

The Honorable Phil Murphy  
Governor  
State of New Jersey  
225 W State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

Thank you for your leadership during this difficult time. Your efforts to keep New Jersey residents healthy and safe during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic are greatly appreciated. We join you in your concern for the wellbeing of both the physical and mental health of our state's residents.

Regarding your Executive Order to suspend all non-essential activities, we ask that you consider adding golf to the list of outdoor activities currently being permitted such as hiking, bicycling and jogging. All are outdoor activities that can continue to be safely enjoyed by our citizens.

Golf Courses throughout New Jersey provide an important outlet for healthy behavior for thousands of people. They can provide a great opportunity for outdoor recreation during these difficult times. Health experts and epidemiologists have spoken recently about the need for such activity and how golf can be played safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Golf is unique among outdoor activities for the natural "social distancing" that occurs, as small groups of at most four individuals per group are spread across wide areas of play that in total, typically comprise between 100 and 200 acres. Golf is not a contact sport and one can easily play without ever getting within 6 yards of another person.

Since the start of the pandemic, golf course operators in New Jersey have taken action to provide a safe environment for golfers and their employees by following CDC recommendations and state guidelines for social distancing. You should be proud and pleased of how golf course operations have responded to directives designed to keep customers safe. They have closed pro shops and clubhouses entirely while still allowing players to play the course for exercise and safe social interaction. They have increased intervals in starting times to limit the possibility of groups congregating near the first tee. Ball washers, rakes, water cooler stations and other frequently touched items have been removed. The holes on putting greens have been modified so that players never have to touch the hole or the flagstick.

Golf courses have changed their payment policies to only accept greens fees online. Some courses are not allowing golf carts and requiring all players to walk. For those who cannot play without the use of a cart, clubs are mandating only one rider per cart – again to enforce social distancing - and carts are sanitized after each use. Private clubs have eliminated bag handlers and suspended the use of caddies, requiring golfers to handle only their own equipment.

The undersigned associations have come together to create Best Practices for the New Jersey golf courses in the wake of this pandemic. See the attached document for a thorough list of action items to make golf safe.

Golf is unlike other sports and most other activities. A single individual can go out and play 9 holes at sunrise or sunset and never see another person. Golf is a wonderful family activity – parents and their children, as well as husbands and wives play together. In the desperate atmosphere of the current pandemic, golf offers a respite, a much needed and safe refuge for thousands of New Jersey's citizens. It is an important opportunity to reduce stress and aid people's mental and physical wellbeing.

Each association listed below may have submitted an individual letter. Here we speak as one. Thank you in advance for thoughtful consideration of this request.



Maureen Sharples  
Executive Director  
GCSANJ



Chris Bauer  
Executive Director  
PGA NJ Section



Geoffrey Surette  
Executive Director  
PGA Philadelphia Section



Ryan Brennan  
President  
CMAA of NJ



David Wasenda  
President  
GCOA NJ



Kevin Purcell  
Executive Director  
NJSGA



## GOLF OPERATION BEST PRACTICES

### General

- Clubhouses not open, outside portion of course open only
- Restaurant facilities are closed or limited to take-out service only
- Place appropriate signage outside the pro shop briefly outlining the social distancing guidelines
- Maintain social distance of at least 6 feet at all times over the entire property including parking and practice areas
- Social distancing applies not only to fellow players but also to golf course employees
- Payments and transactions should be made online or by phone. If not possible, customers should manually swipe their own credit cards; employees are instructed not to handle any cards.
- Manage the line so that no more than 4 people are in the indoor registration queue at any given time - always 6 feet apart
- Eliminate the act of physically holding ID's, Access Passes or other forms of identification. Staff are now viewing these but not touching them.
- Increase starting time intervals to spread players out for registration and on the course
- Players waiting to play should not congregate, maintain social distancing at all times
- Starters no longer handling receipts - golfers are read the receipt number for starters to record
- No distribution of scorecards or pencils
- No caddies, no bag handlers, players handle only their own equipment and should not pick up discarded items such as used tees or stray golf balls
- Use of golf carts - single riders only
- Sanitation of golf carts after use
- No shotgun starts

### On the Course

- Superintendents must take every precaution to keep the maintenance staff and golfers safe by following all CDC protocols.
- Flagsticks and holes should be adjusted (raised cup liner, PVC or foam insert, etc.) so that cup and flagstick are not touched, players should be told not to remove or touch the flagstick
- Ball washers, rakes, benches, water coolers, used tee baskets and other commonly handled items on the golf course that can be removed should be removed.
- Remove water stations
- Players should also be told not to touch permanent structures such as rain shelters or benches that are permanently fixed
- Stakes marking penalty areas should not be touched

### Player Responsibilities

- PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE - WASH YOUR HANDS
- Please do not gather in small groups or clusters while on or off the golf course or driving range.
- Maintain strict adherence to social distancing.
- Golfers who fail to abide by these guidelines should be asked to leave the facility.
- If you do not feel well - stay home!