

A black and white photograph of a stadium at night, with the lights of the stands glowing against a dark sky. The top of the image features a decorative border of white geometric shapes.

# 2021/22 Season Protocol

22 December 2021

1st version

COVID-19



It's not football. It's LaLiga.

## CONTENTS

1. PREAMBLE.....	2
2. OPERATIONAL TEST.....	3
2.1 2021/22 Season Testing .....	3
2.2 Testing on return from holiday period and other occasions .....	3
2.3 Reporting daily test result to LaLiga.....	4
3. CODES OF CONDUCT FOR THE 2021/22 SEASON .....	5
3.1 Use of FFP2 mask.....	5
3.2 General .....	5
3.3 Dressing rooms (use during training sessions and on match days).....	5
3.4 Canteens and similar areas .....	6
3.5 Gyms, physiotherapy rooms and similar areas.....	7
3.6 Meeting rooms .....	7
4 TRAVEL .....	8
4.1 Planes, trains and buses.....	8
4.2 Hotels and pre-match training camps .....	8
5 PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A POSITIVE TEST RESULT.....	8
6 RULES OF COMPETITION.....	10
<b>7 ANNEX.....</b>	<b>11</b>
7.1 Reporting positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection .....	11

## 1. PREAMBLE

Since the onset of the global spread of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in March 2020, more than 5.5 million confirmed cases have been recorded in Spain, as well as 88,793 deaths<sup>1</sup> (latest figures as of 20/12/2021). The vaccination campaign has acted to mitigate the impact of the virus on Spanish society, leading to a marked decline in both the number of confirmed cases and the number of deaths.

According to figures provided by the Spanish Ministry of Health for the week of 20 December, close to 38 million people in Spain have now been fully vaccinated, which represents 89.7% of the target population and ranks as one of the highest percentages in the world. LaLiga is also in an enviable position, with around 95% of its players either fully vaccinated or protected by IgG+ immunity.

Despite this good news, the number of positive cases being identified in Spain has once again started to rise in recent weeks, signalling a sixth wave and a return to high risk levels of transmission. In this context, and together with the emergence of new variants, such as Omicron, we must remain vigilant and establish a **basic protocol for the implementation of a series of essential requirements and recommendations to help stop the spread of the virus.**

Although the set of measures adopted by LaLiga is aimed at protecting the players, coaching staff and other personnel involved in the running of the competition, the ultimate responsibility for compliance with the rules lies with the clubs and each individual, as the principal guarantors of their health and safety.

The epidemiological situation, circumstances, concurrent risks and decisions taken by the competent authorities will determine any possible modifications of this set of operational recommendations and procedures in order to ensure the integrity of the competition and safeguard the health of everyone involved in the process of returning to competition.

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<sup>1</sup> Data obtained from the [Ministry of Health](#).

## 2. OPERATIONAL TEST

### 2.1 2021/22 Season Testing

All clubs must carry out a daily antigen test for anyone entering the club's facilities (training, pre-match preparation, treatment, etc.).

The following indications should be taken into account in relation to operational testing on the day of an official match:

- Local Club: Early on the day of a match or when starting pre-match preparation prior to an official match.
- Visiting Club: Before travelling to the destination city hosting the official match.

This testing applies to the coaching staff and the players (first team and any members of the second team that are regularly involved with first team dynamics), and to any personnel in direct contact with the first team, regardless of whether or not they are fully vaccinated or have IgG + immunity.

LaLiga will supply clubs with antigen tests for daily operations. As such, the following limits have been set regarding the number of daily antigen tests provided:

- LaLiga Santander: 60
- LaLiga SmartBank: 60

Additionally, a PCR test must also be performed on a weekly basis during, at the very least, the first 15 days of January 2022, as well as a serological test during the same period. LaLiga will fund and manage these tests, applying the same limit as for the daily antigen tests.

### 2.2 Testing on return from holiday period and other occasions

PCR tests should be performed prior to the start of the first training session in the following cases:

- On returning from the holiday period (Christmas)

- At the end of FIFA international competition periods, with testing for any player called up for their national team prior to rejoining the squad of their corresponding club.
- At the clubs in the event that three or more consecutive days of rest have been granted.
- New team members or squad signings (professional players or members of the second team joining the first team or new coaching staff).
- Specific situations should be assessed in conjunction with LaLiga.

Similarly, provision is made for additional antigen tests to be carried out in these cases. Individual training is permitted following a negative result from this test. Once the results of the PCR tests have been obtained, the clubs are permitted to train as a group.

