



NOTICE TO COACHES NTC 06/20

26th June 2020

Coaching flying under COVID-19 conditions from 4th July

Even though some flying has been permitted in recent weeks, many pilots will need Coach guidance to gain, or return to, currency, as well as those who need to learn about their new aircraft. Dual training and testing for private flying has been prohibited for some time, but the Department for Transport has now agreed to allow it from 4th July, subject to the government's continued [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#). However, without any means of knowing with certainty that the person next to us is completely free from the virus, we should, justifiably, wish to minimize any risk to ourselves, our "students", or third parties. We need to carry out a risk assessment before every activity, and this notice should help.

We are still required to maintain a specific physical space between ourselves and others outside our households whenever possible. Even 1 metre separation will not be possible within an aircraft cockpit, so whatever mitigations we employ cannot be regarded as completely safe. Our risk assessments must take account of the fact that we are likely to:

- Breathe the same air in the cockpit as the pilot being coached.
- Share several of the same controls with the pilot.
- Share the controls with others who may have used or will use the aircraft.
- Share doors and handles, and access panels, with the pilot.
- Share doors and handles, and access panels with others who have used or may use the aircraft.
- Share the aircraft seats and seat belts with others who have used or may use the aircraft.
- Share the air, and touching maps and electronic devices, with the pilot during brief and debrief.
- Move the aircraft manually with the pilot.
- Move the aircraft manually with engineers and other pilots.

I do not wish to encourage Coaches, or the pilots needing their services, to do anything with which they feel uncomfortable, and fully support any Coach who wishes to remain "locked down", or feels they wish to restrict any coaching to particular individuals. However, for those who are prepared to carry out coaching flights, this suggests some possible mitigations.

Coaches may have advantages over an instructor employed by a flying school. It may be that the only person likely to use the aircraft before or after the flight will be the pilot who is being coached, which would restrict possible contagion to or from third parties.

Pre-Flight

There should be a maximum of 2 persons on board during flight. It goes without saying that all persons involved must believe they themselves are virus free. They should also agree to accept the possible risk of virus transmission, and (I suggest) certify that in writing beforehand. There are devices available to check people's temperature which may indicate the presence of the virus; several flying clubs already use these and record results. In any case, both the Coach and the pilot should log their own names and addresses, and those of everyone with whom contact below the government guideline distance is made. If an NHS contagion app is available, downloading and activating it would also mitigate the risk of spreading any infection. It would be ideal if the aircraft were 'sterile', ie had not been used by anyone other than the pilot and Coach in the previous 72 hours.

The pilot and/or their household members should prepare the aircraft for flight, carry out the daily check and sterilise (wipe down with alcohol or as recommended by engineers) all access areas, doors, handles, access panels, and flight and auxiliary controls. The Coach should not be involved but if necessary can assist in moving the aircraft (wearing gloves and maintaining distance) rather than involve third parties. The pilot and Coach should brief at 2 metres distance if possible, wash hands in accordance with the guidelines immediately before flight, and approach the aircraft separately.

The pilot and Coach should don their own flying gloves (sanitized before flight) or protective gloves (if not already worn), and a clean face mask if at all possible (although it is vital that communication remains clear). Ideally, they should wear their own flying coveralls or similar, which should have been washed if a cockpit has been shared with another person within a certain period; I suggest 14 days but government guidelines may advise differently. In addition to the mask, the pilot and Coach should consider wearing goggles, or spectacles. They should wear their own headsets, and if that is not possible the headset should be sterilised before flight (especially in the microphone area) and not used by anyone else for 72 hours afterwards.

In-flight

The cockpit should be ventilated as much as possible, so it is advisable to be dressed for the cold.

It would be sensible to attempt to avoid physical contact, so Coaches should be ready and willing to make switch selections on their side of the cockpit when asked, even on a test.

Both should try to only speak/make transmissions when facing away from the other crew member, but lookout must not be compromised. On training flights, consider sharing lookout responsibilities.

Post flight

As soon as possible after engine stop, the crew should achieve the recommended separation distance from each other, and wash their hands in accordance with the guidelines. The debrief should be carried out at 2 metres distance. Unless a further flight with the same crew is anticipated, the pilot and/or their household should again sterilise access areas, doors, handles, access panels, and flight and ancillary controls. Refuelling procedures should include the wearing of protective gloves and sterilizing touched surfaces afterwards.

If paperwork signatures are required, the pilot should complete as much as possible, under the Coach's guidance. The pilot can then leave their logbook, licence or debrief sheet as appropriate at the guideline separation distance for the Coach (perhaps wearing gloves) to sign. The paperwork, together with any charts or electronic devices which have been shared, could be placed inside a container, the exterior of which should be clean and only

touched by the pilot's already washed or sterilized hands. After 72 hours, the pilot should be able to remove the contents of the container and use them or send them to other agencies if necessary. Any payment due could be transferred through internet banking.

Ideally, to provide additional protection against contagion, the pilot should avoid flying (or coming into close contact) with anyone, apart from the same Coach or their own household, for 14 days. Similarly, the Coach should avoid flying (or coming into close contact) with anyone, apart from the same coached pilot or their own household, for the same period. Ideally, the aircraft cockpit should not be occupied by anyone other than the same pilot, the Coach, or their own households for 72 hours after the coaching flight, or any subsequent flight.

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