

**Protocol for the regulation of measures to fight and contain the spread of  
Covid-19 in****BEACH CLUBS AND BEACHES  
in the Emilia-Romagna region****1. Purpose**

The primary objective of this regulatory protocol is to provide guidelines and directives, approved at regional level, aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the preventive containment measures adopted to contrast the COVID-19 epidemic within beach clubs and free beaches. This protocol is to be adopted for the so-called “Phase Two” of the reopening plan, with the aim of protecting the health of tourists, customers, operators and anyone working in the sector.

Beach clubs and free beaches, by their very nature, are bound to attract crowds, with large groups of people gathering there at the same time, especially in the weekends and high-season months, also due to the wide range of activities that they offer, both water and land-based (heliotherapy, swimming, food service, leisure and sports activities, etc.). Despite being for the most part outdoor activities, they still pose a risk of spreading the virus. This is why the following measures must protect beach club owners, workers, customers and more generally beachgoers, preventing the spread of the virus, without ruining the overall experience, so that tourists can still enjoy the hospitality and warmth our region is known for.

The operational guidelines contained herein shall be adopted by all businesses and Municipalities (for free beaches), who must identify the most effective measures and best procedures to be implemented on a case-by-case basis. However, we must not forget that, as citizens, we all have an individual responsibility to heed the current health advice and adopt such safety and preventive measures; this is why tourists, customers and beachgoers must be given adequate information on how to prevent the spread of the virus.

This document, which was drawn up with the cooperation of the General Directorate of Personal Care, Health and Welfare of the Emilia-Romagna region, and the Maritime Directorate of the Emilia-Romagna region, on 12 May 2020 was sent to local Traders’ Associations and Trade Unions and to the Municipalities representing the Tourist Destinations. It sets out a number of guidelines for businesses and individuals who own and/or operate beach clubs and Municipalities that manage free beaches, so as to identify the most effective measures to prevent the risk of infection from SARS CoV-2 (the virus responsible for COVID-19) and ensure the safety of customers, beach club staff and beachgoers in general.

These guidelines, laid down according to the *Protocol for the regulation of measures to fight and contain the spread of Covid 19 in the workplace* of 24 April 2020, which shall herein be deemed to have been endorsed in full, may be updated, supplemented or amended, in line with the evolution of the Government's provisions for the "Phase Two" reopening plan (to be followed in order to meet the safety requirements to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic), the evolution of the epidemiological situation, and any further national or international technical-scientific indications.

As for the specific measures to be implemented in order to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and safely perform any activities/tasks, reference should be made to any further provisions laid down in each specific corporate/local protocol, in compliance with the aforesaid Regulatory Protocol of 24/04/2020 or any specific health provisions.

Such protocols may also focus on other aspects within a specific sector, for example training.

## **2. Scope and structure of the protocol**

This protocol applies to all beaches and beach facilities, and more specifically: beach clubs, be they in privately or publicly-owned beaches; free beaches; bathing.

The document is divided into the following sections:

- A. BEACH CLUBS
- B. FREE BEACHES
- C. BATHING

The document includes prescriptions, recommendations, indications and operational suggestions.

Prescriptions will be included in the 2020 Bathing Ordinance, which will set out specific obligations and prohibitions regarding the extraordinary situation of the 2020 Bathing Season, in order to enforce consistent preventive and safety provisions throughout the region.

## A) BEACH CLUBS

### 1. General measures

#### Information and communication

Given the importance of individual responsibility in heeding the current health advice and adopting the appropriate safety and preventive measures, beachgoers must be given adequate information on access and behaviour rules so as to prevent the spread of the virus.

More specifically, the beach manager, through the most suitable and effective means, must inform all staff members, customers and anyone entering the beach about the provisions in force by distributing and/or posting special information leaflets and multilingual signage by the entrance and in the most visible places within the facility.

More detailed guidelines can be found in the *“Technical guidelines for the production, marketing and serving of food to prevent SARS COV-2 transmission”* protocol by the Regional Department for Disease Prevention and Public Health (hereinafter: Food Protocol).

