

25 May 2020

To Club Secretaries
CC Regions

Advisory No 6

We know Clubs and players are chomping at the bit to get back to the table. Some Clubs may have already decided that once the Government releases a change to the size of gatherings, they will open the doors for play. Even though restrictions are being eased it is not because Covid-19 has been beaten or the risk is small, or things will only get better. The truth is that we do not know how the next phase of this global pandemic will play out. A second wave of infection is considered by experts to be inevitable, as restrictions are relaxed. We do not know whether there are antibodies or any form of herd immunity within our community. We just do not know hence the element of caution.

We urge caution for the sake of a few more weeks of not being able to return to the bridge table. If we get it wrong the consequence is that we may be away from the table for a much longer period. We draw your attention to what happened at a bridge event in Colorado in March. 4 deaths and many infected with Covid-19 because they did not take it seriously, they did not physically distance.

We are not suggesting that we have anything like a comparable situation with the USA, because we do not. The reason for the reference is that it was a bridge club, an older demographic and how fast things can happen.

It is quite easy to become complacent when reported new cases are hovering around zero and the recovery rate is at 97%. Medical advice is to remain vigilant and adhere to the protocols of:

1. Physical distancing of 1 metre
2. Size of gatherings (100 from Friday 29 May)
3. Maintain high hygiene standards.
4. Contact tracing.

Of course, one should not participate in any gatherings if one has COVID-19 symptoms or if one needs to be in isolation for any reason. If one has cold or flu like symptoms the recommendation is to stay away.

A strong recommendation prevails that if you are over the age of 70 or have underlying medical conditions extreme caution is required. The following are examples of underlying conditions that Clubs, and players should be aware of.

1. Serious respiratory disease such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe cancer.
2. Serious heart conditions
3. Immunocompromised conditions
4. Severe obesity
5. Diabetes
6. Chronic kidney disease
7. Undergoing dialysis
8. Liver disease.

Our player demographic is in the high-risk category and finding solutions around physical distancing might be challenging. Our recommendation remains cautious- Clubs should remain closed for a few

more weeks continuing to play online bridge. Unless players are using their own tablets (laptop, iPad etc.) physical distancing is a major barrier to resuming.

Physical distancing is the biggest challenge. When we sit at the bridge table, we are separated by about 40cm only. If the Police receive a complaint, they are bound to act. Think of the press getting a hold of the story - “Old people disregard the advice and put the whole community at risk so they can play cards”. Such publicity would bring us under scrutiny of public health and the authorities which could result in us not being allowed to play until we are at Alert Level 1.

Today the Government announced an increase in gatherings from 10 to 100 from Friday the 29th of May. This is a positive step. The Government also announced they will review settings on the 8th of June and look to sign post a shift to Alert level 1 on the 22nd of June. At last there is light at the end of the tunnel, and it is not a train bearing down on us. We are hopeful in a few weeks we will be back at bridge meeting people and doing the thing we love.

Of course, players have a personal responsibility by doing a few simple things:

- Isolate yourself at home if you feel sick.
- Wash hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Dry with hand towels or hand dryer.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth unless you have soap and water washed your hands correctly.
- If you use a tissue dispose of it immediately and soap and water wash your hands correctly.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue if you cough or sneeze. If you do not have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.
- Do not shake hands, embrace, or kiss.
- Continue healthy habits- exercise, drink water

We set out below guidelines/ Covid-19 prevention structure for clubs. We strongly recommend these are not “watered down”. They of course can be strengthened, as you see fit. There are 3 phases to consider- set up (pre bridge session), play and post play.

Pre-Bridge Setup

Surfaces	All surfaces to be cleaned including door handles, railings, lift buttons, chairs, heaters, air conditioning equipment.
Bridge equipment	All bridge equipment to be cleaned- boards, bidding boxes, scoring devices.
Opening Clubrooms	Delegated person to open clubrooms must open all doors and leave open with doorstops so that members do not touch any door handle. External doors to be closed once the session is in progress.
Sanitizers	At entrance to the clubroom. All players must use on entering the rooms. To be placed on each table and to be used by members each time there is a movement between tables.

Tables	Tables to be placed 2 metres apart (this may vary according to the guidelines and how many people can congregate).
Bathrooms	To be cleaned and hand sanitizer provided. An antiseptic provided so toilet, hand basin and taps can be cleaned after use. Paper towels only and waste bin provided.
Scoring devices and/or travellers	To be set up before play
Dealing	Cards cannot be reused for a minimum of 7 days

Play

Physical distancing	Maintain physical distancing in accordance with guidelines.
Sneezing	Into the elbow as per the guidelines. If you use a tissue to be deposited into waste container and not retained. Wash or sanitize hands immediately after touching tissues.
Bathroom use	After use all surfaces, basin and taps to be wiped down with antiseptic
Kitchen facilities- cups, saucers	Coffee and tea will not be made. Players wanting coffee or tea must make their own, returning all cups saucers, glasses to the kitchen and placing in the dishwasher.
Contact details	All players to ensure their contact details including phone numbers are current
Pens	Players to provide their own

Post Session (Play)

Surfaces	All surfaces to be cleaned
Bridge equipment	All bridge equipment to be cleaned
Chairs and tables	All chairs and tables to be cleaned
Bathrooms	To be cleaned
Cups, saucers, glasses	To be washed through dishwasher

Cards

Cards	Once the session is concluded cards are to be placed on a shelf in the office and not to be touched or used again for a period of 7 days
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Yours sincerely



ALLAN MORRIS
CHAIR, NEW ZEALAND BRIDGE