

Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

# IMSA COVID-19

Guidance on Limited Reopening of Men's Sheds  
for Shedders



Seirbhís Sláinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt

Building a  
Better Health  
Service

# CONTENTS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| A Message from the CEO                         | 1 |
| Introduction                                   | 2 |
| 1. Before you attend your shed                 | 3 |
| 2. Visiting the shed under restricted measures | 3 |
| 3. Social Distancing                           | 4 |
| 4. After you leave the shed                    | 4 |
| 5. Accessing Support                           | 4 |

This document provides advice and guidelines to support the safe reopening of your shed. It is not a list of do's and don'ts and at all times we would ask that you follow government guidelines and public health advice. We recognise all sheds are different and come in different sizes with different groups of people. We hope this resource can support you and your shed to open in a safe and appropriate manner.

June, 2020.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear shedders,

We live in very unusual and challenging times. COVID-19 has changed all our lives, and no-one knows when things are going to go fully back to normal.

We all know how much of a difference sheds have made to their communities, and how important they are to our thousands of members. We understand how painful it has been for all of you to be separated from your sheds over the past few months.

We decided to temporarily close all sheds at an early date, because your safety and health is our number one priority. We would never ask or expect any of you to put your health, or the health of your loved ones, at risk.

As of May 2020, the Irish government and HSE have set out a plan for gradually reopening society, called A Roadmap for Reopening Irish Society and Business.

This document explains how the government's plan affects men's sheds. It will set out the steps you need to take, based on public health advice, to visit your shed in a limited capacity and in the safest way possible. Please remember that government advice can and will change depending on how the virus behaves at any given time. When those changes happen, these guidelines may also have to change.

To be absolutely clear, if you cannot follow the guidelines in this document, you should not attend your shed at this time in the interest of not only your health and safety but also in the interest of your fellow shedders, members and community. We all want to get back to normal and to carry on the incredible and important work our sheds do, but only if this can be done safely and with the least amount of risk possible.

I want to emphasise the phrase "limited reopening"; these guidelines do not mean that your shed should fully reopen exactly as it was before. Limited reopening means reopening on a social basis so members can see one another, talk and catch up. It might be some time longer before sheds can return to something approaching complete normality.

We know that asking you not to use your workshop, collaborate on projects, eat together or shake hands etc goes against the grain of how sheds work. All of our advice is based on sound public health information. We all desperately want to get back to normal, but we cannot and will not risk the health or lives of our members by lifting restrictions prematurely.

We also have a special responsibility to keep our members in the 70+ age-group as safe as possible, because these are the most vulnerable to COVID-19. Members over 70 should follow current public health guidelines at all times, as should those who already suffer from a chronic illness.

Until we have the all-clear from the experts who are learning more about this virus every day, we're going to have to do things differently. We will be with you every step of the way, and your health and safety is the only thing that matters to us. It's in that spirit that we have prepared these guidelines.

You can stay up to date with daily updates at [www.hse.ie/coronavirus](http://www.hse.ie/coronavirus) and [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) and we will continue to post updates on the [menssheds.ie](http://menssheds.ie) website, social media channels and in our bi weekly news bulletins. Our office is open to help you 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday on 01-8916150 or [covidsupport@menssheds.ie](mailto:covidsupport@menssheds.ie)

Barry Sheridan  
CEO

**Irish Men's Sheds Association**

## INTRODUCTION

Before reading and acting upon these guidelines, it's vital that all members of the shed read and understand the following:

COVID-19 is a new virus which is not yet fully understood by doctors or science. We only know a certain amount about how the virus works, how it spreads and its effects on people. These guidelines should not be seen as hard-and-fast medical guidance, because the IMSA does not have the expertise to give you that.

Until there is a vaccine or an effective treatment for COVID-19, there will always be an element of risk in opening your shed, no matter what guidelines, rules or regulations are put in place. It is absolutely vital that every single member of your shed, understands that risk and is able to make an informed decision. We appreciate that some of these guidelines may appear stricter than what has been recommended for other sectors of society. However, we have to be mindful of the fact that many shedders are at greater risk of serious illness than most of the population.

To put it bluntly, until a vaccine or treatment is found, gathering in a confined space with other people could potentially lead to you catching the virus, and while most people will recover, up to 20% will become severely ill, and some of those will unfortunately not survive. The risk of severe complications and death is greatest amongst men in their fifties and older, and amongst those with other chronic medical conditions or in bad health generally.

Guidelines have also been issued to your shed with the aim to help minimise and manage that risk, but they cannot eliminate the risk altogether. These guidelines for you as a shedder are based on public health advice on minimising the risk of infection within indoor environments. The more fully you can comply with this advice, the lower the risk (although it will never be eliminated completely).

Protection of Shedders is not just the responsibility of the committee, it is the responsibility of every member of the Shed.

