



IRISH MASTERS OF FOXHOUNDS ASSOCIATION

— EST. 1859 —

Protocols for Hunting During COVID-19

28-09-2020



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Under the present guidance of Horse Sport Ireland and Sport Ireland hunting is permitted to continue during Levels 1, 2, 3 & 4 of the Governments 5 Level COVID Framework, with restrictions. In all circumstances Government Guidelines supersede IMFHA protocols **Hunting members must follow IMFHA protocols and be restricted to Pods of 15..

PREPARING TO HUNT

1. Each club should appoint a Hunt Covid Officer (HCO).
2. The HCO should ensure that they register their contact details with the IMFHA Secretary, to be included in a circulation for updates and discussion on protocols.
3. An online app or electronic process for cashless cap should be adopted.
4. An adequate **track and trace** system must be implemented (Hunting app under development by Warren Harding see funky frog.ie, to comply with track & trace and online payments, details to follow).
5. All members should be fully aware of not only these protocols but also the *Government's - Symptoms of COVID-19 and How To Protect Yourself*.

PREPARING A MEET

6. The hunting day needs to be planned more diligently than ever.
7. Occasions during a hunt for interactions with landowners/occupiers or the public should be minimised through good planning.
8. Country should be prepared with landowners/occupiers while ensuring social distancing and wearing a mask.
9. Be cognisant of landowners/occupiers who may themselves be or have family who fall into the 'vulnerable category'. Phone calls may be more appropriate for some.
10. Meets that may traditionally draw crowds of spectators must be avoided.
11. A remote location for the meet should be planned and members informed.
12. A set of safety protocols should be in place in the event of an accident.

AT THE MEET

13. Prior to the meet, members & visitors hunting on the day should be booked in. The HCO should have a list of all of the members of the field in advance.
14. Cap should be paid in advance.
15. Anyone not pre-booked must be debriefed the HCO.
16. Meets should be held in remote locations they should not be in towns, villages, pubs or busy public spaces.
17. Pods of 15 including a Field Master for each pod should be planned and allocated in advance.
18. Masks must be worn at all times at the meet.
19. No hospitality at the meet, food or drink.
20. No social gathering, handshakes or physical contact.

HUNTING

20. Masks are optional in country but should be quickly at hand if required.
21. Masks should be worn on public roads, strictly adhering to 2 metre distance and no more than 2 abreast.
22. A draw where there is the potential for the public to gather, should be avoided or minimal time spent there.
23. **Pods of 15 must be strictly adhered to** and maintain a **10 metre** distance from the next pod or hunt officials.
24. At least a **2 metre** social distance must be adhered to at all times within pods.
25. In the event of hounds marking a fox to ground, the huntsman should mark to ground as briefly as possible and move on.
26. Fencing teams and countrymen should wear masks at all times.

AFTER HUNTING

27. Returning home, social distance and pods must continue to be adhered to.
28. On return to the location of the meet, members must load up and move off as promptly as possible.
29. Avoid social gatherings.
30. Adhere to government guidelines if visiting a pub.
31. Be conscious of the public's impression who may be restricted from their own activities while hunting is permitted.

RISK MANAGEMENT & GOOD GOVERNANCE

Hunting like all other equestrian sports is to take place behind closed doors, with a set of clearly defined and adhered to protocols.

Spectators and Foot Followers should be deterred, unless in an official capacity or a guardian of a minor.

A hunt suspected of breaching protocols may be required to report to the IMFHA sub committee with responsibility. If found in breach sanctions may apply for that club.

Social media postings of hunting activity should not be permitted by clubs. We are grateful to be able to hunt and cognisant that even in normal times it has the ability to attract social debate.

Hunting has the privilege of being allowed to continue under these protocols. At all times we must be conscious and respectful of our communities who are all experiencing some form of restrictions or hardships due to COVID-19.