



April 20, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Dear Governor Wolf,

Thank you for your leadership during this difficult time. Your efforts to keep Pennsylvania 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, jogging and fishing. All are outdoor activities that can continue to be safely enjoyed by our citizens. The golf industry in Pennsylvania would like to be part of the solution as life slowly gets back to normal. We request that when we reach the deadline of the Stay-At-Home Order on April 30, that golf be included among those activities that are allowable, like the recently announced opening of golf in Wisconsin, Michigan and New York along with the extension of their Stay Home Orders.

Golf Courses throughout Pennsylvania 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 feet of another person.

Since the start of the pandemic, golf course operators in Pennsylvania 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 responded prior to the order to cease operations. They closed pro shops and clubhouses entirely while still allowing players to play the course for exercise and safe social interaction. They 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 were removed. The holes on putting greens were modified so that players never had to touch the hole or the flagstick.

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

The Pennsylvania Alliance for Golf has created a Best Practices for Pennsylvania Golf Courses in the wake of this pandemic. Below is a 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 golfer. 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 Pennsylvania's citizens. It is an important opportunity to reduce stress and aid people's mental and physical wellbeing.

Sincerely,
The Pennsylvania Golf Alliance

Statement from the Pennsylvania Alliance for Golf– We can be part of the solution!

The **Pennsylvania Alliance for Golf** embraces the opportunities for the future of the game, and provides a unified voice from all facets of the golf community in Pennsylvania. Even in these unprecedented times, with the COVID-19 threat affecting all aspects of life as we know it, golf is available as an outlet for people to exercise and provides one of the few respites from the confines of home. With vast areas of open space containing green grass, ponds and trees, a golf course provides the ability for social distancing in a stress-free environment.

Recently, our game and business has been, along with many others in the state, significantly impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19. The Pennsylvania Alliance for Golf is committed to doing all it can to support its constituents by being a resource of information and a clearinghouse of best practices that will provide guidance to any and all facilities, operators, golf professionals, club officials and stewards of the game.

Golf is widely seen as an activity that is viable and relatively low risk, however there are still precautions that need to be in place to ensure the safety of players, golf course staffs and club/course officials. The following are a few examples we could implement at the golf course level to help ensure the regulations laid out by the Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization are being met:

- The golf course will be for golfers only to manage activity levels, all non-golfers/members will not be permitted.
- Advocating players to walk and/or restricted riders to one per power cart.
- All clubhouse/food and beverage to continue with their permitted take-out service and to then follow in accordance with the business practices of reopening of restaurants as defined by the state.
- Retail stores/pro shops should not be open and in-person retail sales to reopen as defined by the state.
- Restriction of payment types to recommend online transactions to help eliminate handling of cash or credit.
- Increasing of tee time intervals/policy to help create appropriate social distancing between groups.
- Removal of flagsticks, or similarly effective methods with cup liners, to avoid additional touch points.
- Removal of bunker rakes and other on-course furniture like benches, ball washers, water coolers, etc.
- Remove all common use distribution of such items as tees, scorecards, pencils, ballmarkers, etc.
- Installation of signage to encourage no group congregation or limiting numbers and communications and directives for check in policies from their cars.
- Personal push carts to be permitted only if brought by the golfer, club push carts are not allowed.
- All golfers must use their own golf clubs. Sharing golf clubs, rental golf clubs is not allowed.
- Ensure restrooms are frequently cleaned and appropriately sanitized throughout the day.
- Posting signage to encourage compliance of CDC regulations such as no hand shaking, frequent hand washing.
- Having staff always wear protective gloves and face masks following the orders in place and as needed.
- Monitoring parking lots by essential employees to ensure congregation and tailgating does not happen.
- Educating staff on CDC requirements and proper hygiene and sanitation regulations.
- Keeping up to date on all changes that are happening daily and weekly on the informed plan once determined.
- Golf bag must remain in the golfer's possession at all times. After play, no staff member should handle bags. Recommend keeping clubs in car or at home. It should not be returned to the bag room.
- Staff levels appropriate to facility activity. (i.e. fewer staff when possible to limit possible exposure).
- Golf and grounds staffs should be provided areas where social distancing can be accomplished.

The Pennsylvania Alliance for Golf is working on your behalf to help mitigate any detrimental outcomes that might occur during these extraordinarily unprecedented times. Our success depends on all of us banding together to create a synergy that will propel us beyond these dark times into prosperity.

The **Pennsylvania Alliance for Golf** was formed to create a unified voice for the future of golf in Pennsylvania. Supporting Pennsylvania golf organizations include; Central Pennsylvania Chapter of Club Managers Association, Golf Association of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Golf Association, Pennsylvania Golf Course Owners Association, Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association (all seven Pa. Chapters), Philadelphia & Vicinity Club Management Association & Philadelphia Club Foundation, Philadelphia PGA Section, Pittsburgh Chapter of the Club Management Association of America, Tri-State Section PGA, Western New York PGA Section, Western Pennsylvania Golf Association.

Thank you,
The Pennsylvania Alliance for Golf