# Guidance for clubs undertaking outdoor training (land based and outdoor swimming) under the Covid-19 Resilience and Recovery Plan 2021.

Non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15 can recommence for all exercise activities from 12th April 2021 (NI) all members, 26th April 2021 (ROI) for underage members and 10th May 2021 (ROI) for members aged 18 years and over. Whilst this document is not exhaustive it will provide guidance in returning to outdoor training. It should also be read in conjunction with any further framework documents and/or guidance documents as highlighted throughout. A further [guidance document](http://www.sportni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Questions-and-responses-on-Phase-2.pdf) has been prepared by Sport NI following recent club consultation meetings.

## **All training activities (Land-Based Training and Outdoor Swimming)**

If planning to organise either land based training and/or outdoor swimming the club must complete the following.

* The club must appoint a Covid-19 Officer who must be present at all sessions.
* Undertake a Covid-19 risk assessment.
* All clubs must operate in a safe manner in accordance with the [Swim Ireland Safeguarding](https://www.swimireland.ie/about/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies) Policies and Procedures (Junior clubs)
* Ensuring compliance with social distancing guidance and follow all.
* Ensuring any facility/space used is following Government guidelines.
* All participants or their parents/carers should sign the return to water self-declaration form and undertake appropriate self-report screening.

## **Maintaining participant safety**

Safety of the participant must be paramount. Delivering a session outdoors means that the coach may well be operating in a different environment than usual. We strongly recommend the coach and Covid-19 officer visit the chosen venue prior to the first training session. This will aid in completing an appropriate risk assessment, session planning and health and safety considerations.

The club must ensure that it can use the outdoor space and has acquired the relevant permission for this if necessary.

The Covid-19 Officer and the coach must agree any necessary measures to ensure distancing is adhered to and to reduce the possibility of virus transmission. This should be communicated to athletes before the first session, at the start of all sessions and during sessions as necessary. This must also be documented within the risk assessments.

The club and the coach must ensure that those taking part are sufficiently fit and healthy to participate in the activity including considering any pre-existing medical conditions that athletes may have and if in any doubt, we recommend they do not train. If a participant has recovered from Covid-19 we strongly recommend they receive a medical check up to ensure they are fit to train before they start.

Athletes and coaches must make every effort to reduce risk of virus transmission e.g., including washing hands thoroughly before and after sessions and bringing and using hand- sanitizer as appropriate.

## **Land based training**

### **Level of coach**

Coaches should only deliver activity for which they are trained. In all instances, coaches should apply good coaching practice. They should risk assess the activity, ensuring that it is appropriate for the developmental stage of participants and consider the fact that they will need to maintain distance from athletes and athletes need to do so from each other. Adjustments should be made accordingly.

### **Coaches with a recognised land training or strength and conditioning qualification**

These coaches can deliver land training activity if they risk assess the activity appropriately, ensure as far as possible safe practice on behalf of the participant and work within the level for which they are trained. Extra care should be taken to ensure the activity is safe for the athlete.

### **Coaches with a recognised aquatic qualification (but not a land-training qualification)**

If the coach is trained to deliver pre and post pool dryland activity, or discipline specific dryland activity, then they can use this in their training, ensuring that they deliver appropriate technique/exercises and ensuring that the volume and intensity is within healthy limit for the participant.

### **Coaches with no recognised qualification**

These individuals should not be delivering land-training sessions.

### **Equipment and activities**

Consider equipment being used. Athletes should bring their own equipment and should not share it. It should be cleaned thoroughly before and after use.

Equipment (e.g., medicine balls) cannot be thrown or passed between athletes due to the risk of virus transmission.

It is important to plan the session and follow appropriate advice on [circuit activities for athletes](https://www.swimireland.ie/files/documents/Circuit-Plan-and-Activities-for-Athletes.pdf)

## **Outdoor swimming**

If planning on organising any outdoor swimming sessions it is important to review the [Swim Ireland Open Water Swimming Safety in Ireland Guidance](https://www.swimireland.ie/news/open-water-swimming-safety-in-ireland) prior to undertaking any session.

We recommend swimmers taking part in the open water training are aged 12-years-old and over and be an experienced open water swimmer (has taken part in club open water training/activities prior to lockdown). Swim Ireland has up to date [winter swimming advice](https://www.swimireland.ie/news/winter-dipping-safety-in-ireland) to ensure you are aware of what is recommended.

## **Outdoor water polo**

If planning on organising any outdoor water polo sessions it is important to review the [Swim Ireland Open Water Swimming Safety in Ireland Guidance](https://www.swimireland.ie/news/open-water-swimming-safety-in-ireland) prior to undertaking any session.

We recommend athletes taking part in the open water water polo training are aged 12-years-old and over and be experienced open water swimmers (has taken part in club open water training/activities prior to lockdown). Swim Ireland has up to date [winter swimming advice](https://www.swimireland.ie/news/winter-dipping-safety-in-ireland) to ensure you are aware of what is recommended.

### **Level of coach**

Coaches should only deliver activity for which they are trained. Coaches planning on delivering any sessions in open water must hold the **Swim Ireland Level 2 Open Water Coach** qualification and operate within the safe supervision guidelines with regards to ratios.

Coaches planning on delivering water polo sessions in open water must hold the Swim Ireland Level 2 Water Polo Coach qualification and must also complete four water polo open water CPD courses prior to delivering any session. For further information on completing these CPD courses, please contact [aveencolvin@swimireland.ie](mailto:aveencolvin@swimireland.ie)

If coaches are delivering sessions within an outdoor swimming pool a **Swim Ireland Level 2 Coaching** (Swimming, Water Polo, Diving) qualification is required.

The Education Dept. has published more detailed information in the [Open Water Qualification Training Overview](https://www.swimireland.ie/files/documents/Swim-Ireland-Open-Water-Qualification-Training-Overview.pdf) document which coaches and teachers which may assist in deciding what education supports you may need. If you require further information on the Level 2 Open Water Coaching Qualification, please contact [education@swimireland.ie](mailto:education@swimireland.ie)

### **Safety Requirements**

Please read the [Swim Ireland Open Water Safe Supervision Guidelines](https://www.swimireland.ie/files/documents/Swim-Ireland-Open-Water-Safe-Supervision-Guidelines-1.pdf) in advance of planning your training.

It is important to take note of the following:

* Club sessions taking place outdoors will require an appropriate trained lifeguard to be present at all sessions.
* Only swim within permitted areas and in areas that you know and have someone on land as a spotter who is a designated responsible person and point of contact for the emergency services.
* It is recommended to have a safety kayak or paddle boarder for club sessions that are taking place in open water venues.
* Do not exceed a maximum of 1:20 ratio (or for as many swimmers as the current government guidance allows).
* Tow floats are recommended for visibility and safety.
* Don’t swim out to sea, swim parallel and close to the shore – know your route before you start.