

ROYAL PIGEON RACING ASSOCIATION

COVID-19

RACING PROTOCOL

On 11th March 2020, the COVID-19 Virus was recorded as a Pandemic, leading to worldwide restrictions. Each government set out guidance and advice, especially around social gatherings. This advice led to the RPRA restricting all pigeon racing in UK until at least 25th April 2020 and subsequently the 23rd May 2020

The RPRA has a duty of care to all its members, whilst observing the current government guidelines. The RPRA acknowledges this and wish to protect its members as much as possible.

The measures that are put in place will very much depend on the Governments advice and restrictions at that point in time.

However, based on the following assumptions the RPRA has developed guidance that could facilitate racing and has decided to publish this document now in anticipation of such developments and to provide clubs and organisations with an opportunity to put in place the following requirements.

Assumptions:

1. Government restrictions are, at some point, relaxed.
2. The relaxed restriction include a limit to the amount of people attending gatherings. In the case of Pigeon racing gatherings relate too (but are not solely restricted too) Race Marking, Clock Striking etc. For the purpose of this document, the restriction has been assumed to be four people. This may not be the case and therefore the guidance should be adapted based on the Government restriction of the time.
3. Gatherings will exclude those over 70 and those with underlying health conditions that would deem them vulnerable.
4. Restrictions relating to Pubs, clubs, and community centres will be relaxed.

At this point it is important to stress that this document is based on many assumptions but is a proactive approach to making clubs and organisations 'race ready' if and when these assumption materialise.

In order to protect the integrity/public image of Pigeon Racing and more importantly lives; we will need to ensure that these requirements are strictly adhered too. Failure to do so will result his will in racing being suspended, disciplinary action and reported to the appropriate bodies.

These processes may be subjected to spot checks by RPRA officials and/or Trading Standards.

Basketing/Race Entry

The following should be strictly adhered and implemented

1. Clubs and Marking Stations should appoint an individual responsible for overseeing compliance. In normal circumstances this should be the Chairman. However, if the Chairman falls into the category of over 70 or have an underlying health condition the Chairman should appoint another member to take this responsibility.
2. The Clubs or Marking Station appoints a race marking team of no more than 4 people. These four individuals should be under 70 and not have any underlying health conditions that would deem them vulnerable.
3. Where it is not possible to appoint a Marking Team then a nearby club should be approached with a view to marking at their premises.
4. Members that fall into the 'at risk categories' should under no circumstances be present at the Marking station. These members should arrange for their pigeons to be collected and delivered to the marking station or if restrictions allow they should deliver the pigeons to

the marking station and leave immediately – while adhering to the social distancing requirements.

5. The team of four responsible for race marking should be further split into two teams of two and should rotate the tasks associated with marking.
6. No member of the race marking team should come within two metres of each other.
7. Each member of the Marking team should wear a suitable mask and where possible a set of gloves.
8. Facilities to wash and sanitise hands shall be made available.
9. After handling baskets/equipment and pigeons belonging to other members each member should thoroughly wash their hands and ensure their hands are dry before handling pigeons.
10. A two metre exclusion zone is implemented away from the marking facilities.
11. One member of the marking team to remove the pigeons from the panniers or baskets, mark the pigeon and place it in the race pannier. **Do not double handle the pigeons**
12. When all members' birds are marked the empty baskets to be lightly sprayed over the surface with a suitable disinfectant and stored beyond the edge of the exclusion zone.
13. The members clock to be wiped clean (note for Ian and P Vps- we need to get advice on what is suitable to wipe clean) and placed with the basket or other suitable area for collection.
14. Loading the pigeons onto the transport should not include more than four people.

We appreciate that this may take a little bit longer than normal but it will help in prolonging racing for all our members, and ensure the health of our members.

IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE A CLUB CANNOT FUNCTION DUE TO HAVING A HIGH AMOUNT OF VULNERABLE MEMBERS THEN SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM NEIGHBOURING CLUBS. PLEASE ENSURE YOUR ETS PRINT OUT IS TAKEN FROM THE SAME ETS SYSTEM THAT SET IT.

Marking pigeons with race rubbers will pose a challenge due to social distancing and this needs to be taken into consideration. Although this will take longer the following may be considered.

1/ Before the official removes the pigeon from the basket he/she loads the race rubber onto the ring marker, and leaves the counterfoil on the table for the clerk to remove.

2/ A bird is removed from the basket and taken to the race marker.

3/ Whilst remaining a suitable distance from the race marker, using a two meter pole, push the plunger to release the ring onto the pigeons leg

We understand that this is quite awkward but it is vitally important to adhere to the 2m social distancing on marking nights

Clock checking

1. Club to set up a designated clock committee of no more than four people and excludes those that fall into the vulnerable category.
2. Members are encouraged to collect and deliver other members clocks
3. Clocks to be wiped/disinfected after being passed between members.
4. Clock committee members to wear disposable gloves
5. Print outs should be retained by the clock committee and distributed after restrictions have been lifted
6. All clock equipment to be cleaned down after use.
7. If the clock is stored at a designated premises then it must be cleaned prior to its use at the marking centre

Please note that the RPRA will be checking that the above information is submitted. Anyone found race marking without submitting such information will be dealt with under the RPRA disciplinary process. And reported to the relevant authorities.

To provide assurances that the above measures are being met each club or marking station should submit the following information to the RPRA via Richardchambers@rpra.org due to current restrictions we are unable to cope with the level of information via post and therefore the only way to submit this information is via email. If you don't have access to email – find someone that does.

1. Club Name and RPRA Number
2. Name of Chairman or person responsible for ensuring compliance with the above requirements.
3. A list of the four member's team appointed to carry out race marking. Where possible a contingency of two additional people should be included.
4. A list of the four member team appointed to carry out Clock Checking. Where possible a contingency of two additional people should be included.

We hope that in these unprecedented times that we will come together to ensure racing is enjoyed by all. We realise that some of the rules will need to be relaxed slightly to allow everyone to race but hopefully during this time the pigeon fraternity will pull together