

# GUIDANCE FOR SWIMMING TEACHERS

PROVIDING SAFETY COVER FOR SWIMMING LESSONS DURING COVID-19

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## 1. Introduction

The following guidance has been created with Swim England, Swim Wales, Swim Ireland and Scottish Swimming to support Operators during COVID-19, to manage swimming teachers that are providing safety cover for swimming lessons (where a lifeguard is not in attendance) and may need to perform a rescue and/or give CPR/First Aid. It is not intended to be implemented until the Government has authorised swimming pools to re-open.

For the purpose of this guidance, where it refers to swimming teachers this also includes swimming coaches and instructors.

RLSS UK suggests that the following guidance is considered when reviewing risk assessments and developing revised operating procedures. The measures suggested in this guidance document may not be appropriate for all venues and/or situations and should be considered as part of the wider plan to protect staff, customers and third parties.

The guidance is not exhaustive and further guidance will be available from Swim England, Swim Wales, Swim Ireland and Scottish Swimming (links can be found in section 7).

It is important for employers, employees, volunteers, and members of the public to understand that no PPE or other protective measures can provide 100% protection from infection with, or transmission of, a virus.

Please note, this is an ever-changing environment and this guidance will be updated regularly following changes to guidance from the Government, please ensure you have the most recent version available [here](#).

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us by e-mail [info@rlss.org.uk](mailto:info@rlss.org.uk) or **0300 3230 096**.

## 2. About COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol-based rub frequently and not touching your face.

There are two common routes people could become infected:

1. Secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs.
2. It is possible that someone may become infected by touching a person, a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as shaking hands or touching door handles and then touching their own face).

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

With the rapidly changing nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, information and advice from the Government can change quickly. For all the latest Government information on COVID-19 and the measures the Government, and devolved Governments, are taking, please visit the relevant Government's website.

Employers have a responsibility to educate, install and maintain systems of work which reduce the likelihood of infection in the workplace. The provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the associated regulations require employers to consider COVID-19 as they would any other hazard in their risk assessments and controls. Employers should invest time with swimming teacher educators to assist them to understand the risks presented by COVID-19 and ensure they have sufficient knowledge to convey safety information effectively to swimming teachers.

## 3. Guidance

Where possible, all contact with members of the public and colleagues should be carried out while maintaining current distancing guidance. We understand that in some circumstances this is not possible, this guidance is designed to help you consider the tasks your swimming teachers may carry out when supervising swimming lessons and the measures (using the hierarchy of risk) you may be able to put in place to help to protect them.

Swimming teachers, coaches, instructors etc

Swimming teacher organisations have provided general guidance principles to follow during COVID-19.

## 4. The Role of a Swimming Teacher Providing Supervision

### 4.1 Supervising a swimming lesson

The provision of safety cover for swimming lessons should continue in the usual way to ensure all participants remain safe. The following should be carefully considered when reviewing the provision of supervision:

- Rescue equipment should be easily accessible to the swimming teacher
- It is important that swimming teachers providing supervision are not distracted by carrying out other duties, for example policing current distancing guidance
- The need for additional supervision to supervise the pool safely during this period

### 4.2 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Operators should ensure PPE is fit for purpose.

It is important that swimming teachers have PPE **immediately available**. This could be in an emergency grab bag positioned on poolside.

PPE should be stored so it is protected, it must be checked pre-duty, to ensure it remains in a useable and safe condition.

In all circumstances where some form of PPE is used, the safe removal and disposal of the PPE is a critical consideration to avoid self-contamination. Guidance can be found from the NHS, Public Health and other relevant health organisations.

Operators will need to provide all relevant employees with suitable training for use and disposal of all PPE. It is recommended that incident training is undertaken by swimming teachers wearing PPE.

#### Suggested PPE

Emergency situation	PPE suggested	PPE to consider
CPR	Face mask*, gloves, apron/gown	Face shield
First Aid	Face mask*, gloves, apron/gown	
Treatment for choking	Face mask*, gloves, apron/gown	Face shield
Extracting casualties from the water	Face mask*, apron/gown	Face shield
Treatment on poolside	Face mask*, gloves, apron/gown	Face shield

\*Following guidance from World Health Organisation and Public Health England, RLSS UK recommends the use of FFP2 mask or surgical masks.

### 4.3 Providing First Aid

Operators will still need to provide first aid effectively whilst mitigating the risk from COVID-19, the following should be followed:

Continue to:

- a. Use disposable gloves for all first aid treatment.
- b. Ensure first aid equipment is fit for purpose and is in date.
- c. Maintain good hygiene practices and those providing first aid should cover any open wounds.

In addition, during this period:

- d. Encourage self-treatment where appropriate, to help maintain current distancing guidance.
- e. PPE should be worn by swimming teachers providing first aid and if possible and appropriate, casualties may also be encouraged to wear a face mask.
- f. Educate swimming teachers to minimise contact with their face at all times.
- g. Dispose of PPE and soiled dressing etc. safely in a biohazard bin
- h. Following treatment, swimming teachers should wash their hands and any of their bare skin and clean the area with disinfectant.
- i. Report to your Supervisor/Line Manager if you develop COVID-19 symptoms after providing direct first aid.

