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## ITF RETURN TO INTERNATIONAL TENNIS PROTOCOLS EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR TOURNAMENT ORGANISERS

*Last updated: 20 August 2021*

### Introduction

This document is intended to provide supporting information for the ITF *Return to International Tennis Protocols* for tournament hosts, and is intended to be read together with that document. Tournament hosts are advised to read both documents and to familiarise themselves with the relevant amendments to the regulations for the tournament(s) in question.

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SECTION	EXPLANATORY NOTE
<b>Eligibility to host an ITF tournament</b>	
1	For the avoidance of doubt, local or national (as applicable) government legislation and guidance in the host country takes primacy over these protocols only where it imposes <i>more</i> stringent standards or restrictions (otherwise, these protocols shall be applied). Accordingly, where such legislation or guidance prohibits a tournament from being held for any reason, then no ITF tournament in that location will be permitted.
2	‘Sufficient’ refers to the number of countries from which the host nation is accessible. ‘Reasonable’ refers to the restrictions imposed at the point of entry (e.g. quarantine). At the time of application, host organisers must notify the ITF of access restrictions and keep the ITF updated as to any changes in those restrictions. This includes details of any waivers that permit access to the host country to participants, which are not generally available.
3	Failure to meet any of the minimum standards in the ‘risk mitigation’ section is subject to sanction under the Code of Conduct of the relevant ITF tour regulations.

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SECTION	EXPLANATORY NOTE
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ITF tournament framework during the Covid-19 pandemic

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This applies to all participants (except for those who require essential physical assistance, in which case the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (known as 'PPE') must be used where physical distancing is not possible), to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19 by the avoidance of close and prolonged contact. For the avoidance of doubt, compliance with physical distancing requirements applies between Team Members, during team competition.

1 Physical distancing requirements shall, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the relevant authorities of the host location. Where no minimum is specified by the relevant authorities, or where that minimum is less than 1 metre, the minimum physical distancing shall be 1 metre (except for vulnerable individuals, for whom the minimum is 2 metres). To avoid creating confusion for other participants, physical distancing must be practised by members of the same household.

Where physical distancing is not possible, then face coverings must be worn. Seating plans should avoid face-to-face orientations, failing which a screen should be placed between facing seats.

2 Personal hygiene includes:

- Regular hand-washing or hand-sanitising;
- Not touching your face;
- Coughing into your elbow, or a tissue and immediately discarding it;
- Wearing a face covering where appropriate

To facilitate this requirement, tournaments must make available for use by all participants a suitable supply of hygiene materials and may wish to provide a package of sanitiser, wipes and tissues to all participants on arrival.

3 These methods may include testing or screening. (See 'risk mitigation' section).

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Additional precautions that will be taken to protect vulnerable individuals must be described in the tournament risk assessment. At a minimum, physical distancing for such individuals must be 2 metres. Vulnerable individuals are those that are at elevated risk of severe Covid-19 symptoms, including:

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- a. People with underlying health conditions;
  - b. People aged 65 and above.

A list of qualifying underlying health conditions can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

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- The risk of infection increases where the density of people increases and where there are failures to comply with physical distancing requirements and hygiene precautions. A full list of authorised participants and tournament staff and their functions must be provided as part of the tournament’s risk assessment (see ‘risk mitigation’ section).

For team events, the host organiser must advise the visiting team(s) in the tie questionnaire of the maximum number of team members, VIPs and other delegates who can be accommodated on site, based on the capacity of the venue. All teams must be permitted the same number of team members, VIPs and delegates.

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- Tournament hosts must ensure that tournament staff and spectators share as little on-site space as possible, e.g. by providing dedicated routes for players and support personnel to move around the site.

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- Reasons for cancellation include where there are insufficient players to complete the tournament, and where the Covid-19 protocols cannot be implemented such that risk to the health and safety of participants is elevated. The Referee shall consult the Covid-19 Officer and the ITF prior to cancelling a tournament in progress.
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<b>SECTION</b>	<b>EXPLANATORY NOTE</b>
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**Compliance**

Tournament organisers and all participants are collectively responsible for reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission. Failure to comply with any requirement places the health of other participants at an elevated risk of infection.

