

Guidance for face-to-face bridge sessions – update 20 July 2020

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Will I go to the club and play bridge today?

Note that Victorian stage 3 restrictions currently prevent face-to-face bridge sessions in that State.

1. Am I well? Do I have any symptoms of illness? This might be fever, respiratory symptoms, coughing, sore throat, shortness of breath. Other symptoms can include runny nose, headache, muscle or joint pains, nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, loss of sense of smell, altered sense of taste, loss of appetite and fatigue.
2. Have I had any recent (last 2 weeks) contact with any person who has/had such an illness?
3. Have I returned from overseas in the last few weeks? Or, have I had contact with a returned traveller?

If you answer YES to any of these – do not attend the club

Am I using the National COVIDSafe app? All attendees who own a mobile phone should be encouraged to download and use this app.

What happens on arrival at the club?

Entry screening for all:

1. Roster a trained club member who acts as “entry monitor”.
2. Entrants read and state that they answer “no” to questions 1 – 3 above.
3. Perform a non-contact temperature check e.g. <https://www.notouchthermometer.com.au/product/led-no-touch-thermometer/>
4. Entrants:
 - i. go directly to the washroom and hand wash with soap and water for 20 seconds, dry with paper towel and depart the washroom through an open door *or*
 - ii. rub hands thoroughly with alcohol gel hand rub

Should people wear a face mask?

Victoria, with high daily COVID-19 numbers, has implemented stage 3 restrictions which mandate face masks for all when outside home. NSW has lower but persistent numbers of new cases; the rest of Australia is watching anxiously.

Why wear a face mask? You must adhere to your state/territory regulations. What factors might help your decision-making?

COVID-19 is extremely infectious, and spreads not just by droplets (which eventually fall to the ground) but also as very fine aerosol – which can stay suspended in air, especially indoors. While 1.5m distancing reduces risk, greater distances reduce risk more, face masks reduce risk further again.

There is conclusive evidence that risk is reduced by wearing a face mask, & thus a cogent argument for all at-risk folk (older, chronic illnesses, especially diabetes, hypertension, obesity) to wear a mask during bridge sessions. In States/Territories with very low COVID-19 cases, the argument for wearing a mask is less compelling.

[Note that the National COVID-19 website advises that routine wearing of face masks is not generally recommended - “However, some members of the public may choose to wear a mask in situations where it is not feasible to maintain physical distancing e.g. on public transport and/or if they are at increased risk of severe illness if infected (e.g. because of their age or a chronic medical condition).”]

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Disposable gloves should be available for club entry monitors, Directors and others assisting at sessions. Gloves might suit some clubs and/or members – but need to be safely removed and disposed of at various junctures in the session. For most players, it is better to have high-quality hygiene with free access and use of alcohol hand-rub (see below).

What about club room cleaning?

Clubs should source their specific state/territory guidelines for the correct process to be followed.

Write your own guidelines with reference to the specifics of bridge games – preparation for a session, clean up after a session. Consider the table & cover, playing cards and boards, bidding boxes & slips, pens, tables & chairs, door handles, bathrooms, refreshments zone (see below).

Consider appointing a small subcommittee to write and maintain your guide, and to upskill & roster members and/or paid cleaners in their duties.

What might a sensible table set-up look like?

At all times clubs must adhere to mandated state/territory physical distancing regulations.

- Does a bridge table perspex shield make it legal and safe to sit closer than current physical distancing regulations? – check your state/territory regulations. Should clubs purchase shields? - \$150+/table. How often should the shield be cleaned? Does a shield make you safer? Does it instead provide a false sense of security?

For one shield example, see http://www.trumpsuitbridge.com/Products-detail?product_id=220

- **Hand hygiene:** soap and warm water handwashing should be encouraged: it is cheap and proven to reduce COVID-19 transmission. Provide alcohol gel hand rub on all tables & freely in the club. It should be used at start & end of each round, and freely at other times e.g. after a cough or sneeze. Alcohol gel at the table and elsewhere distant from the bathrooms is more convenient than a soap & water wash & saves time.
- **Bidding:** use paper bidding slips with own pen *or* players carry their own labelled bidding box from table to table & take it home with them. These might be loaned by your club or bought by players.
- Consider implementing a bridge start-up phase where playing cards, boards and bidding boxes/pads are not used: players bring their own tablet/phone/laptop/iPad and play a BBO session seated (at correct physical distancing) with partner against opponents & move each round.
- **Refreshments:** players bring their own cups and pre-packed personal snack. No common biscuit barrel etc. Refreshment area is managed by a rostered & trained club member – to dispense coffee, tea, sugar & milk, minimise the risk of cross-contamination & ensure a thorough clean before, during & after play.
- **Hand records:** print off and Director/volunteer distributes these to departing players.
- **Clean up after the session:** this should be rostered, structured & not left to spontaneous volunteers. It must adhere to your written guidelines. Remind players to take home their bidding boxes, pens, refreshments etc