### Choking

During a choking event there is an increased likelihood of droplet production from the casualty, PPE should be worn whilst encouraging coughing or delivering back blows, abdominal thrusts (or chest thrusts in under 1's).

If the casualty collapses, swimming teachers should follow the guidance for CPR within this guidance document.

#### 4.4 Carrying out a Rescue

It is important to remember that whilst there is a risk of COVID-19, the swimming pool still presents other risks, such as injury or drowning. Whilst adaption of controls is needed to mitigate the risk of COVID-19, Operators and swimming teachers must not let existing controls be weakened by an overly obsessive focus on the new COVID-19 controls they adopt.

Operators should ensure adequate rescue equipment is available to allow swimming teachers to perform a rescue without involving contact with the casualty wherever possible. Consider rescue equipment (RLSS UK recommend a torpedo buoy) for each swimming teacher.

To maximise the distance between the rescuer and the casualty, swimming teachers should:

- a. Be encouraged to use equipment in the first instance to perform a rescue
- b. Where possible rescue all conscious casualties using rescue equipment (this may be used from the poolside or in the water)
- c. Use an extended arm tow to rescue unconscious casualties
- d. Keep the casualty facing away where possible
- e. Keep the casualty at arm's length away (as a minimum)
- f. Get the casualty to the poolside as quickly as possible
- g. Hand over quickly to lifeguards/trained staff on poolside wearing PPE
- h. Rescue breaths in the water should not be given
- i. Spinal rescues should be performed whilst maintaining as much distance as possible and facing away from the casualty where possible




When a casualty is unable to get out on their own a direct lift or assisted lift should be used. The swimming teachers that performed the rescue should bring the casualty to the side of the pool, keeping the casualty facing away.

If using an assisted lift the two supporting trained staff wearing PPE should take over (gloves are not advised until the casualty is landed due to a risk of the casualty slipping from their grip). They should lift the casualty out of the water and provide First Aid and/or CPR if required.

If a direct lift is used the swimming teacher should lift the casualty out of the water and place on the side where a supporting member of staff wearing PPE will take over.

Adapted practices should only be implemented when they do not put the casualty at increased risk.

**Reducing contact = reducing risk**  
**Safety of the swimming teacher remains the first priority**

No contact	Low contact	High contact
		

#### 4.5 Providing CPR and using an AED

Following guidance from Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) and European Resuscitation Council (ERC), RLSS UK advise CPR for adults is given using compressions only.

PPE should be worn by swimming teachers giving CPR or assisting, PPE should be **immediately available** to prevent delay (bum bag or emergency grab bag should be considered). A towel/cloth/pocket mask/face mask should also be immediately available to be used in the event of CPR (see below).

##### Adult CPR (sudden collapse)

The following protocol should be followed when conducting CPR on an adult casualty who has suddenly collapsed:

- a. If you find someone collapsed, put on PPE
- b. Perform a primary survey, look for normal breathing, in order to minimise the risk of infection, do not open the airway and do not place your face next to the victims' mouth / nose
- c. If they are unresponsive and not breathing, ask someone to call 999 and bring an AED
- d. Before you start CPR, use a towel or cloth (or face mask or pocket mask if available with an elastic band to keep it in place) and lay it over the mouth and nose of the casualty
- e. Give chest compression at the rate of 100-120 per minute
- f. **Do Not** give rescue breaths
- g. When an AED arrives, use it immediately
- h. Continue to perform compression only CPR until emergency help arrives and takes over; the person starts showing signs of life and starts to breathe normally

The Resuscitation Council UK video can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MY0sRYfsRA>

##### Paediatric and Drowning Casualty CPR

Paediatric cardiac arrest is unlikely to be caused by a cardiac problem and is more likely to be a respiratory one, making ventilations crucial to the child or infant's chances of survival. This also applies to a drowning casualty.

Resuscitation Council UK provide additional guidance for paediatric casualties here:

<https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/>

*We are aware that paediatric cardiac arrest is unlikely to be caused by a cardiac problem and is more likely to be a respiratory one, making ventilations crucial to the child's chances of survival.*

*We accept that doing rescue breaths will increase the risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus, either to the rescuer or the child/infant. However, this risk is small compared to the risk of taking no action as this will result in certain cardiac arrest and the death of the child.*



## Operator Risk Assessment

As with all policies and procedures developed to support the safe use of facilities during Covid-19, Operators should complete a risk assessment to identify which level of CPR (full or compression only) are suitable for their venues.

It is critical that swimming teachers and other First Aid trained staff clearly understand and are specifically trained on the protocols adopted to ensure that they can act quickly, safely, and can work efficiently as a team.

## Rescue Breaths

Where an operator instructs swimming teachers to give rescue breaths this must be completed with a suitable barrier. RLSS UK recommend rescue breaths are only administered using the Laerdal Pocket Mask with a valve and filter. Laerdal pocket masks have a Technostat T-150(+)/15 filter which is intended to protect the rescuer from bacteria and viruses and has a viral and bacterial efficacy of  $\geq 99\%$ .

