



International
Handball
Federation



COVID-19 Medical Precaution Plan POL/SWE 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION AND MISSION

The present COVID-19 Medical Precaution Plan establishes the minimum standards for the participants and attendees of the 28th IHF Men's World Championship 2023 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main goal of the IHF and the Organising Committee is to organise the event in a safe environment for all parties involved. Therefore, the medical and operational protocols to be followed to safeguard the health of players, coaches, team officials, referees, delegates and other participants in the World Championship in Poland and Sweden are established. The main goal of these measures is to try to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This document is subject to updates on a regular basis depending on the evolution of the situation.

The IHF and the Organising Committee urge the following stakeholders involved in the World Championship to strictly follow the provisions of the COVID-19 Medical Precaution Plan in order to ensure a successful and safe event for all stakeholders:

- Participating teams – players and officials
- IHF nominees (representatives, referees, technical delegates, event delegates, IHF office staff, IHF Media group etc.)
- Organising Committee
- Drivers
- Press, photographers and media (local and IHF)
- TV production crew
- Marketing representatives and board manufacturers
- COVID-19 Officers
- Team Guides
- Volunteers (in zones 1, 2 and 3)
- Doctors, medical staff, Doping Control Officers, chaperones
- Other support staff (speakers, statistics, etc.)

Failure to comply with the present Medical Precaution Plan may result in positive COVID-19 cases among the team delegations, which might affect the successful participation in the World Championship.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19

2.1. World Health Organization (WHO)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Most people infected with the virus experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, some become severely ill and require medical attention. Older people and those with underlying illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer, are more likely to develop severe illness. Anyone, of any age, can contract COVID-19 and become seriously ill or die.

The most common symptoms are:

- Fever
- Cough
- Tiredness

- Loss of taste or smell

Other less common symptoms are:

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Aches or pains
- Diarrhea
- Skin rash or discoloration of the fingers or toes
- Red or irritated eyes

On average, it takes 2-14 days for symptoms to subside from the time a person is infected with the virus.

The virus can spread from the mouth or nose of an infected person in small liquid particles when coughing, sneezing, talking, singing or breathing. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to the smallest aerosols. It is important to adopt good breathing practices, for example, coughing into the inside of a flexed elbow, and to stay home and self-isolate until you recover if you feel unwell.

3. REGULATIONS IN POLAND/SWEDEN AND ENTRY INTO POLAND/SWEDEN

3.1. Before travelling to Poland & Sweden

There are no specific regulations or recommendations in connection with entry to

- Poland
- Sweden

Everyone has a responsibility for preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is the responsibility of each participant to regularly check the current regulations regarding entry into the country through the website of

- [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Sweden.](#)

3.2. International travel

All participants must comply with the COVID-19 regulations stated by the specific airline company and transit airport regulations. The use of a face mask is recommended in situations where close contact to other passengers is unavoidable.

4. IHF COVID-19 REGULATIONS

4.1. Full vaccination/recovery

Similar to the procedure applied for 2022 IHF events, only **fully vaccinated or recovered** persons are entitled to participate in the 2023 IHF Men's World Championship, aiming to safeguard the health of all participants involved in the World Championship and to help reducing the number of COVID-19 infections detected during the event concerned. Article 4.1 is applicable for the following stakeholders:

- Participating teams – players and officials
- IHF nominees (representatives, referees, technical delegates, event delegates, IHF office staff, IHF Media group etc.)
- Organising Committee (all members who are in direct contact with the participating teams and IHF nominees)

A person is considered “**fully vaccinated**” if he/she has received at least two doses of one of the following vaccines, taking into account that the last dose was given within at least 14 days and no more than 270 days prior to arrival:

- Comirnaty (BioNTech Pfizer) including omicron-adjusted vaccines,
- Spikevax (Moderna) including omicron-adjusted vaccines,
- Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca),
- Valneva (Valneva),
- Nuvaxovid (Novavax),
- any other World Health Organization (WHO) approved vaccine, such as Sinovac and Sinopharm,
- Sputnik V,
- Sputnik light,
- CureVac,

or one dose of Jcovden (Johnson & Johnson/Janssen) given within at least 14 days and no more than 270 days prior to arrival.

If more than 270 days have passed since the date of the last dose, a booster vaccination is required in order to be considered fully vaccinated. Stakeholders who received three shots (meaning two initial vaccinations and one booster vaccination) are considered fully vaccinated, even if more than 270 days have passed since the date of the booster vaccination. No additional shot is needed in such case.

A stakeholder who recovered from a COVID-19 infection (at any point of time) and received two vaccination doses is considered fully vaccinated.

Any other vaccines than the ones mentioned above are subject to confirmation by the IHF.

