



# BASC COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR GAME SHOOTS IN ENGLAND

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**BASC**   
The British Association for Shooting & Conservation

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IMAGE: TOP SHOTS COMPETITION ENTRY/ANDREW DALGARNO

## Introduction

This guidance document has been produced to help those who manage game shoots as they identify and manage the risks posed by COVID-19 on shoot days. What follows is a broad overview of the aspects of a shoot day where the risk of transmission of COVID-19 may be present.

This document is not an exhaustive list of actions, given that guidance from government on managing the risk of COVID-19 is frequently updated and all shoots operate differently.

The Government has outlined five practical actions for businesses to take to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace. These actions can readily be applied to shoots and are listed below.

- 1. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment**
- 2. Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures**
- 3. Help people work from home**
- 4. Maintain 2m social distancing**
- 5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage the transmission risk**

Assessing the risk of COVID-19 transmission on shoots is important to ensure the safety of all participants. How risk is managed must take into account the regulations and government guidance in force on the day of the shoot.

# How to use this guide

It is important to remember that the guidance within this document cannot be exhaustive, and each shoot will need to be considered in the context of its own operations.

This guide is intended to help shoots identify areas of risk, draw up practical mitigation measures, and formulate risk assessments specific to COVID-19. Outlined below are a range of factors and areas that might be considered prior to and during a shoot day.

## Considerations prior to the shoot day

### Risk assessment

Each shoot should undertake its own risk assessment and scenario planning for shoot days. There will likely be differences between individual shoots, but all risk assessments should consider the key aspects outlined in this framework, alongside the usual assessment of health and safety risks.

Specific guidance on completing a risk assessment for your shoot can be found here:  
[www.basc.org.uk/health-and-safety](http://www.basc.org.uk/health-and-safety)

A risk assessment template from the Health and Safety Executive can be found here:  
[www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm)

You can use this guidance to help identify potential COVID-19 risk factors and potential mitigation measures to help reduce risk. **As with any risk assessment, if you are not confident that the risk can be reduced to an acceptable level, then the activity should not go ahead.**

When applying mitigation measures, you must refer to and take account of government regulations and guidance in force at the time the shoot is to take place.

### Determining who should attend the shoot

It is important to identify those who will be attending a shoot and are considered to be at higher risk from COVID-19. This includes those who may be clinically extremely vulnerable (known as the shielded group) and those in the clinically vulnerable group.

- Carefully assess whether those attending from these groups can do so safely.
- Consider whether you will have a sufficient number of beaters and pickers-up to operate effectively and safely on a shoot day.
- Be aware that those who live with critically vulnerable people may not be able to attend.

From 1 August, the requirement for shielding will pause in England, however, measures should be taken to protect 'at risk' groups attending shoot days.



## Employees

If your shoot has five or more employees at any one time, it is a legal requirement to have a health and safety policy in place. Even if the shoot does not have employees, it still makes sense to document and assess potential risks.

In the context of COVID-19, this policy should include:

- Assessment of vulnerability to COVID-19.
- Assessment of physical ability to undertake the tasks required.
- Identification of precautions required to help protect everyone involved on the shoot (such as the hygiene and transportation guidelines detailed within this document).

The conduct and requirements of each employee should be clearly outlined and agreed before shooting commences. For example, a letter might be sent to those involved in the shoot in advance of their first attendance.

A clear safety brief, including risks and actions in response to COVID-19, should be given prior to each shoot.

## Travel

Consider any restrictions on travel which may impact the shoot day. There may be restrictions on distances which can be travelled, and limitations on who can/cannot travel together.

## Accommodation

Consider any restrictions relating to accommodation and the hospitality sector, and communicate these to visitors – it may impact their ability to attend the shoot. Accommodation will be permitted to open in England from 4 July where operators can comply with government guidance on hygiene and social distancing.

## Visitors from abroad

It is a good idea to discuss the current state of play with any visitors from abroad who are due to attend the shoot. There may be quarantine rules for those arriving from overseas, which would need to be observed before they can visit the shoot. Overseas guests may also need to consider quarantine in their own country when they return home. Refer to government guidance for further information.



