



2020/21 SEASON MATCHDAY COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

1. HYGIENE MEASURES AT THE STADIUM

1.1 STADIUM ENTRY

Everyone entering the stadium on Matchday (MD) and Matchday minus 1 (MD-1) must have their temperature taken on arrival.

In addition, a person entering the stadium who is not in the tested groups must:

1. Disinfect his/her hands
2. Wear a mask
3. Maintain social distancing
4. Wash their Hands (where applicable)

If a person fails to comply with the above protocols or shows abnormalities in their temperature checks, the Club Safety and Security Officer should ensure the immediate ejection of the individual from the venue.

1.2 FACE MASKS AND HAND SANITISER

Face masks covering the mouth and nose must be worn by anyone operating in the stadium at all times on MD-1 and MD. Failure to comply with wearing masks will be reported to the National Safety & Security Officer or the Club Safety & Security Officer and shall lead to ejection of the person from the stadium.

The requirement to wear a mask by every person at the stadium shall include, but is not limited to, the following target groups: Match Commissioner/Coordinator, GFA staff, NSA staff, all members of the Testing Groups, Stadium Operational staff, Stadium Stewards, Ground staff, Catering and Cleaning staff, Broadcast staff, Media persons (except commentators during the match), Photographers, Signage and LED Teams and Independent Medical staff (Pitch side emergency teams, Stadium medics).

Teams, External contractors, and all other stakeholders are responsible for equipping themselves with their own face masks.

Nonetheless, for all matches, host teams are required to have an additional supply of face masks which can be provided to essential workers in case they are not equipped with sufficient PPE.

Hand sanitizer and Veronica Buckets with soaps must be provided at all access points to the stadium, and at the entry points to each of the designated zones for key persons. Hand sanitizer must be used by everyone entering the stadium or when changing stadium zones.

1.3 STADIUM HYGIENE PROCEDURES

In general, all areas of the stadium that are in use for the match must be cleaned prior to use. These areas include media working areas, seating (depending on use), offices, meeting rooms and sanitary facilities.

2. STADIUM ZONING

2.1 STADIUM ZONES

A zoning system will be implemented in order to prevent any uncontrolled or indirect contact with the teams.

Zone 1 – ‘team zone’

Zone 2 – ‘pitch surroundings’

Zone 3 – ‘stands and stadium interiors’

Zone 4 – ‘stadium exterior’

Zone 1 – The ‘team zone’ includes the dressing room areas (team and referee dressing rooms, doping control station, medical room, delegate’s office, tunnel), the player benches, technical seats and any additional seats in the stands used to extend the benches or technical seats, the pitch and pitch surrounds up to the pitch perimeter advertising boards, warm-up areas including a distance of 2m around the warm-up areas. This zone is for the groups required exclusively for match operations (players, substitutes, coaching, technical and medical staff, referees, doping control officers and chaperones, pitch medics, security, hygiene staff) but also people fulfilling the minimum delivery obligations, such as limited NSA staff, technical suppliers, signage, etc.

For the avoidance of doubt, only those who have been cleared by the Safety and Security Committee of the GFA with appropriate Accreditation will be allowed to enter Zone 1, and no more than approximately 100 people are allowed to be in Zone 1 at any one time.

Zone 2 – The ‘pitch surroundings’ means the area between the pitch perimeter advertising boards and the stands. Along the side of the benches this zone extends from 2m from the outer limit of the warm-up area to the stands. This zone is for manned camera positions, other staff (e.g. pitch reporters), photographers, ball retrievers, groundskeepers, other operators, etc. During preparation times (T1) no more than 100 people are allowed in Zone 2, but once the teams are in the stadium on MD-1 and MD (T2 & T3) no more than 50 persons are allowed in this zone.

Zone 3 – The ‘stands’ are the seating sections of the stadium. This includes the usual seating areas as well as the hospitality areas, media tribunes, camera positions and the stadium control room. The ‘stadium interiors’ include all indoor areas at the stadium not included in Zone 1. This therefore includes any team offices and working rooms, stadium offices, media and photographer working rooms. This area may be used for manned camera positions removed from Zone 1 warm-up areas.