A person is considered “**recovered**” if he/she has obtained a medical certificate of recovery from a COVID-19 infection, the validity of which commences from the 6th day after the positive PCR test result. The sample must not have been taken more than 180 days prior to the last match day of the World Championship (29 January 2023), i.e. not before 2 August 2022.

4.2. General hygiene guidelines

All participants of the World Championship are requested to respect the following general hygiene guidelines at any time and to be self-responsible as far as possible:

- In case of crowds, keep physical distance from other people, even if they do not appear to be ill.
- Choose open, well-ventilated spaces rather than enclosed ones. Open a window if you are indoors.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or clean them with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Wear a face mask when physical distance is not possible or when you are in poorly ventilated places.
- Avoid handshake.
- If you feel unwell, inform your team doctor and isolate yourself until you receive medical instructions.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

5. COVID-19 OFFICERS

Each participating team, as well as the IHF and the Organising Committee will have to appoint a person (in the case of teams it should be a team official, preferably with a medical background) as COVID-19 Officer. This person is responsible for the compliance with the measures and rules set out in the present Medical Precaution Plan by his/her delegation (team, referees, working group, etc.). The COVID-19 Officer must

have knowledge of the symptomatology and transmission of SARS-CoV-2 as well as the regulations and prevention measures.

6. COVID-19 CONTROL MEASURES

6.1. Before the competition and before arrival

Step 1:

Each participating National Federation needs to upload a copy of the corresponding vaccination or recovery certificates of all delegation members to the following Dropbox link no later than 14 days prior to arrival to POL/SWE:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/wCzGV1PeoNjR7LNVi406>

The files (vaccination or recovery certificates) to be uploaded should be named as follows:

“Team name (country code)_Function (Official or Player)_LAST NAME_First Name_COVID certificate”

Example: SWE_Player_WISLANDER_Magnus_COVID certificate

The same procedure shall be followed by IHF nominees.

Step 2:

All delegation members of the participating National Federations need to undergo a PCR test within three days (72 hours) prior to arrival to POL/SWE. In case a team is arriving earlier to POL/SWE than stipulated in the official announcement, the PCR test needs to be carried out within three days (72 hours) prior to entering the World Championship environment. The costs for such PCR tests shall be covered by the participating teams. Immediately after receiving the results, a copy of the PCR test result certificates of all delegation members shall be uploaded to the following Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/wCzGV1PeoNjR7LNVi406>

The files (PCR test result certificates) to be uploaded should be named as follows:

“Team name (country code)_Function (Official or Player)_LAST NAME_First Name_PCR Test_Date”

Example: SWE_Player_WISLANDER_Magnus_PCR Test_08.01.2023

Each IHF nominee needs to undergo a PCR test within three days (72 hours) prior to arrival to POL/SWE. The costs for such tests will be covered by the IHF.

All participating National Federations and IHF nominees are recommended to contact their laboratory well in advance to guarantee that the PCR test result will be issued on time (prior to travelling).

Note: Flights between Poland and Sweden during the World Championship will be treated as internal transfers and therefore no additional tests will be required.

6.2. After arrival and during the competition

During the event, all delegation members of the participating National Federations as well as all IHF nominees need to undergo a rapid antigen laboratory test

1. after the end of the Preliminary Round, and

2. after the end of the Main Round.

The related costs shall be paid by the Organising Committee.

Measures taken in case of symptoms

Additional rapid antigen laboratory tests shall be carried out in case any delegation member and/or IHF nominee develop symptoms. The roommate of a player who has been tested positive after developing symptoms shall also undergo a rapid antigen laboratory test. No further delegation member needs to be tested.

Isolation policy

In the event of a positive rapid antigen laboratory test result, the COVID-19 Officer and the IHF need to be informed immediately. The person who has been tested positive is to be isolated (single room to be provided and covered by the Organising Committee) and may return to the competition at the earliest after five days and issuance of a negative PCR test result (costs to be covered by the Organising Committee) as well as a confirmation from the team doctor that the player in question is fit and takes over the responsibility (corresponding confirmation form to be provided by the IHF, available under the following link: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/pmy5l522wz6hur4517xmp/COVID-19-Recovery_NF-Confirmation_Poland_Sweden-2023.docx?dl=0&rlkey=kjh5uitiit7y50tsqu7q3rxix).

No further delegation member needs to be isolated.

At the same time, the COVID-19 related rules issued by the Polish and Swedish governments must be respected at all times.

7. TRANSPORTATION

All stakeholders involved in the World Championship shall follow the general hygiene guidelines outlined in Article 4.2 during local transfers:

- from the airport to the hotel (and vice versa);
- from the hotel to the training hall (and vice versa);
- from the hotel to the arena (and vice versa);
- from one hotel to another (in case of changing venues).

