

## Getting Started

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Blue type updated since 11.6.20

Whilst the UK governments have relaxed their measures to varying degrees, they still require that everyone must keep a distance of 2m/6ft apart when out, where possible. Therefore this **must currently remain one of our key protocols** when getting started (subject to ongoing review).

As a part of the Getting Started Guidelines we have stated that groups should not be using PPE as a standard protocol to mitigate against the risk of Covid-19 contamination. This currently remains the case.

#### 1. What is PPE?

- Personal Protective Equipment
- PPE is important in some areas, where an essential service is needed and social distancing is impossible, but **handwashing is even more important!**

#### 2. Does RDA advocate the use of PPE as standard protocol to get re-started?

- Both the UK government and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are advising that PPE should only be used as a last resort; the key actions to prevent contamination are:-
  - regular and thorough hand washing
  - maintaining social distancing
- With this in mind, whilst there are many benefits from being involved with RDA, we do not provide an essential service and so should not, within the current guidelines, be operating where the risk requires the need for PPE.
- Additionally it is not felt that currently we should be taking PPE away from frontline healthcare services at this critical time.
- We recognise that some individuals will opt to wear PPE (masks and gloves); however social distancing and hand hygiene requirements must still be followed.

#### 3. Should we wear gloves?

- We always recommend the use of gloves whilst working around horses as it prevents damage to your hands whilst holding lead ropes and reins / sweeping stables etc.  
[However extra care would need to be taken in the current time.](#)
- Normal material / leather gloves are acceptable (keep these gloves just for RDA work; wash them frequently or leave them out to dry between uses – [if you are involved in more than one session/with more than one rider you will need to thoroughly wash or change these between each](#)).
- Do not touch your face with your gloves.
- Disposable vinyl or nitrile gloves should be used whilst cleaning / anti-bicing surfaces. Only use these gloves once, removing and disposing of them carefully.
- Always wash your hands after removing your gloves (in case the gloves have a hole in them or you have touched a contaminated area whilst taking them off).

#### **4. Should we wear masks?**

- No - the Government is not recommending the use of masks at this time unless you are within 2 metres of someone for a sustained amount of time.
- At RDA we are currently only opening for business where we can maintain social distancing for the majority of time.
- Masks should not be used at RDA as they are unnecessary / expensive / may upset our equines. Masks are distracting and will make communication more difficult with our participants and colleagues, or raise the risk of accidents.
- A mask alone cannot protect against possible contamination of the virus.
- Masks worn incorrectly also increase the risk of spreading droplets from the nose and mouth to more surfaces.

#### **5. Should we wear face visors or shields?**

- As with masks, not at the current time.
- Face visors / shields may be useful in the future for the small amounts of time where social distancing is impossible e.g. during mounting / dismounting / checking girths or helping with stirrups in an emergency.
- However we know that they reflect light and so can be much more of an issue for our equines and we have had some cases of equines being spooked. Before considering the future use of visors / shields in RDA sessions all equines would need a good induction to these, considering the different lights and reflections within your own environment.

#### **6. Do we need to wear aprons?**

- No – we do not need to wear aprons – they may flap and scare the equines.
- It is recommended that you change and wash your clothes after being at RDA.
- Keep coats / non-washable items / shoes and boots just for RDA – wash hands after removing or changing. Don't wear them around supermarkets where social distancing becomes more difficult.

#### **7. What about first aid kits?**

- In line with our guidance on first aid during this period, there must be disposable masks and gloves in the first aid kits to protect the first aider in case there is an emergency requiring close contact.
- If a first aider needs to use PPE, they should remove masks by holding the ear attachments whilst still wearing gloves. Then remove gloves by peeling one glove off from the wrist so it is inside out then using the removed glove to pull the other glove off the same way. Remove and dispose of the items correctly and wash your hands immediately.

***As a reminder, these are the current guidelines for social distancing and general hygiene:***

#### **8. What does social distancing mean?**

- Social distancing means that you should stay 2 metres (6 foot) away from another person or people **not in your household**.
- Whilst recognising this will not always be possible, it is important to be aware that the risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus, and the amount of time you spend in close contact with them. Therefore, for example, you are unlikely to be infected if you walk past another person in the street.

- Please be conscious of people with guide dogs / assistance dogs – these dogs will not have been taught social distancing rules.

#### **9. Why is it important to wash my hands?**

- Many illnesses and diseases (Covid-19 included) are spread through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose being sneezed or coughed out of the body - you then touch this droplet on a surface - you then touch your face and spread the disease to yourself.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

#### **10. How often should I wash my hands?**

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Before you leave your house / [arrival to RDA / leaving RDA](#)/ on arrival to your house.
- After using the toilet / before eating / after touching your face / after being in a busy environment where people have gathered e.g. RDA.
- After touching surfaces that others may have touched (door handles, toilet flushes etc.).
- If they are visibly dirty.

#### **11. A bit of dirt never hurt anyone – why is it different now?**

- Dirty areas are more likely to hold the droplets of virus as they are discharged from the nose during a sneeze.
- Some dirty areas will be harder to keep clean.
- All frequently touched areas – e.g. door handles should be cleaned regularly to prevent cross infection of the virus should it be present.

#### **12. What is hand sanitiser?**

- This is a quick and convenient alternative to hand washing for already physically clean hands which are not visibly contaminated with dirt or organic material, especially when soap and water for hand washing is not readily available.

#### **13. Does hand sanitiser work as well as soap and water?**

- No; it will not work on visibly dirty hands – it may coat the dirt and then the dirt may flake off later leaving your hands still contaminated underneath.
- You should wash your hands with soap and water after 3 uses of sanitiser to prevent build-up of contaminants.

References:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/ppe.htm>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely>