

# Mile End Climbing Wall

COVID19 Risk Assessment

And Procedures

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## CONTENTS

- 1) OVERVIEW
- 2) MANAGING CONTACT
- 3) MANAGING CAPACITY
- 4) MOVING IN AND OUT OF MECW
- 5) MOVING AROUND INSIDE MECW'S FACILITIES (SOCIAL DISTANCING)
- 6) PROTECTING MECW'S STAFF
- 7) ACCIDENTS, SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
- 8) VENTILATION
- 9) CLEANING
- 10) ANEXES

## 1) OVERVIEW

- This document has been created following ABC and government guidelines to minimise the risk of contracting and spreading COVID19 at Mile End Climbing Wall. Whilst it is recognised that completely removing the risk in climbing walls is impossible, we will do everything we can to keep customers and members of staff as safe as possible, while bringing back our so much loved and awaited sport; climbing. These are the government guidelines followed to create this document: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities>  
And these are the ABC support documents: <https://www.abcwalls.co.uk/news/coronavirus-updates-and-weekly-news/>
- Following these guidelines will certainly have an impact on the customer's experience, and, whilst we recognise the potential frustration that this might cause on some climbers, we all need to do everything we can to keep the COVID19 health crisis under control and provide the best possible environment for customers and MECW's workers.

## 2) MANAGING CONTACT

Objective: To minimise contact with surfaces, workers, other customers and contractors within facilities or while participating in sport and physical activity.

Primary control for minimising transmission through contact is through handwashing and sufficiently frequent washing and avoiding sharing of objects.

- Keeping customers and staff informed of how to minimise these contacts is key. This information is displayed on our website, social media and posters all around the centre.
- Hand sanitisers and or hand washing stations are provided at the entrance, exit and all around the centre. We have added 2 new hand washing stations (one by the car park queue area and one at the end of the counter, in the reception area) and 5 hand sanitiser stations (one by the self-scan in reception, one by the toilets entrance, one by the main hall, one by secret garden entrance and one by the corridor in the rope bay). Customers will be encouraged to wash/sanitise their hands before entering, during their visit and before leaving the premises.
- Regularly used surfaces will be cleaned every 2 hours (reception counter, toilet cubicles, door knobs, self-scan machine, water fountains, etc.).
- All doorways will be kept open during opening hours. This not only helps avoid contact, but also improves ventilation throughout the centre.
- Water fountains will only be used for personal bottles, no mouth to water fountains will be operational.
- No shared chalk bags will be available.
- No shared equipment will be available (free weights, dumbbells, ropes, etc.)
- Rental shoes will be sprayed inside and outside after each use.
- Rental harnesses will be quarantined for 72 hours after each rental.
- Customers will be encouraged to bring their own shoes, harnesses, and equipment.
- All bookings will be done and paid online to avoid contact between customers and staff during sales. If a sale has to be made on site, contactless transactions will be

advised. We have updated our card machines and raised the contactless cap from £30 to £45.

### **3) MANAGING CAPACITY**

Objective: To ensure distancing is possible by limiting the number of customers able to access the facilities.

With doors open and extractor fans active, air circulation will not be a problem and certainly will meet the government guideline of keeping an air flow of 20L per person per minute. This is considered very low and easily achievable simply by opening doors and windows even without mechanical systems, which we have.

- Our maximum capacity at any given time is currently 50 customers.
- To ensure this, we are offering 2 or 2.5 hours timeslots to customers. Booking and payment to be made online whenever possible. Booking on arrival is subjected to availability and over-the-counter sales will only be made when there's no other options (e.g. booking upon arrival can also be made online with a smartphone if there's spaces).
- We are keeping a 30 minute gap between slots to ensure everybody leaves the premises and staff have time to clean surfaces before the next group comes in.
- Each climbing area has a maximum number of climbers at a time. This is clearly displayed in posters and markings around the centre.

### **4) MOVING IN AND OUT OF MECW**

Objective: To ensure distancing among workers, customers and contractors when moving in and out of the premises.