Each category of participants will have their own vehicle assigned to them (bus, van or car) for the duration of their stay and the event. All vehicles will have hand sanitisers available for the passengers and will be disinfected after use.

On buses, it is recommended that passengers use the rear door and handle their luggage and belongings themselves. Non-team members (other than players, team officials and guides) are not allowed on the team buses.

All drivers are obliged to wear a face mask during local transfers.

The use of public transportation (cabs, subways, buses and streetcars) is not recommended, and the OC is not responsible for non-compliance with hygiene measures of those participants who decide to use them.

8. VENUES

8.1. Zones

The arenas will be divided into the following zones:

Zone 1 – Field of play

Zone 2 – Court surrounding area

Zone 3 – Changing rooms/medical areas

Zone 4 – Media areas

Zone 5 – Spectator areas

Zone 6 – Office
Zone 7 – VIP area
Zone 8 – Special guest area

8.2. Entry and exit regulations

In order to avoid crowds, the entrances and exits of the sports venue will be made through different accesses for participants, spectators, etc.

Participating teams should plan their arrival at the sports facilities on time, avoiding arriving before the scheduled time for training and matches, as well as leaving the facility on time. In the event that two teams arrive at the same time, and in order to avoid crowds, one of them will enter first followed by the other.

Public access control will be staggered in order to avoid crowds.

8.3. Changing rooms

Teams and referees are assigned their own changing rooms. It will not be possible to use other changing rooms than those assigned by the Organising Committee.

Access to the changing rooms is restricted to participants and strictly necessary working staff (cleaning services).

8.4. Field of play and competition areas

The playing court, the perimeter around it, the bench area, the match management table and the IHF support table, as well as the changing room area, doping control rooms and team stands are restricted to authorised staff only.

8.5. Face masks

The following zones of the arenas are subject to a face mask obligation at all times:

- Zone 1 (field of play) → all stakeholders except for players, team officials and referees
- Zone 2 (court surrounding area) → all stakeholders except for players, team officials and referees
- Zone 3 (changing rooms/medical areas) → all stakeholders

9. MATCHES

Current information about applicable COVID-19 measures will be delivered via the IHF website on a regular basis. All stakeholders shall follow the general hygiene guidelines as outlined in Article 4.2 at all times. All areas of the arena must be thoroughly cleaned and hand sanitisers must be available at all entrances.

In general players must maintain physical distance from other persons when entering and leaving the court. The players of both teams shall walk towards the players of the other team and bump fists instead of shaking hands. The team officials of both teams shall bump each other's fists as well as the fists of the IHF nominees appointed to their match while handing over the identification letters.

After the end of the post-match procedure, players and officials shall leave the field of play and fulfil their media obligations.

The staff of the arena will clean the field of play after each match.

10. MEDICAL AREAS

Hygiene guidelines and the use of face masks must be respected in the medical areas of the arenas at all times. The facilities must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

11. DOPING CONTROLS

Hygiene guidelines and the use of face masks must be respected in the doping control room at all times. The room must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Whenever possible, it should be large enough for players and doping officials to maintain physical distance.

Players who must undergo doping control may drink beverages in the waiting room without sharing in any case the bottles or cups, removing their face mask only to drink.

12. MEDIA

General provisions

All accredited media representatives (with access to zone 4, i.e. media areas) are recommended to be fully vaccinated.

In order to protect the players, all media representatives must wear a face mask when being in direct contact with players and/or team officials in zone 1 (field of play), zone 2 (court surrounding area) and zone 3 (changing rooms/medical areas) of the arenas.

All participants, including all companies and their staff deployed at the World Championship, must comply with applicable local and national law at all times, as well as the requirements of the present COVID-19 Medical Precaution Plan.

12.1. Staff

The number of accredited staff will depend on:

- Applicable local law;
- The available working spaces with appropriate hygiene measures;
- The total number of persons permitted in the areas, as well as any limitations on the number of persons permitted in the arena under local or national law.

12.2. Photographers

The number of photographers during the match will be established according to local regulations regarding seating capacity. The position of each photographer should be clearly marked and their movements should be limited to the minimum possible.

Each photographer is responsible for his/her equipment and its disinfection. Photographers are not allowed to touch any type of material (balls, t-shirts, towels, etc.) that may be on the court.

Photographers are obliged to wear a face mask in zone 1 (field of play), zone 2 (court surrounding area) and zone 3 (changing rooms/medical areas) of the arenas at all times.

12.3. Media stand

Seating in the media stand shall be established according to local regulations regarding seating capacity. The position of each media outlet must be clearly marked.

12.4. TV production

Camera operators are not allowed to touch any type of material (balls, t-shirts, towels, etc.) that may be on the court.

