

COVID safe principles for game shoots in England

Date: 15 October 2020

Introduction

This document outlines the principles for Covid safe operation of game shoots in England through reference to relevant Government guidance and regulation. It has been produced to assist those managing game shoots to think about and manage the risk posed by COVID-19. It is not exhaustive, and each shoot will need to evaluate its own operations.

Updates following the introduction of a '3-Tier' system for local restrictions in England on 14 October are provided in red.

The Government has outlined five practical actions to take to manage the risk of COVID-19. Those actions that can readily be applied to shoots to help reduce the risk posed by COVID-19 currently include:

1. Carrying out a COVID-19 risk assessment
2. Developing cleaning, hand washing and hygiene procedures
3. Maintaining 2m social distancing
4. Where people cannot be 2m apart, managing the transmission risk

Assessing the risk of COVID-19 on shoots is essential for the safety of all participants. How risk is managed must take into account the regulations and government guidance in force on the day of the shoot.

It is a legal requirement that anyone organising a gathering must undertake a health and safety risk assessment and take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

COVID-19

Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID19, or who shares a household with any individual displaying symptoms, must not attend the shoot day.

Keeping COVID-19 out of the shoot is the most effective way to minimise the risk of infection. Anyone with symptoms, or who has, or may have been exposed to COVID-19 within 14 days prior to the shoot must not attend and should follow government guidance on self-isolation.

Shoots must comply with government guidance to support NHS 'test and trace' efforts. Further information and relevant guidance can be found [here](#).

Local restrictions

The government have produced a 3-Tier system for local restrictions in England. You must follow any local restrictions which apply to the area in which the shoot takes place. Those attending the shoot must also follow any restrictions in place where they reside. Details of local restrictions are published [here](#).

Considerations prior to the shoot day

Risk Assessment

Individual shoots should undertake their own risk assessment and scenario planning for shoot days to ensure that adequate measures are in place to protect all participants.

When applying mitigation measures you must refer to and take account of government regulations and guidance in force at the time the shoot is to take place.

Determining who should attend the shoot

Government guidance on determining who should be attending a place of work can be readily applied to shoots. The measures you need to take to reduce the risk of COVID-19 can be found in [here](#).

Travel to the shoot

Measures to limit the risk of COVID-19 for those travelling to a shoot can be found [here](#).

Government advice is to avoid travelling into or out of an area if it has been categorized as a 'very high alert' level area.

Accommodation for participants

Consider any restrictions on accommodation and the hospitality sector and communicate these to visitors. The latest government guidance for accommodation providers can be found [here](#).

If you live in a 'very high alert' area, government advice is to avoid staying away from the area overnight. Equally, if you are resident elsewhere, government advice is to avoid staying in a 'very high alert' area overnight.

Visitors from abroad

Have discussion with any visitors from abroad who are due to attend the shoot. There may be quarantine rules for those arriving from overseas which would need to be observed before they can visit the shoot. The latest government guidance can be found [here](#).

Gatherings

The 3-Tier system of local restrictions came into force in England on 14th October, restricting social gatherings both indoors and outdoors, unless a specific exemption applies.

The limitation on gatherings does not apply to physical activity which is carried on outdoors and for which a licence, permit or certificate issued by a public body to carry on the activity, or for any of the equipment used for the purposes of the activity is required. Such a licence, permit or certificate must be held by the gathering organiser, or any person taking part in the activity.

Shoots are encompassed by this exemption, where the organiser or member of the gathering holds a shotgun certificate. The exemption applies in all areas of England regardless of the 'alert level' in force.

The shoot organiser acting within this exemption is legally required to prepare a risk assessment in accordance with regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The organiser will also be required by law to put in place all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of coronavirus taking into account the risk assessment carried out and any guidance issued by government which is relevant to the gathering.

The exemption does not include gatherings indoors. In the 'medium alert' tier areas, indoor gatherings must not exceed six people unless all are from the same household. In 'high alert' and 'very high alert' tier areas, gatherings are limited to one household indoors. Shoots that run as a business may host more than the prescribed number of customers inside their premises in total, however no social group may exceed the indoor gathering limit for the alert level tier in force in the area, social distancing must be maintained, and there must be no social interaction between individual groups.

Those living within 'high alert' and 'very high alert' tier areas must not gather indoors with persons outside of their household when travelling to other areas.

Employees are exempt from gathering limits where their gathering is necessary for work purposes. Social distancing and other COVID-safe working practices must be followed.

