

Golf – Best Practice Information – COVID 19

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What can I do to make playing golf safer?

<https://www.golfdigest.com/story/playing-golf-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic-your-most-pressing-questions-answered>

There are many things you can do to make playing golf safer.

- For starters, walk (no carts, even if available) and play with people who completely share your social-distancing desires. That might mean playing only with or mostly with family members.
- State to anyone you're playing with that you'd be much more comfortable with a 15-foot distance than merely six.
- On tee boxes, stand well away until it's your turn to hit. You can have a perfectly good conversation from 15 feet away.
- On the course, do not pick up tees other than your own. Hopefully your course has placed something in the cup (or raised the cup) to where you don't have to put your hand in there. If the ball is holed, be extra careful when picking it out.
- Bring hand sanitizer with you so if you do touch a cup or something else, you can immediately sanitize.
- Don't arrive until about 10 minutes before your tee time.
- Change shoes in the parking lot. Don't sit on any bench or chair that might have been left out.
- Don't linger afterward. In short, be smart and err on the side of caution.
- Regarding masks, the CDC recommends "wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission." A golf course probably doesn't fall under that description (depending on community-based transmission), but if it makes you feel more comfortable, go for it.

Wherever golf was still being played, it had a new set of rules:

<https://www.golfdigest.com/story/golf-courses-across-the-country-continue-to-adapt-as-restrictions-pile-up>

Off course

- 1.) **Online booking (mostly).** To the extent that they are able to, courses and clubs are limiting golf-shop traffic by booking tee times online. Club dues were to be paid that way or dropped off in an outside box. Banquet businesses, like the robust one at Great River Golf Club in Connecticut, have ended.
- 2.) **Clubhouses closed.** Gatherings of more than 10 in some states, even fewer in others, were banned. One club created a dropbox for payments. At facilities that remained open, management began distributing bottles of hand sanitizer. “Tables have been spaced six feet apart from each other to promote social distancing,” said a note at The Oaks in Covington, Ga. “Employees have been instructed to wipe down all equipment continuously throughout the day to keep customers—and themselves—out of harm’s way.”
- 3.) **Golf-shop traffic restricted.** Where digital arrangements were impossible, limits on the number of visitors to a golf shop were established. Poppy Hills originally limited this to four. Others have allowed only one at a time.
- 4.) **Curtailed bag handling.** At clubs such as Brooklawn Country Club in Fairfield, Conn., members were expected to handle their own sticks. Brooklawn also suspended its caddie program to limit exposure. At other clubs, outside staff wore protective gloves. At the Oasis Golf Club in Mesquite, Nev., “sanitizing stations” were set up to make sure golfers were clean before they entered the facility.
- 5.) **Members only.** Guest play has been suspended at most private clubs.
- 6.) **No simulator play.** One of the latest trends at golf courses and clubs is, for the time being, no more.
- 7.) **Practice range restricted.** One club allowed only four players at a time—spaced out. Others have simply closed their ranges.
- 8.) **Food service suspended.** At most facilities, it was takeout only. Rock Ridge Country Club in Connecticut added curbside pick-up.

On course

- 1.) **Walking encouraged (or required).** Clubs have urged members to walk, and many are requiring it. “It’s a form of social distancing,” said a note to members at TPC River Highlands in Connecticut, home of the Travelers Championship.
- 2.) **One to a cart.** This was one of the limitations Poppy negotiated with Monterey County to re-open. Sierra Sage Golf Course in Reno, Nev., allows only family to share a cart.
- 3.) **No seed bottles.** Golfers were asked to replace divots instead.
- 4.) **Two club-lengths.** Although nearly every club advised social distancing, the Central Links Golf association in Kansas was very specific: “Stay at least six feet away from your playing partners.”
- 5.) **Flagsticks in.** Virtually every course that’s open urged players to leave the flagstick in and to avoid touching it when retrieving holed putts.
- 6.) **Cups up.** At Richter Park in Danbury, Conn., superintendent Robert Dorsch has raised cups two inches out of the hole so that balls bounce off rather than dropping. “Any ball that touches the cup is considered holed.” Some superintendents are cutting two-inch pieces of PVC pipe or “noodle” material and lowering them over the flagstick into the hole. Putts that are holed remain slightly above the rim of the cup, allowing for removal without touching stick or cup.
- 7.) **No rakes.** At one course, members are urged to “use a gloved or covered hand when using a rake.” Others ask players to ignore the rakes and smooth the sand with their feet, and even others, like MacGregor Downs Country Club in Cary, N.C., and Lake Forest in St. Louis removed all rakes.
- 8.) **No ball washers.** “We’re not putting out ball washers,” said Dave Roe of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, public courses. “Nothing that people touch regularly.”
- 9.) **Cart clean-up.** At some TPC courses, golfers were asked to remove their own trash from their carts. In addition, extra cleaning and sanitation practices were in place. “We’re cleaning things every 20 to 30 minutes, like keypads, touchpoint stuff, carts, seats and steering wheels,” announced one private course.
- 10.) **No high-fives.** Golfers at nearly every facility were asked to dispense with shaking hands, high-fives or hugging.