12.5. Media access to trainings

Training sessions are recommended to be held behind closed doors without the presence of the media and limited to delegation members required to conduct the training sessions. Media access will be permitted during the first 10 minutes provided all precaution measures are followed.

12.6. Departure and arrival of teams

To record the arrival of the teams, a manned camera position will be allowed. The position must guarantee physical distance from the paths of the players and team personnel.

12.7. Pre-match interviews

The positions for pre-match interviews must be assigned in advance, with physical distance between the interviewer and players and/or officials.

12.8. Team time-out

Media representatives are allowed to enter the field of play, provided they use long microphone poles. Media representatives must try to keep the biggest distance possible, always using a face mask.

12.9. Press conference

The number of persons allowed to be present during the press conference will depend on the local regulations in force.

12.10. Flash Zone and Mixed Zone

Journalists and camera crews must maintain physical distance from the players and/or officials at all times.

12.11. Recording of changing rooms

In case media representatives are allowed to access the changing rooms, they are obliged to wear a face mask at all times.

12.12. Recording at team hotels

Media access to the hotels of the participating teams is discouraged, while the use of outdoor locations is recommended to conduct interviews.

13. SPECTATORS

Depending on the development of the pandemic, and the regulations in force in the host cities during the World Championship, the Organising Committee in coordination with the host cities' authorities will decide on the capacity allowed for the matches.

Public access control will be staggered in order to avoid crowds.

The stands are sectored in such a way that changing seats is not allowed; each spectator must occupy only the seat assigned to them.

14. MEETINGS

14.1. Meetings of teams, IHF and OC

Meetings of teams, IHF nominees and the OC must be carried out following the applicable hygiene measures at the hotels in addition to the general hygiene guidelines outlined in Article 4.2.

Each team/group will be assigned a meeting room and must use it during the established time slots. Proper



ventilation of the room is recommended whenever possible.

14.2. Technical meetings

Up to two members of each delegation are allowed to participate in the technical meetings held during the World Championship.

14.3. Other meetings

Any other meeting shall be carried out following the general hygiene guidelines outlined in Article 4.2. Social gatherings between participants from different groups and/or people outside the World Championship are strongly discouraged to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.



Annex: Competition-Related Regulations

Team registration:

In case any player(s) from the 35-player provisional list tested positive for COVID-19 after the provisional list has been submitted and prior to the technical meeting, the player(s) concerned may be replaced (upon presentation of a medical certificate) by any other player at the latest at the technical meeting at which the provisional list and subsequently the definitive list will be confirmed. The provisional list will become final upon submitting the definitive list. Afterwards, replacements are only allowed based on the final provisional list. The IHF reserves the right to amend this rule within the overall COVID-19 policy and if further action is needed as a result of the overall development of the pandemic.

Replacements:

Player replacements during the World Championship after submitting the definitive list due to positive COVID-19 cases will not be deducted from the total of five replacements each team is entitled to. This is only valid for replacements within 48 hours after the infection of the player concerned has become known. Players may be replaced with players indicated in the provisional list only. Furthermore, the Competition Management will ease the process of replacing team officials in the event of positive COVID-19 cases.

Non-appearance:

If the team of a federation that has qualified for the World Championship does not take part, the IHF Executive Committee shall decide on a substitute nation.

However, due to the special situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic and in order to be prepared for last-minute decisions and to have a proper preparation period for all stakeholders involved, the following procedure should be applied:

1. All participating federations shall confirm their participation in the Men's World Championship within the deadline stipulated in the official announcement.
2. In case any team that has qualified for the World Championship in Poland/Sweden and confirmed its participation is unable to participate due to travel restrictions or national law, for reasons connected to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, a substitute nation is invited to take part. The corresponding substitute nation will occupy the position of the team that is unable to participate.
3. The list of substitute nations is created in accordance with the performance criteria of the qualification event of the continent of the reigning World Champion, which is Europe. Consequently, the following substitute nations are to be selected in the following order: 1. CZE, 2. SVK, 3. AUT.
4. In case a team is not appearing and cannot be substituted, the matches of the respective team will be evaluated as a 10:0 / 2:0 defeat (goals / points).

Furthermore,

- no match shall be postponed to another day due to any COVID-19-related problems of playing a match as scheduled;
- each team needs to have a minimum of nine (9) athletes, including one (1) goalkeeper, on the start list to be allowed to take part in the match;
- there must be at least one (1) official with coaching experience/licence and one (1) physician/medical staff available for a team to compete;
- the COVID-19 Advisory Board will decide about the eligibility or non-eligibility of each team delegation member.

For further procedures and measures, the IHF Competition Management shall decide according to competition principles implemented at previous IHF events (2021 Men's World Championship in Egypt, Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, 2021 Women's World Championship in Spain).



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