

Policy on face coverings in RDA for COVID-19

The use of face coverings is now dependent on the country in which you operate. From 19 July in England we strongly recommend the wearing of face covering where you are coming into close contact with someone (<1m) especially if this is for a prolonged duration. The wearing of face coverings at all other times is optional though please consider and respect the needs of others.

In all other home countries at the time of writing, face coverings will continue to be mandatory for close proximity situations where social distancing is breached.

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