Zone 4 – The ‘stadium exterior’ extends from the outer limits of Zones 1 and 3 (indoor areas) to the outer boundary of the private stadium environs (wall, fence, turnstiles, gate etc.) as well as the broadcast compound even if outside the stadium boundary.

NB:

A plan must be prepared in advance in order to define the approximate number of people who will need to be present in Zone 1 and 2 at any given time during the day. The same analysis may be extended to Zone 3 and 4 based on the permitted capacity restrictions imposed by the government.

Queuing or other specific gatherings that can be expected (e.g. arrival of media or post-match media activities) must also be identified and mitigation measures taken such as barriers, signage and additional access points.

The Club Safety & Security Officer / National Safety & Security Officer must draw up a staffing plan ahead of each match for approval by the Safety and Security Department.

The Club Safety & Security Officer shall be responsible for overseeing the movement of people between different zones. The Match Commissioner must take a decision in case of doubt and report any violation of the zoning system to the Security Officer on duty.

2.2 STADIUM ZONING TIMINGS

MD are divided into four different time frames for dynamic planning of staff requirements:

T1: From the Match Coordinating Meeting (MCM) until shortly before arrival of the kit vans which must be announced in advance on the TIME platform).

T2: From the end of T1 until players and officials have left the pitch after the warm – up session.

T3: From the end of T2 until the players and officials have left the pitch.

T4: After all players and officials have left the stadium

2.3 ZONING ACCESS AND MOVEMENT ON MATCHDAY

During T1: transit through Zone 1 area must be controlled and limited to only those people with a specific need.

During T2: movement between zones is strictly limited. In principle, no one may enter Zone 1 except the tested groups of the teams, match officers and officials and venue staff. Specific exceptions may be possible for operators of approved camera positions.

During T3: movement between Zones 2, 3 and 4 is permitted but in principle, no one may enter Zone 1 except the tested groups of the teams, match officers and officials and venue staff. Specific exceptions may be possible for operators of approved camera positions and broadcast staff to conduct interviews.

During T4: Movement between zones is not restricted.

3. STADIUM ACCESS AND ACCREDITATION MANAGEMENT

The GFA shall be responsible for accreditation devices and tickets allowing access to the stadium. The GFA accreditation system will be used to control numbers entering the specific zones and so the number of accreditation devices issued giving access to each zone will be controlled. Tickets and Accreditation for each match venue shall be done with considerable diligence to the stadium capacity to ensure adherence to the permitted capacity restrictions as directed by the government.

3.1. ACCREDITATION SYSTEM APPLICATION

The accreditation system must allow stewards / Security to clearly identify who is authorized to be in which zone at what time.

The stadium safety and security officers, stewards and private security must be clearly briefed about the stadium zoning system and the various times, as well as the importance of its application. All staff working in the stadium must be asked to respect the system and to cooperate fully with stewards.

To highlight the sensitivity of Zone 1, it is recommended to implement very clear visual floor-level demarcation at all potential points of access to Zone 1 to indicate the start of Zone 1 at each point.

3.2. MANAGEMENT OF STADIUM ENTRY AND ACCREDITATION COLLECTION POINTS

Any areas where queuing may be required must be arranged and managed in such a way as to maintain social distancing. Signage, floor markings and barriers/airport tape should be used wherever necessary to facilitate organisation and to inform people of the requirements.

3.3. TEAM PERSONNEL AND NUMBERS AT THE STADIUM

Teams are permitted to come to the stadium with a Zone 1 tested group of a maximum of 35 persons for each match. This allocation must include the 25 persons from the team who will need access to Zone 1, which means 18 players and 7 technical team members (coaching and medical staff) and 2 logistic officers of the club. Only this group of 27 persons will be permitted to enter Zone 1, and their accreditations will be issued on production of a negative SARS-CoV-2-RNA test confirmation from the last relevant test, together with an ID.

Other members of the team who are part of the team's tested pool (up to a maximum of 10 persons) are permitted to come to the stadium, but will not be allowed to enter Zone 1 and shall be given a distinct dedicated place in the stands only for them or behind / beside the team's technical bench on extra seats.