This testing applies to the coaching staff and the players (first team and any members of the second team that are regularly involved with first team dynamics), and to any personnel in direct contact with the first team, regardless of whether or not they are fully vaccinated or have IgG + immunity.

The completion of the PCR testing on return from the Christmas break will be funded and managed by LaLiga. As such, the following new limits have been set with regard to the number of PCR tests supplied:

- LaLiga Santander: 60
- LaLiga SmartBank: 60

### 2.3 Reporting daily test result to LaLiga

The club must provide anonymous, statistical reports on the results, as well as identify the number of people tested by category (professional/second team player, coaching staff or club personnel).

Clubs are reminded that medical services must, as a mandatory requirement, maintain a record of the **club's** epidemiological situation, i.e., keep track of all positive cases, close contacts, as well as the isolation and quarantine periods of each individual.

## 3. CODES OF CONDUCT FOR THE 2021/22 SEASON

### 3.1 Use of FFP2 mask

It is mandatory for all personnel to wear FFP2 masks at all times while on-site at the club's facilities, as well as while travelling. This requirement also applies to anyone entering the club's facilities (external personnel, journalists, camera operators, etc.), with the exception of the players while engaged in professional activities on the field of play.

FFP2 masks must also be worn in the dugout area on match days. Only the head coach will be exempt from this obligation if they wish.

### 3.2 General

Compliance with the following basic codes of conduct is advised for the rest of the 2021/22 season:

- Maintain social distancing with respect to other personnel within the facilities at all times.
- Ventilate the facilities at least once a day or, where appropriate, after each period of use. Maintain cross ventilation while the facilities are in use and, where possible, use CO<sub>2</sub><sup>2</sup> meters.
- Work with the same functional groups at all times, so that players and members of the coaching staff are grouped according to their vaccination or IgG+ immunity status. This should be taken into account in the organisation of all activities (training sessions, use of dressing rooms, meals, travel, etc.).
- Make hydroalcoholic gel available at the facilities to be used prior to access.
- In the case of presenting symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, diarrhoea, vomiting, etc.), inform the medical services immediately and follow their instructions.

### 3.3 Dressing rooms (use during training sessions and on match days)

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of <800ppm, it should be ventilated.

Dressing rooms are high-risk areas for SARS-CoV-2 transmission. For this reason, specific extraordinary measures must be adopted for these and other communal spaces.

As such, the use of dressing rooms during training sessions and on match day should be minimised as much as possible. Compliance with the following indications is recommended:

- The players and coaching staff should wear their relevant training/match kit to the facilities and shower either at the hotel or at home, as the case may be, afterwards.
- Make as many dressing rooms available for use as possible.
- Limit the number of people per dressing room to a maximum of seven.
- Establish set groups for using the dressing rooms that must be respected at all times. It is important that the same group distribution is always maintained and respected.
- A system of alternate shower usage should be established, closing one shower to be left free between each one in use.
- Areas that are not to be used in the dressing room and shower areas should be properly marked.
- The dressing room must be as well-ventilated as possible, with particular emphasis on ventilation after each use.
- Aerosols should not be used in the dressing room, with any such treatments used outdoors.
- Remember to wear a FFP2 mask inside the dressing room and maintain social distancing at all times.

### 3.4 Canteens and similar areas

Compliance with the following indications is recommended with regard to the use of club canteens and similar areas:

- Establish a maximum limit of four people per table.
- Seat the same groups of personnel together on a table in order to facilitate the potential identification of positive cases and close contacts.
- Keep the room as well-ventilated as possible.

### 3.5 Gyms, physiotherapy rooms and similar areas

It is mandatory for all personnel to wear FFP2 masks at all times while on-site **at the club's facilities**, with the exception of the players while they are exercising in the gym.

Similarly, compliance with the following indications is recommended for the use of gyms, physiotherapy rooms and similar areas:

- Use disposable towels for each exercise.
- Clean each machine or treatment table with disinfectant products after each use.
- Work in small groups, respecting the safety distance between machines or treatment tables.
- Keep the room as well-ventilated as possible.
- Establish shifts for using the room (small groups) to facilitate social distancing by all those present; and, where possible, always work with the same members of staff so that any potential positive cases and close contacts can be identified.
- Make outdoor gyms available wherever possible (weather, space, etc. permitting)

### 3.6 Meeting rooms

It is mandatory to wear an FFP2 mask during all coaching staff meetings or technical-tactical talks.