IMAGE: CELINE PENNISTON-BIRD

## Gatherings

You must comply with restrictions on social gatherings in force at the time of the shoot. It is currently a criminal offence to breach the regulation on gathering limits or to 'incite' a gathering which breaches regulations.

The current regulation permits the gathering of employees where essential for work purposes (e.g. beaters, pickers-up, etc.). However, the regulation restricting gatherings would currently apply to teams of Guns or shoot parties partaking in social/recreational activity, as it is not specifically permitted by law. Consider how the shoot operates, and the potential impacts of limitations on the number of people who may gather.

# Considerations on the day of the shoot

## COVID-19

Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or who shares a household with any individual displaying symptoms, must not attend the shoot day.

Keeping COVID-19 out of the shoot is the most effective way to minimise the risk of infection. Anyone with symptoms, or anyone who may have been exposed to COVID-19 within 14 days prior to the shoot, must not attend and should follow government guidance on self-isolation.

In line with best practice in other sectors to help 'test and trace' efforts, it is recommended to obtain contact details for everyone participating on a shoot day. This should be names and contact telephone numbers as a minimum, which should be retained for 21 days.

## Arrival at the shoot

Congregation of the shoot party, beaters, pickers-up or others poses a COVID-19 transmission risk. Social distancing measures should be put in place in accordance with government guidelines, and restrictions on gatherings must be adhered to. Measures to reduce risk might include:

- Reducing the time between arrival of participants and the start of the shoot day.
- Distancing vehicles in car parks.
- Asking people to remain in their own vehicles until the shoot briefing.
- Putting social distancing markers in communal areas.
- Avoiding indoor spaces, unless able to maintain social distancing.
- Using safe outdoor areas while maintaining social distancing.
- Increased cleaning of hard surfaces and contact points such as entry gates and door handles.
- Where it may be difficult to maintain social distancing outdoors, reduce contact time to less than ten minutes.
- Having one person controlling access points to reduce contact by multiple individuals.

As a general measure, you may consider treating each group on the shoot as an individual 'bubble', i.e. the Guns, the beaters and the pickers-up. By avoiding the mixing of individuals outside of these bubbles, it reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and lessens the potential impacts on future shoots days in the event that an individual involved in the shoot contracts COVID-19.



IMAGE: TOP SHOTS COMPETITION ENTRY/ANNE TIPPLES

## The shoot briefing

As well as the usual safety briefing, all participants of a shoot day should be informed of the precautions and guidance in place to protect against COVID-19. The responsibilities of all parties should be agreed prior to the shoot commencing. You may wish to:

- Provide a written briefing prior to the shoot, by email, and have Guns acknowledge their responsibilities by return.
- Brief participants outdoors where safe to do so, ensuring social distancing is maintained.
- If briefings are undertaken indoors, currently this can only be for employees and only where it is essential for work purposes. You should take steps to ensure that social distancing can be maintained. Keep time spent indoors in groups to the minimum required to deliver the safety briefing. Open windows and doors to increase flow of air into the room.
- If possible, introduce a one-way system to facilitate access and egress.
- Consider alternatives to drawing pegs, such as one individual doing the draw while observed by his/her fellow Guns.

## Transportation

Where possible, travel around the shoot should be on foot, as this allows social distancing to be maintained and reduces the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

If practicable, individuals or household groups should travel in separate vehicles. Transport should be planned well in advance of the day to ensure appropriate provision is in place. Parking arrangements around the shoot should also be considered, to ensure that multiple vehicles can be accommodated safely and without impacting other countryside users.



Where a vehicle/transport is used for multiple people, shoots should refer to the relevant government guidance on travel. If using transport around the shoot, you may consider:

- Physical social distancing between passengers (currently 2m, or from 4 July, 1m+ mitigation).
- Sitting side-by-side, not face-to-face, and increasing ventilation in the vehicle.
- Using a 'partnering system' with fixed teams always travelling together (e.g. separate teams/vehicles for stops, beaters and pickers-up).
- Hand hygiene – using handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser before and after each journey.
- Organising drives to minimise travel times, and therefore length of potential exposure to COVID-19.
- Cleaning transport, contact points (e.g. doors, handrails) before and after each journey.
- Enhanced cleaning of shoot transport before and after each shoot.
- Minimising the touching of dogs and surfaces within vehicles.
- Encouraging those travelling with multiple people to wear face coverings in line with government guidance for using public transport in England.