The team's official delegations (president, board of directors etc) are permitted to come to the stadium (up to a maximum of 10 persons). They will be provided seats in the stands and shall not be allowed to enter Zone 1 at any time.

3.4. TEAM ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURES AT THE STADIUM

3.4.1. Arrival

The arrival of each team and the match officials must be staggered to avoid mixing and crowding in the corridors.

During team arrivals, the presence of any staff along the route should be kept to a minimum and with stewards in place to temporarily stop any other transit. Any stewards must maintain a minimum 2m distance from the team.

Teams may go straight to the dressing room, and may perform a pitch inspection as usual, but must avoid congregating in indoor areas or passing through the tunnel at the same time as their opponent.

3.4.2. Departure

Teams should leave the dressing rooms as soon as possible after the match and the completion of any media obligations.

3.5. STADIUM FACILITIES

3.5.1 Dressing rooms

Dressing room areas for the teams and technical staff must optimize social distancing and air circulation. Depending on the actual size of the dressing room, additional nearby rooms or spaces may therefore also have to be used.

In addition:

- Any saunas, ice-baths, pools must be closed or drained.
- Any fitness equipment must be disinfected before and after use and must be located either within an area of the dressing room completely separated from the changing area, or in a different room.
- Any physio equipment and massage beds must be disinfected before and after use and must be located either within an area of the dressing room completely separated from the changing area, or in a different room.

The same principles apply also to the referee dressing room, and if space is limited then additional rooms or alternative solutions must be found for the referee team.

3.5.2. Cleaning of Dressing Rooms, Team Benches and Technical Areas

The dressing room areas, team access routes (corridors, door handles, handrails, etc.) team benches and technical seats (including any additional seating used to maintain social distancing) must be thoroughly disinfected before the team arrives on MD. Once the dressing rooms have been disinfected prior to team arrivals, no one may enter until the teams arrive other than tested team support staff, e.g. team kit staff.

3.5.3 Dressing room catering

Teams must agree on the supply of food and drinks to the dressing rooms between themselves and are responsible for ensuring that any food and drink deliveries adhere to all hygiene requirements and minimise any risk of contamination.

The same applies to food and beverages provided by the host to referees and match officers.

For drinks, personal disposable bottles must be used exclusively. They must be collected and disposed of appropriately.

3.5.4. Team benches, technical seats and additional seats

Substitutes and coaching /technical staff may remain at least 1m apart on the bench. Solutions must therefore be found to extend the team benches or separate each seat on the bench.

Technical seats must similarly be separated. Solutions to adapt this seating may include the use of adjacent seating in the stands if accessible possible.

NB: Up to 10 additional seats must be earmarked in the stands next to the benches for members of each team's tested pool who are not part of the matchday Zone 1 delegation e.g. suspended, injured or unlisted players or technical staff who are not part of the matchday group. These persons are provided segregated seating close to Zone 1 to avoid any contact with working staff, but they may not enter Zone 1.

The seats for these people must therefore be in the tribunes in Zone 3 but must still be segregated from everyone else in this Zone and from any working positions in this area. An appropriate accreditation or access system (e.g. supplementary access device) must be used to access these seats.

3.5.5 Player warm-up areas

Players of each team should warm up in separate zones, so a separate warm-up area should be marked out in each half of the pitch area. If this is not possible due to space limitations, the standard warm-up area must be used, but players of opposing teams must remain as apart from each other as possible during warm-ups.

3.5.6. Doping Control

Waiting room may be required for players to ensure that social distancing can be maintained. The GFA will follow the doping control procedure as provided in the Doping Control Regulations.

4. MATCH DAY OPERATIONS

4.1. Ball Retrievers

For pitches surrounded by an athletic track or significant distance to the stands, 6 to 8 ball retrievers may be deployed. If there is no athletic track around the pitch, 4 to 6 ball retrievers may be deployed. They must be positioned in Zone 2 around the pitch behind the pitch perimeter advertising boards.

In addition, 4 to 6 ball retrievers (or groundskeepers) may be positioned in the stands (Zone 3), as dictated by the configuration of the stadium.

Ball retrievers must:

- Wear mask.
- Keep the ball on the ground at their feet until needed.
- Disinfect their hands / wash their hands before and after warm-up and before and after each half.
- Maintain at least a 2m distance from the players at all times.

The Home Team must find out whether parental consent is required for ball retrievers' assignments and parents must also be informed of the entrance checks (temperature measurement, hand wash and other protocols) applicable to the ball retrievers.

In addition, all match balls must be disinfected at the end of the warm-up (if the same balls are to be used during the match) and during half-time.

4.2. Pitch-Side Medical Team

The pitch-side medical team must use PPE as prescribed by the local authorities and follow the local health regulations for any on pitch lifesaving procedures such as cardiac arrest or spinal trauma.

4.3. Pre-Match Warm-Ups

The time spent in the dressing room should be kept to a minimum. Players may therefore access the pitch to start their pre-match warm-ups earlier than the normal allocated time. Exact timings must be agreed at the latest at the MCM in order to avoid any overlap with other activities such as pitch maintenance.

4.4. Opening/Line-Up Ceremony

Teams will not line up together in the tunnel as usual before the opening ceremony to avoid congestion in the tunnel area. Teams must therefore exit the dressing room directly to the pitch one team at a time for the on-field pre-match line-up.

Players and referees must maintain at least 1m distance between each person during the line-up ceremony.

No additional activities shall be organised (e.g. player escorts, mascots, dancers, musicians, etc.) without permission by the GFA. In addition, there shall not be any handshakes between teams or with the referees. The coin toss will still take place after the line-up ceremony with the two captains and the referee only, while still maintaining a 1m distance.

Pennants may be exchanged as agreed between the two teams.

At half-time and second half the teams should again avoid congregating in the tunnel and must instead exit directly to the pitch according to the timings indicated in the match countdown.

4.5. Players and Staff on the Bench

Players and staff on the substitutes bench and technical seats are not required to wear masks during the match, but are required to maintain social distancing at all times when seated, and players should limit contact as much as possible when warming up.

Individual labelled drinks bottles must be organised by each team for each person on the bench, as well as for each player on the field.

4.6. Shirt-Swapping

Players are strictly refrained from swapping their shirts.

5. BROADCASTERS PARTNERS, MEDIA AND TECHNICAL SUPPLIERS

5.1. General principles

All companies and their staff present on site must comply with the applicable national/local legislation as well as all requirements of the GFA Protocols, including the mandatory wearing of masks at all times in the stadium on MD.

Where involvement in a match is arranged by GFA, the companies involved may be required to submit details of their own protocols, hygiene measures and operating plans, which must be adhered to if not exceeded by the GFA Protocol. Broadcasters must adhere to any national or local requirements with regard to their operations e.g. use of plexi glass dividers between operator positions.

The host team must ensure that any companies or staff operating at the stadium is informed of all the local requirements and restrictions, as well as the operational principles of this protocol. The Venue Manager and or the Club Safety & Security Officer must ensure that these requirements are respected.

In principle broadcast and media activities may continue subject to the specifications outlined in this section of this protocol and any other directive the GFA may give.

5.2. Staffing facilities and broadcast positions

5.2.1. Number of staff onsite

The numbers of broadcast staff and media attending a match will be decided based on, inter alia:

- The prevailing applicable legislation at the time;
- working spaces available (e.g. in the media tribune) with appropriate hygiene measures;
- total number of people permitted in the zones as defined in this protocol as well as any limitation on the number people allowed in the stadium under permitted capacity granted by the state authorities.

5.2.2. Broadcast compound and trucks

The compound must be arranged in a way that allows sufficient space for the movement of people without congestion e.g. vehicles appropriately spaced apart, creating additional routes or paths to limit any congestion of people.

5.2.3. Broadcast positions during the match

Manned pitch level camera positions will, in principle, only be allowed in Zone 2; however, certain standard manned camera positions may be used in Zone 1 (e.g. pitch-side halfway camera, steadicams) provided that they can maintain a 2m distance from the technical areas, player warm-up areas and the assistant referee.