#### Rearranging spaces, venues and entrance points

Where possible, rearrange spaces so as to prevent overcrowding and ensure that customers and staff can practise social distancing (at least 1-metre distance).

Always promote outside spaces, as there is a lower risk of spreading the virus outdoors.

Particular attention must be paid to indoor areas, where appropriate distancing must be ensured between workstations and services.

More detailed guidelines regarding employees, suppliers, common areas, workspaces, etc., can be found in the Food Protocol. As for customers and their access to the facilities, see Paragraph 2.

#### Personal protective equipment

All employees and workers must use personal protective equipment. For further information, reference should be made to the Food Protocol.

#### Cleaning, disinfecting and sanitising

Facilities, rooms, workstations and common areas must be cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis. High risk areas must also be sanitised when needed.

More detailed guidelines on cleaning and disinfection and the difference between cleaning, disinfecting and sanitising can be found in the *“Technical Guidelines for Cleaning, Disinfecting and Sanitising to prevent SARS COV-2 transmission”* protocol drawn up by the Regional Department for Disease Prevention and Public Health (hereinafter Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines).

More detailed guidelines for the food service sector can be found in the Food Protocol.

Generally speaking, all cleaning operations must be scheduled taking into account the use of the spaces, paying special attention to high-touch surface areas such as horizontal surfaces at face and chest level, handles, switches, tabletops, etc.

In addition, ensure availability of hand sanitisers in multiple locations for all to use.

## 2. Access to the beach

All beachgoers must enter the beach and beach facilities in an orderly manner to prevent overcrowding and maintain at least 1-metre distance.

Wherever possible, create separate paths for entrance and exit.

Beaches that are known to have a huge influx of people coming and going must find a way to limit the number of people allowed in at any one time, for example by introducing a reservation system (either online or by phone), so that beachgoers can get a beach lounge set until there are no more spots available. Beaches will have a limited number of spots, so as to ensure social distancing rules are adhered to as provided for in Paragraph 3. The foregoing especially applies to new or one-time customers, who must go to the reception area to see if there are any spots available so as to check in advance and speed up on-site procedures.

To this end, the creation of reservation systems and online platforms to check the availability of beach umbrellas, sunbeds and other services is strongly encouraged.

When at least 1-metre distance cannot be maintained, staff members must wear protective equipment (e.g. face masks or face shields/screens) and provide customers with all necessary information on access and behavioural rules that need to be followed to prevent the spread of the virus.

In order to avoid long queues or crowding at the checkout, encourage the use of electronic and contactless payment methods, also through online platforms/portals.

In case of rain or bad weather, customers cannot seek shelter in the beach facilities that do not allow for social distancing to be observed (restaurant seats, bars, halls, etc). The same does not apply to employees and workers.

In order to ensure the efficient cleaning and maintenance of the premises, beach facilities can close at night and access can be denied to non-customers during the day, in compliance with the Bathing Ordinance for the 2020 summer season.

### 3. Beach services

To ensure social distancing between beachgoers, beach equipment must be spaced so that there is at least 1-metre distance between people.

Pursuant to Bathing Ordinance no. 1/2019, there must be a distance of at least 2.50 metres between rows, whereas beach umbrellas in the same row must be at least 2 metres apart.

In the light of the above, according to the Bathing Ordinance for the year 2020 beach umbrellas must be positioned as follows:

Beach umbrellas must be as far away as possible, ensuring that the required minimum distance between rows and umbrellas in the same row is maintained, with at least **12 sq. m. available for each umbrella**. The same also applies to other shading devices. (reference should be made to the Bathing Ordinance for year 2020).

**As for sunbeds, beach chairs, etc.** outside the umbrella area, they must be spaced **at least 1.5 m apart** (Note: *you may also establish a minimum area in sq. m.*).

This shall not apply to people who are not subject to social distancing pursuant to the applicable law (guests staying in the same room or dwelling; people from the same family, etc.). The beach manager is not required to check whether customers are from the same family or living together.