## Equipment

Sharing equipment on shoot days increases the transmission risk of COVID-19. To reduce the risk, you may consider:

- Issuing equipment to individuals which is not shared (e.g. flags for stops) and ensuring such equipment is cleaned thoroughly before and after use.
- Issuing shoot radios to individuals, which are not shared, and ensuring they are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use.

## Socialising

All government guidance that is in place on the day of the shoot, and which relates to social distancing and limits on gatherings, must be followed. Socialising should take place outside where possible and safe, avoiding the congregation of many people in a small space (such as a shoot hut). Current regulations allow only employees (beaters and pickers-up) to gather indoors and only where essential for work purposes. Any indoor space should be configured so that social distancing can be observed. If possible, introduce a one-way system to facilitate access and egress and increase ventilation to the space.

## Provision of food and refreshments

Many shoots will provide food and refreshments. The provision of food and refreshments is a 'high-risk' area for transmission of COVID-19. To reduce the risk, you may consider:

- Asking people to bring their own food and refreshments. These should not be shared.
- Providing adequate handwashing facilities or hand-sanitising points.
- Avoiding indoor facilities, unless social distancing can be maintained – this should include any seating areas.
- Using safe outdoor areas while maintaining social distancing.
- Putting queue management and/or one-way systems in place.
- Using Perspex screens in serving areas.
- Avoiding 'buffet/self-serve' options as shared serving implements increase transmission risk.
- Enhanced cleaning regimes for surfaces and equipment, and regular waste removal.
- Where contract/outside catering is used, ensuring a copy of their COVID-19 risk assessment is provided and that the service they provide is compliant with government guidance for the sector.

You must comply with indoor and outdoor gathering limits as defined by the Government.

Further guidance on food hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19)



## Handwashing and hygiene

Frequent handwashing or hand sanitising are effective ways to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. You should consider ways to improve and increase the frequency of handwashing and sanitising on shoot days. Measures may include:

- Advising individuals to bring hand sanitiser with them on shoot days and to follow guidance on handwashing.
- Providing additional handwashing facilities where practicable.
- Providing additional hand sanitising points/hand sanitiser.
- Using signage to reinforce messaging about frequent handwashing and not touching surfaces.

Enhanced hygiene practices in communal areas will reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from surfaces. Special attention should be paid to communal areas such as washrooms and toilets.

Use of PPE such as gloves and face coverings may help improve hygiene and reduce transmission risk. Refer to government advice on the use of face coverings.

Increasing the provision of waste bins may improve hygiene. Take appropriate precautions when disposing of waste, including use of gloves and thorough handwashing after emptying waste bins.

## Informing others

With a rise in public access to rural areas, shoot organisers should consider other land users, such as walkers, who may be present on shoot days. The presence of other countryside users on a shoot day might increase the number of COVID-19 transmission points – examples include gates and styles, etc.



## Guidance for the beating line

While beaters usually maintain distance between themselves during a drive, in addition to the general guidance outlined to reduce risk, you may also consider:

- Maintaining social distancing while walking to, during and after a drive.
- Maintaining social distancing when waiting to cross obstacles such as fences and styles.
- Planning routes around the shoot to avoid crossing points where practicable, or avoiding gates to minimise contact transmission.
- Encouraging everyone to wash or sanitise their hands after crossing an obstacle which others may have crossed/touched (fences, styles, gates, etc.).
- Nominating a person to oversee hygiene measures and sanitising throughout the shoot day.

## Guidance for pickers-up

While pickers-up usually operate in a socially distanced manner during each drive, there are areas of COVID-19 transmission risk. In addition to the general guidance outlined to reduce risk, you may also consider:

- Asking pickers-up to travel in their own vehicles around the shoot.
- Encouraging pickers-up to bring their own equipment, or issuing them with equipment that is not shared.
- Minimising the handling of shot game, using a game carrier where appropriate.
- Maintaining social distancing by not handing shot game to other persons, including the game cart operator (see section on game handling for further details).
- Not touching dogs belonging to other people.

## Guidance for Guns/shoot parties

You must comply with restrictions on social gatherings in force at the time of the shoot. It is a criminal offence to breach the regulations on gathering limits or to 'incite' a gathering.