Similarly, compliance with the following indications is recommended during such meetings:

- Attendees should maintain a minimum distance of 1.5 metres from others.
- The space should be properly ventilated.
- Hydroalcoholic gel should be provided for use on entry.
- Minimise the length of time spent in these types of rooms as much as possible and attempt to hold meetings such as these in open spaces wherever possible.



## 4 TRAVEL

### 4.1 Planes, trains and buses

In addition to the regulations established by the airlines and train/bus operators themselves, compliance with the following indications is recommended:

- Minimise the amount of time spent in the terminal, keeping it as short as possible, adjusting travel times to that end.
- Do not use the commercial establishments inside the terminals.
- Wear an FFP2 mask at all times.
- Do not eat in enclosed spaces when travelling
- For bus trips (long or short journeys) provide the necessary quantity of buses to ensure social distancing and respect 50% occupancy.

### 4.2 Hotels and pre-match training camps

Compliance with the following indications in relation to hotels and training camps is recommended:

- Stay in separate rooms.
- Attempt to keep to the zones facilitated for the exclusive use of the club wherever possible.
- Wear an FFP2 mask at all times.
- Establish a maximum limit of four people per table (maintaining the same distribution of people at all times).

## 5 PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A POSITIVE TEST RESULT

In the event of a positive case being identified among the coaching staff or players (first team and any members of the second team that are regularly involved with first team dynamics), the following indications should be followed:

- 1) The positive case should be reported to:

- a. The Department of Health of the relevant Autonomous Community using the form provided for this purpose
  - b. The Club's Occupational Health and Safety Department
  - c. LaLiga, maintaining anonymity (see annex 6.1).
- 2) The regulations established by the Department of Health of each corresponding Autonomous Community must be complied with in relation to the quarantine period of the individual concerned.
  - 3) The club's medical services must carry out contact tracing in relation to any team members or personnel who may have been in close contact<sup>3,4</sup> with the positive case during the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or, in the event of being asymptomatic, in the 48 hours prior to the realisation of the test diagnosing a positive result, as well as during the period between the test being performed and receiving notification of the results from the laboratory. This anonymized report containing purely aggregate, statistical data must be submitted to LaLiga.

The following should be noted with regard to the identification of close contacts:

In the event that close contacts have been identified within the Club, according to the Ministry of Health<sup>5</sup>, fully vaccinated individuals and asymptomatic individuals who have had a SARS-CoV-2 infection confirmed by AIDT<sup>6</sup> in the previous 180 days, will be exempt from quarantine<sup>7</sup>.

For close contacts exempt from quarantine, it is advisable to carry out at least one AIDT (preferably a PCR) during the 10 days following the last contact with the confirmed case. Ideally, two tests will be carried out, one on notification

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<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the definition of close contact stipulated by the Ministry of Health (Section E.1; Ministry of Health: [Strategy for the early detection, monitoring and control of COVID-19](#))

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Health: [Guidance for Occupational Health and Safety Services in relation to exposure to SARS-CoV-2](#)

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Health: [Strategy for the early detection, monitoring and control of COVID-19](#)

<sup>6</sup> AIDT: Test used for the detection of active infection. Includes Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADT) and RNA viral load tests (via RT-PCR or equivalent molecular technique)

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Health release: <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/gabinete/notasPrensa.do?id=5615>

of contact and another approximately seven days after the last contact with the confirmed case.

Vaccinated contacts exempt from quarantine who are travelling by means of collective public transport will undergo an AIDT prior to the trip.

Any close contacts identified that are not fully vaccinated and have not had a SARS-COV-2 infection confirmed by AIDT in the previous 180 days must quarantine for 10 days, following the regulatory indications established by the Ministry of Health for each corresponding Autonomous Community.

In all cases, the possible development of symptoms compatible with the COVID-19 disease will be monitored.

## 6 RULES OF COMPETITION

The Extraordinary Provisions for COVID-19 set out in the First and Second Division Regulatory Standards and Competition Rules<sup>8</sup>, issued in RFEF Circular No. 95 of 28 June 2021, are applicable from the start of the 2021/22 season.

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<sup>8</sup> RFEF: [First and Second Division Football Regulatory Standards and Competition Rules](#)

## 7 ANNEX

### 7.1 Reporting positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection

LaLiga must, as a mandatory requirement, be notified of all positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection identified by the clubs.

Reports submitted shall exclude any personally identifiable information or information that enables the identification of the subjects concerned, being limited to the following:

- Information that confirms whether the positive individual is a member of the Club's squad or staff.
- The date the test was carried out.
- Confirmation of whether or not the person concerned has been fully vaccinated.
- In the case that they have, the date of the last dose administered and relevant vaccine manufacturer.