Equipment and facilities (e.g. sunbeds, beach chairs, floats and boats) must be **cleaned** daily and disinfected on a regular basis with a chlorine-based solution or any other product approved by health authorities. Either way, all equipment must be disinfected before and after each customer.

In order to allow customers and beachgoers to enter the beach in an orderly manner, speed up the registration process, and keep track of customers so as to help the relevant authorities, you may adopt the following measures:

- Number each spot/umbrella and keep a list of both one-time and seasonal customers for each spot, to assess the capacity of the existing facilities and for possible health surveys;
- Create routes for people to go to/from their spot/umbrella and the shoreline;
- Have well-trained staff accompany customers to their spot/beach umbrella and explain what preventive measures need to be taken.

### 4. Toilet facilities-showers-bathing huts

Toilet facilities (for both customers and staff): toilet facilities must be cleaned several times during the day, also depending on how many people have used them, and must always be disinfected at the end of the day after closing time. Establishments should ensure uninterrupted availability of soap, cleaning products and disposable cleaning tools for customers to use.

Showers: encourage the use of outdoor showers, which require less disinfection. Showers must be cleaned daily the same way they were cleaned before the COVID pandemic; however, they must always be disinfected at the end of the day.

Bathing huts: bathing huts cannot be used by different people at the same time, with the exception of families or people staying in the same room or dwelling in a tourist accommodation facility of the region.

Bathing huts must be disinfected before and after each customer.

If they are used as changing rooms, they must come with cleaning equipment (see toilet facilities).

## **5. Restaurants and bars**

As for hygiene standards in restaurants and bars, more detailed guidelines can be found in the “*Technical guidelines for the production, marketing and serving of food to prevent SARS COV-2 transmission*” protocol annexed hereto.

In order to keep serving as many customers as possible while limiting the number of people allowed inside bars and restaurants at any one time, it is recommended that such businesses deliver food and beverages directly to the customer’s umbrella/sunbed, always maintaining at least 1-metre distance. Setting up outdoor tables and chairs is strongly encouraged. To this end, and to further space tables apart, pursuant to the extraordinary Bathing Ordinance for the year 2020 Municipalities may allow tables to spread out also in the so-called multi-purpose areas.

## **6. Children’s playgrounds and sports activities**

### Children’s playgrounds

The perimeter of outdoor children’s playgrounds must be clearly defined, with only a limited number of children allowed in at any one time. Children must be supervised by their parents and follow the regulations in force. For further information, reference should be made to the Regional Protocol for Summer Camps. Any equipment must be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.

### Beach games and sports

Beach games and sports activities are permitted as long as they take place in specific areas (multi-purpose areas) and in compliance with social distancing rules (art. 1 par. 1 lett. f) DPCM April 26: sports activities are allowed as long as a 2-metre distance is maintained).

Individual sports that take place on the beach (e.g. matkot) or in water (swimming, windsurfing, surfing, kitesurfing) do not pose a significant risk of spreading the virus and can be practised in compliance with social distancing rules.

As for dual and team sports (beach tennis, beach volleyball, beach soccer etc.), reference should be made to the provisions set out by the Ministry of Sports and by sports associations (the Italian National Olympic Committee, Sports Federations), especially with regard to higher risk sports.

As for competitions and tournaments, reference should be made to the applicable State regulations.

## **8. Entertainment and shows**

It being understood that reference should be made to the specific provisions applying to such activities, bathing ordinances should prohibit dance parties and music events, with the exception of concerts where the audience members can sit at a safe distance from each other.

Planning and advertising activities involving people gathering together, such as dancing, happy hours, buffets, etc., is not permitted.

## **8. Swimming pools and spas**

In order to keep swimming pools and spas open to the public, adopt the preventive and safety measures specifically introduced for the reopening of such facilities. In cases where such measures cannot be adopted, access to such facilities will not be permitted.

## **9. Procedures**

Keep a register and/or a check-list for each step and/or activity: a document reminding the guidelines and the relevant measures adopted in detail, including date, hour, all cleaning, disinfection and sanitation procedures, the products used, the staff in charge, etc.