<https://www.laerdal.com/gb/information/coronavirus-covid-19-resource-center/medical-devices/>

Where rescue breaths are given to a child, infant or a drowning casualty (using a pocket mask) the swimming teacher should face away after each breath to limit the risk of infection from the casualty.

For Operators that do not wish to permit their swimming teachers to perform rescue breaths compression only CPR should be given to all types of casualties.

## Regurgitation of Stomach Content

If during CPR the casualty regurgitates their stomach contents, the casualty should be turned immediately to face away from the swimming teacher, the cloth, clothing or pocket mask should be removed to allow the stomach contents to exit the mouth.

If CPR is still required another cloth, piece of clothing or pocket mask should be applied.

## 5 Equipment

The equipment listed below will help Operators follow the guidance outlined in this document. RLSS Direct\* is working with multiple suppliers to provide the best quality and value products to the industry during this period. This includes both existing and new products such as:

- Surface cleaner
- Gloves of various sizes
- Face masks
- Face shields
- Aprons / gowns
- Pocket masks
- Pocket mask spare valve & filter
- Torpedo buoys

\*Please remember all profits from RLSS Direct are gifted to RLSS UK for water safety education and charitable work, your support is appreciated.

<https://www.rlssdirect.co.uk/categories/COVID%20Essentials/>

## 6 Training

For Operators that competency assess swimming teachers when returning to work, you will find a return to work competency assessment to be used during COVID-19 for swimming teachers, in appendix 1.

## 7 References and Sources of Information

1. Resuscitation Council UK <https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/>
2. European Resuscitation Council <https://erc.edu/covid>
3. Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders/interim-guidance-for-first-responders-and-others-in-close-contact-with-symptomatic-people-with-potential-2019-ncov>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>
4. Public Health Wales <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>
5. Public Health Scotland <https://publichealthscotland.scot/our-areas-of-work/sharing-our-data-and-intelligence/coronavirus-covid-19-data/>
6. Institute of Public Health Ireland and Northern Ireland <https://publichealth.ie/covid/>
7. Health and Safety Executive <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>
8. NHS <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
9. World Health Organisation <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
10. Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care>
11. UK Government <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
12. Scottish Government <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>
13. Welsh Government <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>
14. Government of Ireland <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>
15. Northern Irish Government <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>
16. CIMSPA <https://www.cimspa.co.uk/library-and-guidance/coronavirus---cimspa-briefings/sport-and-physical-activity-sector-facility-reopening-guidance>
17. PWTAG <https://www.pwtag.org/>
18. UKactive <https://www.ukactive.com/covid-19/>
19. Swim England <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/coronavirus-faqs-answered/>
20. Swim Wales <https://www.swimwales.org/>
21. Swim Ireland <https://www.swimireland.ie/>
22. Scottish Swimming <https://www.scottishswimming.com/newsroom/news.aspx>

## Appendix 1 - RLSS UK Swimming Teacher Return to Work Competency Assessment **Due to - COVID19**

Surname:

Forename:

NRASTC Expiry (dd/mm/yyyy):

Compete Skill/Knowledge		Competency demonstrated
1	Swim 50 metres	Y / N
2	Tread water in deep water for 30 seconds then climb out of the water unaided	Y / N
3	Poolside Based Rescues –Rescue of casualty over a distance of 5 metres to a point of safety using, wade <input type="checkbox"/> , reaching <input type="checkbox"/> or throwing <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Ensure compliance with current distancing guidance</b>	Y / N
4	Demonstrate an effective head splint technique as dictated by the depth of the water - <b>Use a Ruth Lee manikin or explain the process</b>	Y / N
5	Demonstrate the recovery of a casualty who is lying on the bottom of the deepest part of the pool - <b>Use Ruth lee or submersible manikin.</b> Depth: _____	Y / N
6	Demonstrate adult (sudden-collapse) CPR for 2 minutes with an AED - <b>COVID-19 CPR guidance must be followed</b>	Y / N
7	Demonstrate adult (drowning) CPR for 1 minute with an AED - <b>COVID-19 CPR guidance must be followed</b>	Y / N
8	Demonstrate child CPR for 1 minute with an AED - <b>COVID-19 CPR guidance must be followed</b>	Y / N
9	Demonstrate infant CPR for 1 minute with an AED - <b>COVID-19 CPR guidance must be followed</b>	Y / N
10	Explain the treatment for a bleed (insert injured area)	Y / N
11	Demonstrate a range of knowledge and understanding of a range of First Aid conditions by satisfactorily answering two questions (record questions below) 1. 2.	Y / N
12	Demonstrate a sound knowledge of hazards and managing risks by satisfactorily answering two questions (record questions below) 1. 2.	Y / N

Trainer Assessor Name:

Signature confirming competence:

Date of Competency Assessment: (dd/mm/yyyy):



## Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)

W. [www.rlss.org.uk](http://www.rlss.org.uk) | E. [info@rlss.org.uk](mailto:info@rlss.org.uk) | T. 0300 323 0096



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