

RYA Covid-19 FAQs valid in Northern Ireland

Latest Update: 1st April 2021

These FAQs have been developed in accordance with the NI Executive Pathway to Recovery and [SportNI Pathway out of Restrictions](#) guidance.

Whilst we aim to provide a useful resource for our members and stakeholders, the decision to go boating ultimately lies with the individual concerned. There are fines in place for those deemed to be in breach of the regulations and it is essential that you properly assess whether any activity is permitted within the most recent Government guidance and regulations.

Activity is permitted and will only move through the steps where there is clear compliance with protocols by clubs and individuals and the rate of infection remains low.

Please note - the guidance within these FAQs is not intended to cover RYA Recognised Training Centres. Please refer to the COVID-19: Guidance for restarting RYA training activity.

In the sections below we have outlined our current understanding of what activities are permitted. In relation to the easing of restrictions, we will update this document as and when we receive more detailed guidance from Executive departments or upon Regulation updates.

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General

Why are there no dates or indicative dates?

The Executive will formally review restrictions every 4 weeks (from 16th March). Outdoor sport is one of the very first restrictions to be eased from 1st April. Indicative dates will only be confirmed where the R Rate and other metrics remain low. As the Executive will move through each of the 9 sectors at different stages, there are no longer term indicative dates given.

Facilities

Can clubs/ centres reopen from the 1st April?

Yes, where risk assessments and mitigations are put in place and well communicated, outdoor facilities may reopen. Indoor facilities must remain closed, with limited exceptions, until further notice.

Can Marinas reopen?

Marinas will operate under guidance issued by British Marine, the Yacht Harbour Association or equivalent. Our understanding is that marinas that can meet this stipulation should be able to allow limited access for recreational activity in line with RYA affiliated clubs.

Can I prepare my yacht under the new guidance?

Preparing of boats for activity would fall under this guidance and protocols applied by clubs must be adhered to prevent gatherings from taking place.

When can bars/ catering reopen?

The NI Executive has outlined (where specific limitations/ requirements are met):

- Premises where alcohol can be consumed, excluding wet pubs, can reopen when announced under Step 3 (Hospitality);
- ‘Wet pubs’ open with table service, can reopen when announced under Step 4 (Hospitality);

Activity

Can 2 households be in the same boat?

From the 1st April, where social distancing of 2 metres can be maintained, two households (up to a maximum of 10 individuals) can be in the same boat. This may exclude certain boats where this is not possible.

Activity should be undertaken above deck with no mixing of households below deck unless in an emergency.

What about smaller craft/ dinghies?

The RYANI *Mixed Household Sailing/ Racing Guidance* has been submitted to the Return to Sport Expert Panel that oversees necessary protocols to permit a return for activity. We await the outcome of this submission in order to advise when this may be possible.

Can multiple groups of 10 from 2 households go afloat from a club from 1st April?

Yes, where a club/ facility has clear protocols in place to prevent congestion and groups will always remain apart. Participants must follow the protocols and are urged to arrive and depart changed in order to avoid any gatherings.

Our club runs Open Water Swimming, SUP etc sessions, does this guidance apply?

RYANI Guidance for activity only applies to relevant activities including sailing, windsurfing and powerboating. Where clubs may run other activities, these should meet the relevant NGB protocols.

Can I stay overnight onboard my yacht?

This will not yet be possible for a same household until announced under Step 3 of the Executive's Plan.

Overnight stays away from home in NI are not currently permitted under the Regulations (unless it is your primary residence or specific legal aspects are met).

We are planning to cruise to Scotland, when will this be possible?

Travel advice may be found at [NI Direct](#). Travel to other areas in UK/ Ireland may not be possible until permitted by the relevant domestic governments.

When can club racing restart?

Racing / competition will not be able to restart until Phase C of Step 2 in the Return to Sport Plan.

We are planning to hold a regional/ national event, when will this be permitted?

Larger Events cannot take place until the Executive ease further restrictions for the Sport and leisure Sector.

Will vaccination be considered a form of mitigation?

SportNI has outlined: No – mitigations are focused on methods to minimise risk of transfer of infection – masks, distancing, hand sanitation, limiting face to face etc.

Furthermore: Such a policy could have several legal issues including those relating to data protection, equality, human rights, and employment. Importantly it would have to include provision

for individuals who, for a variety of reasons, may be unable to have the vaccine or who are further down the vaccination priority list.

It is worth noting that:

- Most of the evidence and expert opinion suggests that in the UK mandatory vaccination might well be counterproductive and do more harm than good to vaccine uptake.
- It would be logistically and administratively challenging for many clubs or centres to implement a policy requiring vaccination, and to then monitor and police it.
- We will be living with Covid-19 for a while and the vaccine is there to reduce deaths and serious impact from the virus.
- Vaccination is a part of protecting individuals, but we will still need to follow other measures to remain Covid-19 secure.
- There is a risk that a 'require vaccination policy' means people pay less attention to everything else they need to do to keep each other safe.

What should we do if we get challenged by the public when organising activity?

Public perceptions about what should be happening can be a barrier to restarting. Even where activity is possible under the regulations, organisations may come under additional scrutiny, including visits from the police. Many venues are in places with high public footfall, and this makes the issue of optics even more relevant. Long term all clubs and centres need the support of their local communities, so they need to make sure there is support for what they are doing and how they are going about it. Engaging with key stakeholders locally and explaining what you are doing (and why) is important.

From Phase 2A (indicative date 12th April)

Does a mixed age group differ for organised training?

Organised training for affiliated clubs and RTCs permits up to 15 participants per group (including coaches/ safety) at any one time, irrespective of age. Any 2 groups cannot mix and must be kept apart with control measures ashore to ensure this. There should be social distancing by individuals/ household group within the group of 15.

Can RTCs run training?

Outdoor courses up to a maximum of 15 per group (Inclusive of instructors) is permitted from phase 2A, where risk assessment and RTC COVID requirements are met. This date remains indicative until otherwise confirmed.

Guidance on running RYA Training Activity can be found [here](#).

We have a lift in/ launch date planned, can this go ahead?

There is a legal exception to the wider limits on gatherings for volunteering purposes, as such it is likely to be permissible for your club to organise lift-ins, working parties, committee meetings etc. However, we would advise you to limit these to those which are strictly necessary and adhere to the Rule of 10/two households wherever possible.

Can instructors be included within a group of 15 in the morning and a different group in the afternoon?

Coaches could coach different groups on different time slots. They would have to follow all protocols re. entry to the training slot on each separate occasion – e.g. confirmation that they are symptom free. If it were possible with available coaches, it would be best practice to minimise transfer of coaches across groups.