5.2.4. Photographers during the match

Match photographers are limited to eight at each end of the pitch, four on each side of each goal. They must be in clearly marked positions preferably in Zone 2 behind the pitch perimeter advertising boards, however positions in Zone 3 in the tribunes may also be used if required. There must be a minimum of 2m between each photographer position.

5.2.5. Media tribune

The distribution of media in the stands must allow a 2m distance to be maintained. When in operations, commentators are temporarily exempt from the requirement to wear a mask, but must still wear one at all other times.

5.2.6. Media and photographer working areas

Media and photographer working areas may be used if enough space is available to allow social distancing (at least 4m² per person). Food and beverages may be provided if due measures have been taken for their preparation, packaging and distribution.

5.3. BROADCAST AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES

5.3.1. Press conferences

Pre-match and post-match press conferences may be held as usual.

They may either be organised with a video conferencing/remote system or by taking the following physical protection measures:

- Press conference podium at least 3m from the first row of seats and any photographer positions.
- Separate and exclusive access for the team representatives.
- Number of media who can attend must be restricted to a certain number and adapted so that a 2m distance between each person can be respected at all times.
- Photographer positions must be arranged by the Venue Media Officer to ensure a 2m minimum distance between each position and to other media representatives.
- All media attendees must wear face masks.
- Recording devices (Dictaphones, mobile phones etc) must not be placed on the press conference podium.

5.3.2. Filming team arrivals

One manned camera position in a fixed position pre-agreed by GFA at a minimum of 2m distance from players and team staff routes. If a suitable manned position cannot be identified that allows sufficient distancing from the teams, then a remote camera solution may instead be used subject to GFA's approval.

5.3.3. Pre-match stand ups

Stand-up positions may be allocated but only in Zone 2 and with at least 2m between the markings of each position. The maximum number of positions available will depend on the stadium configuration.

The number of persons per position is limited to six per position at any one time (including any interview guest).

5.3.4. Dressing room filming

Video Cameras and reporters may not be allowed to enter team dressing rooms for filming or pre-match stand-ups. Alternative solutions (e.g. remote cameras) may be considered subject to the approval of GFA and the relevant team.

5.3.5. Post-match flash interviews

Post-match interviews may be organized on/around the pitch in outdoor Zone 1 areas once the teams have left the area, or in a suitable pre-approved indoor location. The allocated area must allow for 4m² per person. The reporter and camera crew must stay at least 2m from the player at all times. Common sense must prevail in terms of location and access. For example, a player may be asked to leave Zone 1 to access the flash location and if the location is nearby and all contact can be avoided then this is acceptable

6. PUNISHMENT

6.1 PUNISHMENT

Any violation of the above protocols shall be referred to the Disciplinary Committee of the GFA or the appropriate state authorities.

Any club, team official, player, match official, club official or any person under the GFA who violates any of the above protocols or any GFA directive in relation to COVID – 19 shall be punishable by:

- 6.1.1 a fine not less than GHc1,000.00;
- 6.1.2 a stadium ban;
- 6.1.3 playing behind closed doors;
- 6.1.4 suspension of not less than two (2) matches;
- 6.1.5 and any other punishment or sanction as deems fit by the Disciplinary Committee.

6.2. Depending on the severity of the violation, the disciplinary committee may combine any of the above punishments.

7. MONITORING

The Match Commissioner after every match shall report to the Safety and Security Committee, the adherence or otherwise of all stakeholders for profiling and necessary administrative and disciplinary actions.

8. DIRECTIVES

The GFA shall have the power to issue various directives in relations to COVID-19 depending on the situation in Ghana on the advice of the National COVID-19 Response Team and in compliance with the directives of the State.

9. TESTING

The number of COVID-19 test to be conducted on each club and the other participants, the procedure and isolation and treatment protocols would be determined by the National COVID-19 Response Team together with the GFA.

10. ADOPTION AND ENFORCEMENT

These Protocols was adopted by the GFA Executive Council on November 9, 2020 and came into force immediately.

Accra, November 9, 2020
For the GFA Executive Council



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KURT EDWIN SIMEON-OKRAKU
(PRESIDENT)



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PROSPER HARRISON ADDO, ESQ.
(GENERAL SECRETARY)