Failure to comply by a tournament may result in a sanction under the ITF Code of Conduct including a fine and/or revocation of approval to sanction ITF tournaments.

1 The Tournament Supervisor is responsible for monitoring and enforcing failures to comply with the requirements in this document by players and player support personnel. The Referee or Supervisor may enlist the assistance of the Covid-19 Officer, where necessary, but the Covid-19 Officer has no decision-making authority. Failures by tournaments to comply with requirements will be enforced by the ITF.

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<b>SECTION</b>	<b>EXPLANATORY NOTE</b>
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**Risk Mitigation**

1 The Covid-19 Officer must be on-site throughout the tournament (including, as a minimum, from the day the Referee arrives on-site to the day he or she departs) and will be responsible for the overall preparation, implementation and monitoring of the tournament’s risk assessment, the minimum standards in this document and all relevant government requirements on behalf of the tournament.

Adequate resources must be dedicated to this function. It is expected that this will be a dedicated role at larger tournaments.

2 A risk assessment template is available as a supporting document.

3 Local testing services may be required, in the event that participants require such testing (e.g., in order to access another country or to confirm whether they are infected with Covid-19). Key information to be provided includes location, opening hours, testing costs, and turnaround time for results, and should be provided by the entry deadline (but in any case no later than 14 days in advance of the tournament and kept updated).

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Event cancellation insurance may be difficult to obtain and/or expensive. However, where it is available at a reasonable price, tournament hosts are recommended to obtain it.

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Local restrictions should include any location-specific travel advice, and should be provided by the entry deadline (but in any case no later than 14 days in advance of the tournament and kept updated). At a minimum, the information should include:

- Any requirement to have a certified negative Covid-19 test prior to entering the country or participating in the tournament;
- Any quarantine requirements on arrival into the host country.

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In practical terms, restrictions such as quarantine are likely to prevent access to a tournament for players and support personnel. Local authorities may be willing to relax those requirements under certain circumstances (e.g. where the traveller has a certified negative Covid-19 test, or where they will be subject to sufficient precautions for the duration of their stay). Any such relaxations will encourage participation.

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If a dedicated hotel cannot be provided, the fewest number of tournament hotels is recommended. Tournament hotels should be encouraged to implement physical distancing and hygiene practices that are consistent with the requirements of the *ITF Return to International Tennis Protocols*.

Where a participant in a shared room is required to isolate, due to infection or exposure to Covid-19, then the same will be required by other person(s) sharing the room.

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Where no minimum physical distance is specified by the relevant authorities, or where that minimum is less than 1 metre, the minimum physical distancing shall be 1 metre (except for vulnerable individuals, for whom the minimum physical distancing is 2 metres).

Where tournament transport is provided, parking arrangements should permit physical distancing and avoid interaction between participants and spectators. Provide sanitiser at pick-up points.

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The general principle is to minimise the number of people waiting to enter the venue at any time and to keep them apart while they are waiting.

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Credentials should be obtained online and in advance of the tournament. Ideally, separate entrances/exits would be provided for (1) players, support personnel and officials, (2) tournament staff and (3) spectators.

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Tournament hosts must comply with any testing that is required by government in the country concerned and which goes beyond the ITF minimum standards. Where additional testing is required by government regulation, the Tournament host must submit to the ITF in writing at least one week in advance of the entry deadline (i) evidence of the requirement and (ii) the cost of testing for each individual. Unless otherwise approved by the ITF, up to 50% of the cost of each test or US\$20 (whichever is the lower) may be passed on to the player and their accompanying person. Where such testing is not required by government regulation, but is implemented at the discretion of the Tournament host, all of the cost of such testing shall be borne by the Tournament host.

Records of all participants' screening responses shall be retained by the ITF in case of a Covid-19 outbreak, in accordance with applicable data protection laws.

Failure to comply with testing will result in the person concerned being denied entry to the site and not being permitted to participate in any ITF tournament until such time that they comply with those requirements in full.

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Notices should be posted at site entrance points, emphasising the 'no screen, no access' policy.

