

COVID-19 update: face coverings to be mandatory at British race fixtures

From **Monday 26 October**, all attendees at behind closed doors race fixtures will be required to wear a face covering **at all times** while at the racecourse.

Face coverings (i.e. non-medical face coverings) must be worn at the racecourse by all attendees who are not identified as needing certified/higher grade PPE (e.g. medical and cleaning staff).

From Monday, face coverings should be worn in all indoor and outdoor areas of both the Green Zone and Owner Zone, from the point of arrival at the course and throughout the day until the point of departure, apart from where specific exemptions apply (see below).

The mandatory use of face coverings will enhance the existing infection control measures and add an additional layer of protection for everyone on the racecourse – further reducing the risk of transmitting COVID-19. It will also simplify the face covering requirements and make it clear when they need to be worn.

Attendees must still follow existing infection control requirements, including avoiding close contact and socially distancing in line with [government guidance](#) and [BHA protocols](#).

Why are face coverings needed?

Explaining the decision to make face masks compulsory on the racecourse, Dr Jerry Hill, the BHA's Chief Medical Adviser, said:

“Our behind closed doors model and the vigilance of our participants and officials has enabled racing to return safely, with no evidence of transmission of Covid-19 on the racecourse.

“Even in the period since resumption, there has been a growing scientific consensus that, when used correctly, face coverings can help to reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets.

“They provide an additional layer of infection control which, used alongside other essential measures like frequent handwashing and strict social distancing, can help racing reduce our risk of transmission and safeguard our industry from the virus.

“With cases rising across the country and more areas subject to local lockdowns and restrictions, we believe that making face coverings compulsory for all attendees – except, of course, where exemptions apply – is a sensible and necessary precaution to bolster our existing protocols and help keep everyone safe”.

When you don't need to wear a face covering

For most people, face coverings can be worn throughout the day and only removed in certain scenarios. Situations where face coverings do not need to be worn include:

- Eating or drinking
- Showering or changing
- Working alone in a car
- Taking medication
- If required to wear certified/higher grade Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as part of a raceday role
- If asked to remove your face covering:

- For ID checks
- To receive medical treatment
- **Jockeys** – immediately before and during a race (see existing requirements below).
- **Broadcast media** – when broadcasting live to camera or during live/pre-recorded interviews. Strict social distancing (2m) must be maintained at all times when not wearing a face covering.
- **BHA Officials** – for operational and safety reasons, where face coverings may be dropped temporarily to enhance audibility and clarity of messaging:
 - Clerk of the Scales – when appropriate risk mitigation is in place i.e. a Perspex screen.
 - Starters – immediately prior to a race
 - Stewards – whilst talking during an enquiry.

There may also be circumstances where attendees are not able to wear a face covering and are exempt from doing so e.g. due to physical or mental health reasons or disability. Verification by a healthcare professional may be required.

Recommended face coverings

The face coverings should cover your mouth and nose, while allowing you to breathe comfortably. Reusable face coverings should be washed regularly with normal detergent at the maximum tolerated temperature. If single use Type IIR masks are the only covering available, users are reminded that these should be disposed of as clinical waste. Users should wash or sanitise their hands before and after applying or removing a face covering.

Face coverings can be purchased from the BHA's preferred supplier [here](#).

Alternatively, Dr Hill and the PJA have worked with face covering supplier, [Yaris Equestrian](#), to develop a snood style face covering, which can be purchased using the [online order form](#).

Other suppliers may be used if preferred. However, if ordering from an alternative supplier, we encourage you to ensure that the face coverings meet the required specifications set out [here](#).

Please note we now recommend mask and face coverings **without** valves as they offer superior protection to those in the area around the wearer.

Sponsored face coverings

In line with the Sponsorship Code of Conduct, face coverings worn by the horse attendant (between pre-parade ring and unsaddling) should be free of all sponsorship and advertising. This includes advertisements for their yard.

This does not apply to other members of staff, unless acting as a horse attendant.

Jockeys' face coverings

Jockeys are permitted to pull down the face covering in the moments **immediately prior** to the start and for the duration of the race. If lowered for the race, the face covering should be raised again on completion before entering the horse walk, whether mounted or on foot.

In the unsaddling area, once the jockey has assisted stable staff with loosening any tack and is two metres away from any other personnel, the jockey's face covering may be lowered until the jockey returns to the changing area if the jockey is breathless.

While the face covering is lowered, it is essential that two-metre social distancing is maintained from other people.

COVID-19 Requirements

All racecourse attendees must comply with the BHA [COVID-19 Requirements](#), which stipulate that attendees must, where required, wear face coverings and/or appropriate PPE. A failure to comply may result in removal from the racecourse and a period of exclusion from all racecourse premises.

The COVID-19 Requirements can be read [here](#), and attendees should review this document each time they attend the racecourse.