guernsey:** From 22 March, there has been no requirement for social distancing or face coverings, however this will continue to be recommended for vulnerable individuals.

**Jersey:** From Monday 12 April, face coverings continue to be worn indoors. In RDA, due to the vulnerability of some of our participants, we would recommend that groups are aware of the reference and use of face coverings in the [carriage driving protocols](#) to reduce risk, as well as the face covering guidance in the [disability dispensation](#) if vulnerable individuals need support mounting or dismounting.