In addition to the general guidance for pre-shoot information, arrival at the shoot and transport, there are further areas of COVID-19 transmission risk which may need to be considered by teams of Guns/shoot parties.

### Cartridges

If the shoot supplies cartridges for Guns, then you may wish to consider how this can be done while reducing potential for contact transmission of COVID-19. Measures may include:

- One individual handling cartridges, ensuring appropriate handwashing measures and PPE if appropriate.
- Providing cartridges at a safe, centralised location, supervised by the provider, and ensuring that those collecting them maintain social distancing.

Empty cases could also act as a route of COVID-19 transmission between individuals. To reduce the risk, you may wish to consider:

- Asking Guns to collect their own empty cases with disposal points on each drive.
- Nominating one person to collect empty cases at the end of each drive, using appropriate PPE such as nitrile gloves, and ensuring thorough handwashing or sanitising before and after collecting them.
- Liaising with your local disposal or recycling agent and following any guidelines they may have for disposal of accumulated cartridge cases.

## Loading

Loading, whether for single gun or double guns, requires individuals to stand in close proximity. This may breach guidance on social distancing. If current social distancing guidelines remain in force, consider the following:

- An individual from the same household as the Gun might act as a loader, ensuring that the loader is appropriately experienced/qualified.

The same applies to the chaperoning of novice Guns. It may be appropriate to exclude novice shooters where appropriate close supervision is not possible.

## Guidance for handling shot game

Shoot managers must ensure they have appropriate arrangements in place for the sale or consumption of the anticipated bag in advance of all shoot days. All game should be handled in accordance with established game handling and hygiene requirements. These requirements can be found here: [www.codeofgoodshootingpractice.org.uk](http://www.codeofgoodshootingpractice.org.uk)

### Game cart

To ensure social distancing and reduce transmission risk, you should consider:

- Where safe, one individual operating the game cart. If this is not possible, measures should be put in place (such as those for beaters' transport) to reduce transmission risk.
- Washing or sanitising of hands before and after handling shot game.
- Using PPE such as nitrile gloves – a new pair each drive with appropriate waste disposal points – for handling shot game.
- Maintaining social distancing when loading and unloading shot game.
- Implementing enhanced hygiene practices for the game cart, including regular cleaning of high contact surfaces.

### Game larder

Loading and unloading of game to the shoot larder may present a transmission risk. To reduce risk, consider:

- Maintaining social distancing; measures may include one person unloading game into/out of the larder where safe, or processes to ensure two-metre distancing can be maintained.
- Enhanced cleaning of contact points with products which are safe for use around food items, paying particular attention to larder doors, switches or other high contact surfaces.
- Washing or sanitising hands before and after using the larder.
- Using PPE such as nitrile gloves when handling shot game.
- Protocols which your game dealer may have in place.

### Game supplied to guests

Game supplied at the end of the shoot may present a transmission risk due to multiple handling. To reduce the risk, you may consider having one central collection point, where social distancing can be observed.

The same measures may apply to oven-ready game which is often provided to guests. Maintaining the 'cold chain' for processed game immediately prior to its collection should also be considered.

### Payments

You should consider the transmission risk associated with handling cash or cheques in relation to payments for shooting. Electronic payment is the safest option for payments and should be used where practicable. Where physical payments are made, enhanced hygiene process should be considered as well as measures to ensure social distancing requirements are met.

## Further information

If you require further information or support, please contact your local BASC office.

## Resources

The following resources may be useful in preparing to address the risk of COVID-19 on your shoot:

### **BASC coronavirus guidance**

[www.basc.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.basc.org.uk/coronavirus)

### **Code of Good Shooting Practice**

[www.codeofgoodshootingpractice.org.uk/](http://www.codeofgoodshootingpractice.org.uk/)

### **Government COVID-19 information and guidance**

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

[www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work)

### **Health & Safety Executive – COVID-19 guidance:**

[www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/index.htm)

### **Defra COVID-19 information**

[www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-on-accessing-green-spaces-safely](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-on-accessing-green-spaces-safely)



IMAGE: TOP SHOTS COMPETITION ENTRY/HARRY LESSMAN