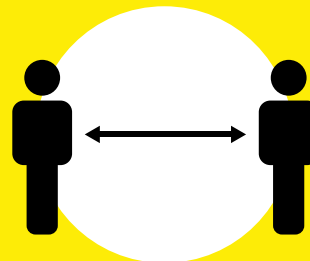
**Always follow the Government Guidelines of:**



**Good Hand Hygiene**



**Respiratory Etiquette**



**Social Distancing**

## 1. BEFORE YOU ATTEND THE SHED PLEASE READ

### THE FOLLOWING:

#### **You must stay at home if you:**

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have been overseas or exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have any COVID-19 symptoms which include any of the following:
  - a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above), a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry and shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
  - if you are feeling unwell in general.

#### **Before visiting the shed:**

- Read and understand the COVID-19 measures your shed has put in place.
- Make sure your shed has the right contact details and can reach you via phone/email.
- Only visit the shed when you have arranged a time with a shed committee member (for now, you should NOT just drop in without telling anyone in advance).
- Please remember attendance is your individual choice and no pressure should be placed on any person to attend the Shed.

## 2. VISITING THE SHED UNDER RESTRICTED MEASURES

- For the time being, you will have to arrange a time to visit the shed. You will do this by contacting the shed committee by phone or email. Your shed committee will be drawing up a rota of dates and times for shedders who want to attend and who comply with the criteria above regarding health and safety guidance.
- It's very important that you arrive at and leave the shed at the arranged time. This means we can limit the amount of people in the shed at any one time to the safest amount possible.
- If you need to bring a carer (or a family members who looks after your care) to the shed, you should - but only ONE. This person must also follow all the guidelines in this document, and you must also mention them when you phone or email to arrange a visit.
- Shedders should travel to the shed alone, or only with a member of the same household.
- Cars also need to observe social distancing. Leave as much distance as possible between parked cars. If you have to park close to another car, don't enter or exit the car at the same time as another driver or passenger enters or exits theirs.
- Don't cluster together on the way into or out of the shed - follow the social distancing guidelines at all times
- Make sure your hands are washed and clean BEFORE you enter the shed.
- Try to use the toilet at home before you visit the shed. We want people to use the shed toilet as little as possible, because shared toilets help spread the virus.
- Shedders should, ideally, bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer and antiseptic wipes with them where possible.
- The IMSA advises, in line with public health guidance, that shedders wear a face-mask or appropriate face covering while at the shed. Cloth face-masks should be washed between each use. Please be careful not to touch your face when putting on or taking off your face covering, and bear in mind that you should still avoid touching your face while you're wearing a mask or covering. Put disposable face coverings straight in a waste bin once you've finished with them. Reusable face coverings should go directly into a washing machine.

### 3. SOCIAL DISTANCING

#### To protect against infection:

- Don't shake hands or have any form of physical contact (touching) with other shedders.
- Keep 2 metres away from other people at all times.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, playing cards or any other items.
- If you wish to eat while in the shed please bring your own pre-prepared snack.
- Your shed will supply you with a disposable tea/coffee cup.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand-sanitizer, before and after eating, after going to the toilet, sneezing and coughing.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and dispose of any used tissue in your own bag and bring it home with you.
- Don't touch your face, or your face covering or mask. Don't adjust your face covering unless you've just washed your hands. Treat the covering like it was part of your face.
- Try not to touch any surfaces, but if you do, sanitize your hands as soon as possible.
- The workshop area of your shed will be closed. Please do not pick up any tools, paintbrushes, gameboards or other people's instruments while in the shed. Please only handle your own personal belongings to avoid risk of contamination.
- If you see someone who isn't following the rules within your shed, please remind them, kindly and gently – it's for everyone's safety and benefit, so you shouldn't feel embarrassed about this.
- If you're seriously worried that others within the shed aren't following these guidelines, please contact a member of the shed committee or the COVID Implementation Officer(s) immediately.

### 4. AFTER YOU LEAVE THE SHED

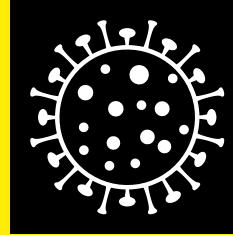
- Once your allocated shed visit has finished, please leave the shed promptly to allow the committee time to clean the shed for the next group coming in.
- Wash your hands as soon as possible.
- If you feel unwell after visiting the shed, you should first contact your GP/HSE and then inform your shed committee. The shed will then follow public health advice provided to them by the HSE on the next steps for their shed.

### 5. ACCESSING SUPPORT

Should you have any queries in relation to this document or the advice contained in it please contact the Irish Men's Sheds Association on 01-8916150 or email [covidsupport@menssheds.ie](mailto:covidsupport@menssheds.ie) The advice in this document has been prepared in conjunction with the HSE and public health guidelines. It is intended to keep you and all your fellow shedders as safe as possible. By following this advice, you are helping to keep not only yourself safe, but also to keep your fellow shedders safe.

# NOTES

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Irish Men's Sheds Association  
Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12.

Telephone: 01 891 6150

Email: [covidsupport@menssheds.ie](mailto:covidsupport@menssheds.ie)

Email: [info@menssheds.ie](mailto:info@menssheds.ie)

Website: [www.menssheds.ie](http://www.menssheds.ie)



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