Where a participant has (a) a certified positive SARS-Cov-2 RT-PCR test that was taken between 10 days and 90 days prior to arrival at the event in question, or (b) a certified positive IgG antibody test that was taken within 30 days prior to arrival at the event in question, or (c) been fully vaccinated (at least 14 days previously) against Covid-19 with a vaccine named on the World Health Organisation list of approved vaccines ([www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines/advice](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines/advice)) and does not have Covid-19 symptoms that are not otherwise explained and verified by an infectious disease specialist, that participant will be exempt from testing and screening protocols for the duration of the event (**Exempt Participants**), except daily self-declarations, which all Participants must complete. In order to benefit from exemption, the participant must provide a copy of their positive Covid-19 test certificate, IgG antibody test or vaccination certificate to the Covid-19 Officer, with a copy to the ITF (to Covid19@itftennis.com, with the subject line 'Covid-19 Exemption') in advance. Failure to provide a test certificate in advance may result in the participant being subject to (a) testing and screening

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during the tie and (b) the relevant follow-up protocols in the event that that testing returns a positive result or a failed screen. Any requirements imposed in relation to testing and screening by the Local Health Authorities (LHA) that are more stringent than these protocols take precedence.

The exemption described above does not over-ride any local requirements.

**Exemptions are at all times conditional on the Participant remaining asymptomatic. If any Exempt Participant displays any Covid-19 symptoms (as described in the daily self-declarations), then their status as an Exempt Participant shall be revoked and shall not be reinstated unless and until the Independent Doctor rules out infection with Covid-19.**

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11 Case management protocols are available as a supporting document.

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12 ‘Exposed’ refers to anyone who has been in close contact with the affected individual within the previous 48 hours of the onset of the affected individual’s symptoms. A Close Contact is defined as: anyone with the following exposure to a confirmed Covid-19 case, from 2 days before to 14 days after the confirmed case’s onset of illness (defined as the date of the positive test): being face-to-face within 1 metre for a total of at least 15 minutes; direct physical contact. For the avoidance of doubt, anyone living in or sharing the same household or household-like setting (e.g. hotel room, apartment or hostel) is automatically classed as a Close Contact.

Where required by local legislation, public health authorities must be notified of Covid-19 cases. ITF will endeavour to notify exposed participants and other tennis organisations, as necessary.

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13 Organisers will need to source, and make available, a suitable supply of Personal Protective Equipment (known as ‘PPE’) for all tournament staff. Consider providing face coverings at site access points.

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14 Completion on telephone sign-in requires players to have an in-person telephone conversation with the Supervisor of the event. Leaving a voicemail is not sufficient. Tournaments may extend the sign-in period to accommodate telephone sign-in.

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Any request to depart from the *ITF Officiating Requirements* must be approved in advance by the ITF. Accommodation that permits physical distancing must be provided for the use of officials between assignments.

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Where possible, only mobile tickets should be issued to spectators. Notice of ticket holders' responsibilities should be sent in advance, supported by on-site signage. Staggered arrival, entry and exit of ticket holders should be encouraged. Multiple entry and exit points (separate from participants) that prevent congestion are recommended.

To the extent possible, spectators must not share the use of any parts of a venue with any participants, including entrances and exits, and other amenities (including toilets, changing rooms and dining areas).

16

All seats should be designated seats. Cash transactions at amenities should be discouraged. Movement flow around the venue should be managed to prevent congregation of groups.

Spectator numbers in all areas publicly-accessible areas (including fan zones, commercial areas and at public concessions) must be restricted to that which is manageable while maintaining physical distancing.

At its sole discretion, the ITF may place a lower limit on the number of spectators (or the extent of public use of the venue) compared to that permitted by local authorities (or refuse to accept spectators or public use at all), where participants cannot be separated from spectators or other users of the venue to an adequate extent, such as at entry/exit points, or in toilets, dining and changing facilities.

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Movement protocols should encourage physical distancing and hygiene, such as one-way systems, marked pathways and physical distancing markers provided at appropriate locations, such as amenities and entrance/exit points. In toilets, separate entry and exit doors are recommended.

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Ventilation contributes to the dispersal and dilution of airborne droplets that may transmit Covid-19. Where air conditioning is used, it should be set to use a fresh air supply, rather than recirculation, and air flow should be directed away from individuals. Where possible, outdoor venues are preferable.