Arrival at the shoot / shoot briefing

Congregation of the shoot party, beaters, pickers-up or others poses transmission risk for COVID-19. Social distancing measures should be put in place in accordance with the government guidelines and restrictions on gatherings must be adhered to. Further information can be found as follows:

- General guidance for Coronavirus (Covid-19) [here](#)
- Social distancing [here](#)
- Cleaning [here](#) and [here](#).
- Meeting other people [here](#)
- Gatherings guidance [here](#)

Utilise 'fixed team' working (called bubbles) to reduce the risk of transmission between groups. Further detail can be found within the COVID-19 secure guidelines for 'Construction and other outdoor work' [here](#).

Transportation

Where possible, travel around the shoot should be on foot, as this allows social distancing to be maintained and reduces the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

If practicable, individuals or different household groups should travel in separate vehicles. Transport should be planned well in advance of the day to ensure appropriate provision is in place.

Where a vehicle / transport is used for multiple occupants, shoots should refer to the relevant Government guidance for transport around worksites [here](#) and public transport [here](#).

Shared equipment, cartridges and waste

Sharing equipment on shoot days increases the transmission risk of COVID-19. To reduce the risk follow guidance for outdoor work for 'cleaning the workplace' [here](#).

Socialising

All Government guidance on social distancing and limits on gatherings in place on the day of the shoot must be followed. Guidance for meeting other people can be found [here](#) with further guidance for gatherings [here](#).

Provision of food and refreshments

Many shoots will provide food and refreshments. The provision of food and refreshments is a high-risk area for transmission of COVID-19. Further guidance on food hygiene during the Covid pandemic can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Refreshment breaks (e.g. elevenses) may be taken outdoors during the shoot day. During such breaks, all participants must maintain social distancing, and appropriate hygiene measures must be in place.

Shoot meals (e.g. shoot lunch) do not fall within the exemption for gatherings which apply to shooting. Shoot meals must therefore conform to the indoor gathering limits set by the 'alert tier' in force in the local area. Individuals from 'high alert' or 'very high alert' tier areas must not gather indoors with persons outside of their own household.

Shoots operating as a business may host a meal for more than the prescribed number of customers inside their premises, however no social group may exceed the indoor gathering limit for the 'alert level' tier in force in the area, social distancing must be maintained, and there must be no social interaction between individual groups.

Shoots not operating as a business must conform to the indoor and outdoor gathering limits as prescribed by 'alert level' in force in the area.

Shoot parties may visit pubs or restaurants for their shoot meals but must comply with the gathering rules which will be enforced by the premises.

In all cases individuals from 'high alert' or 'very high alert' tier areas must not gather indoors with persons outside of their own household.

Handwashing and hygiene:

Frequent handwashing or hand sanitising are effective ways to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. You should consider ways to improve and increase the frequency of handwashing and sanitising on shoot days. General guidance on limiting risk from COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

Informing Others:

With a rise in public access to rural areas, shoot organisers should consider other land users such as walkers who may be present on shoot days. This will increase other risks associated with the shoot day, as well as potentially increasing COVID-19 transmission sources.

Guidance for beating and picking up

Employees are exempt from limits of gatherings, where gatherings are necessary for work purposes. You will still need to consider adopting appropriate measures for your workforce. Government guidance for 'outdoor work' can be found [here](#).

Guidance for guns / shoot party:

You must comply with restrictions on social gatherings in force at the time of the shoot. Shooting is exempt from gathering limits as a 'licensed outdoor physical activity' whilst outdoors. Gathering limits will apply indoors. (see sections on Gatherings and Provision of Food and Refreshments for further detail) Refer to government guidance for gatherings and local alert levels [here](#).

Loading

Loading, whether for single gun or double guns, requires individuals to operate within 1m of one another. Unless the loader is from the same household, this breaches guidance on social distancing. As such loading should only take place if absolutely necessary, following the government guidance for 'close contact' services [here](#). Individual shoots should also take into account any additional implications for health and safety from following this guidance.

Loading for double guns poses a higher risk than single gun loading, due to the constant handling and transfer of guns. Appropriate cleaning and sanitising precautions should be in place for all shared equipment in line with government guidance [here](#).

Guidance for handling of shot game

All game should be handled in accordance with established game handling and hygiene requirements. These requirements can be found [here](#). General guidance on social distancing and hygiene should also be in place.

Payments

You should consider the transmission risk associated with handling cash or cheques in relation to payments. Electronic payment is the lowest risk option for payments and should be used where practicable. Where physical payments are made, measures should be in place to meet hygiene and social distancing requirements.