## **10. Staff training and information**

The company running the beach club must train and inform its staff through in-house training sessions that include these guidelines and any other organisational business procedures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

All staff members, including third party workers, must strictly adhere to these guidelines.

## **11. Employee health screening**

The beach club manager may conduct temperature checks on all employees, workers and casual workers on entering the premises. People who have fever (above 37.5°C), cough or difficulty breathing will not be allowed to work and instructed to immediately contact the local health authorities.

## B) FREE BEACHES

Free beaches, which are usually characterised by the absence of beach infrastructure and facilities, make it so that beachgoers can enjoy the beach freely, without having to use specific equipment and paid services. It is paramount that tourists and locals alike have the opportunity to access such beaches.

However, while beach clubs have a manager in charge of implementing the measures for the prevention and containment of COVID-19 (by spacing out beach equipment to encourage social distancing, for instance), when it comes to free beaches it is harder to identify and take appropriate and effective actions to maintain social distancing and avoid overcrowding.

### 1. Individual behaviour

In order to minimise the risk of infection, all beachgoers must act responsibly and do everything they can to abide by the safety and preventive measures in place.

To this end, awareness raising campaigns and initiatives on how to keep safe (through leaflets, signage, social media, etc) are strongly encouraged.

### 2. Duties of the Municipalities

Municipalities, which are in charge of identifying, regulating and cleaning free beaches, as well as providing a lifeguard service, must also monitor and regulate access to them. Municipalities must identify the most appropriate and effective measures to minimise the risk of covid-19 infection, in compliance with the regulations of the extraordinary 2020 Bathing Ordinance of the Emilia-Romagna Region and taking into account the characteristics of each beach, including their location and visitor flow rate (also according to season).

However, all free beaches must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Warning signs in multiple languages listing the main preventive measures (maintain at least 1-metre distance, avoid overcrowding, and any other provisions) must be displayed at the entrance of the beach.
- When positioning their equipment (beach umbrellas, sunbeds, beach chairs, etc.), all beachgoers must follow the same social distancing rules adopted by beach clubs.
- Appropriate measures must be taken for the cleaning of the beach and the sanitation of any shared facilities, such as toilets.

Where possible, Municipalities may consider adopting the following measures with regard to the most popular and crowded free beaches (see map):

- appoint special institutions or entities that can provide trained staff - also through agreements with third sector bodies, lifeguard cooperatives, etc. - that will be in charge of monitoring one or more areas, in order to avoid overcrowding, provide beachgoers with information on how to prevent the spread of the virus and how to place beach umbrellas and beach equipment to maintain social distance;
- Limit the number of people allowed in at any one time;
- Find the most appropriate methods to explain to beachgoers how to position their equipment (beach umbrellas) in compliance with social distancing rules. Such rules include: positioning umbrellas at the far ends of the beach to ensure that there is a safe distance both between rows and within the same row; creating routes for people to go to and from their spot/umbrellas; placing markings on the sand

using rope or tape lines (do not use poles or barriers that are likely to cause an obstacle or danger to other people);

- Implement measures from Local authorities promoting the use of registered and controlled free beaches.

Municipalities may also consider:

- any further restrictions to prevent beachgoers from reaching the neighbouring beach facilities by sea or by walking along the shore (except in cases of emergency or necessity);
- any regulations to prevent beachgoers from gathering along the shoreline (transit area) and avoid overcrowding.

It is understood that there should be constant cooperation between the relevant bodies to ensure that all guidelines are shared, applied, and their implementation monitored.

## C) BATHING

Even bathing must comply with social distancing rules (at least 1 metre) with no exception.

To this end, signage notifying the general public of the correct behaviour to adopt while bathing (social distancing, no overcrowding), and a list of the allowed and forbidden water sports activities should be posted in visible places.

### Lifeguard service

Lifeguards will keep providing safety cover, in accordance with the Ordinances of the relevant Authorities.

Bologna, 12.05.2020