For ventilation recommendations, see:

[www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Ventilation-in-the-context-of-](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Ventilation-in-the-context-of-)

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[COVID-19.pdf](#) and  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360132321000706>

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19 While indoors, face coverings should be worn at all times, excluding at Opening Ceremonies, providing that physical distancing requirements are maintained.

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All seating areas, including team benches, VIP hospitality and Presidential Box and for tournament officials, must comply with physical distancing requirements.

20 Only pre-packaged meals and individually-sealed drinks should be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, buffet meals are not permitted. Public water fountains should be disabled. Dedicated and physically-separated amenities for staff/players/teams should be provided, where possible. Player lounges may be located at the tournament hotel, subject to ITF approval in advance.

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The number of media must be limited according to the available space in the relevant media facilities, such that physical distancing can be maintained at all times. All media activities (including on-court interviews) must meet physical distancing requirements, and take place in adequately ventilated rooms, or outside.

21 Print media are not permitted to attend draw ceremonies. Post-draw interviews must take place in a separate room following the draw. If a separate room is not available, the room in which the draw took place must be cleaned prior to the interviews.

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22 It should be possible for persons making deliveries to remain outside the access perimeter, and only the items being delivered cross that perimeter. Consideration should be given to disinfecting deliveries, where deemed necessary.

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Common areas should be deep cleaned weekly, with regular disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and in high-traffic areas (surfaces and areas subject to regular cleaning should be set out in the risk assessment, but will include chairs, toilets and all door handles) throughout the day.

23 Deep cleaning covers areas that are not part of a traditional 'surface' clean, e.g. behind, inside and under objects; inside and outside windows, full dusting and disinfecting of all surfaces that may be touched (e.g., handles, switches, sockets, control panels). Staff should be responsible for disinfecting their personal items, such as computers, keyboards and telephones. An adequate supply of suitable cleaning products will be required, that allow cleaners to:

- Decontaminate with disposable cloths/paper towel and a fresh solution of general-purpose detergent and water or detergent-impregnated wipes;

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- Rinse and dry;
  - Disinfect using 70% isopropyl alcohol.

Cleaning staff must be trained in these procedures and all cleaning staff must wear Personal Protective Equipment (also known as 'PPE'). Each tournament will need to ensure that a sufficient supply of cleaning products is available for this purpose.

Daily cleaning includes medical facilities (between treatments), locker rooms and showers (between uses), toilets, player dining and player lounges, and wheelchair storage facilities. Wheelchair players shall be responsible for placing their wheelchairs in storage locations and are responsible for ensuring that their wheelchairs are disinfected at the time of storage. The tournament is responsible for cleaning the high-touch parts of the storage area (e.g. door handles).

Anti-doping staff shall be responsible for cleaning the Doping Control Station.

Access points should be passable without the need to touch surfaces (excluding fire doors, toilet doors and anti-doping facilities). measures should be taken to discourage unnecessary touching of surfaces.

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Signs should include contact details of the Covid-19 Officer and the location of the medical post.

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ITF practice and match protocols are available as a supporting document. In addition, where a positive Covid-19 result for a Player is received during a match, the Referee shall immediately withdraw the Player from the match, irrespective of the score.

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Showers are permitted only after matches and only where:

- Physical distancing can be maintained;
- Where the player is competing in more than one match in a day and during team events.

Where the locker room includes the team lounge, the shower area must be physically separated from all other parts of the lounge.

Only single-use personal cleaning products should be provided.

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The maximum number of people undergoing treatment at any one time must be determined by the available space in the relevant room(s), such that physical distancing can be maintained at all times (except during treatments).

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A schedule of treatment times must be published. Medical staff must maintain the strictest hygiene precautions and must use adequate Personal Protective Equipment (also known as 'PPE') during all treatments. Physical barriers between adjacent treatment spaces may be used. Additional treatment facilities meeting the same specifications may be provided at the player hotel(s), subject to ITF approval in advance.

All treatment bookings should be online. Between each treatment/patient, all equipment must be cleaned and medical staff must change their PPE as necessary.

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