- Queueing barriered system with signals to keep 2 meters apart is set up in the lower car park, which is not available for parking.
- One of the new hand washing stations will be set up here to encourage customers to wash their hands before entering the wall.
- Customers will be checked in on our system while queueing and then let in maintaining social distance.
- Customers will exit the premises using the same main entrance, which will be separated enough from the next group queueing to ensure social distance.
- There will avoid crossing from a group entering and a group exiting the facilities, as we are allowing 30 minutes break between groups.

### **5) MOVING AROUND THE FACILITIES (SOCIAL DISTANCING)**

Objective: To ensure distancing among workers and customers when possible whilst moving around inside the facilities.

- The lockers will be spread out and distributed to more areas than before. As there will only be 50 lockers needed at one time, many of them will be out of action to separate them further. Sanitising spray and tissue will be available for customers to use in their locker and locker key if they wish to do so.
- Even though we have made all efforts to distance the lockers and separate climbing spaces, etc., it is not possible to guarantee social distancing when moving around the centre. This is why face masks are MANDATORY for customers inside the centre when moving in and out, going to the toilets, using the water fountains and hand sanitising stations, using the lockers, moving from one designated climbing area to another, etc.). Customers can only remove them when climbing inside one of the designated areas, which allows for enough space to social distance from each other.
- To comply with the ABC guidelines of 1 person per 9 square metres, each wall or area will have a designated and marked floor area with a maximum number of people clearly visible in a poster and marked on the floor. This still allows for the usual safety rules of not standing underneath climbers and maintain the usual high level of safety as a priority.
- Changing rooms are out of action so customers have to arrive already changed for the activity, although these are available for customers with disabilities or special needs upon request.
- The maximum number of people in the toilets is reduced to 2 each. There's signage with more specific details by the toilet entrance.

## 6) PROTECTING MECW'S WORKFORCE

- PPE:
  - o Counter staff: Protective screens are installed on the counter to shield the counter staff when interacting with customers. Counter staff will not be required to wear a face mask, but MECW will provide FFP2 masks if requested.
  - o Routesetters: FFP2 masks are provided for route setters when stripping holds. These are not necessary when setting, as the holds have been previously cleaned. FFP2 mask and face visor to be worn when washing holds. FFP2 masks or face visors to be worn when routesetters or forerunners leave their cordoned off area.
  - o Floorwalkers: To wear face visor at all times. They can only take them off if they need to climb on the walls or access somewhere that has no transit of people (i.e. behind the walls or kit store area).
  - o Managers/office personnel: to wear FFP2 mask or face visor when walking around the centre. They can be removed while standing behind the counter or in the office, as long as social distance can be maintained from other staff members.
  - o PPE is available for any staff member that would like to go beyond the measures that MECW is taking to protect its employees.
  - o Hire shoes should be sprayed outside as well as inside to avoid smear infection. Whilst there is no evidence of virus transfer through sweat, for confidence, staff completing this work should wear gloves or wash their hands immediately after this task.

- Higher Risk workers:
  - o To help identify and address any particular cases where our workers might be at higher risk due to pre-existing conditions we have emailed all the workforce to ask about it and each individual case will be studied and addressed following the government guidelines copied below:

*“Objective: To protect clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.*

*Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have been strongly advised not to work outside the home.*

*Clinically vulnerable individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions), have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.*

*If clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to maintain social distancing from others. If they have to spend time closer to others than set out in the government guidance, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. As for any workplace risk you must take into account specific duties to those with protected characteristics, including, for example, expectant mothers who are, as always, entitled to suspension on full pay if suitable roles cannot be found. Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.”*

- It is inevitable that at times, workers will be unable to maintain social distance at MECW. Advice is that if you are unable to maintain social distance you should be either side to side or back to back and spend as little time as possible together. Virus transmission is more likely with face-to-face contact.  
On top of that, we have FFP2 masks, face visors and gloves ready available should any staff member prefer to use this even when not mandatory.
- Upon returning to work, workers will be trained on all the protocols and procedures related to minimising COVID19 risks (they are all listed on this documents). They will also have previous information about it through this document, which they will be sent beforehand and given the chance to give feedback on. This document will then be finalised and made public on our website, alongside all other relevant information for workers and customers to be aware of before the re-opening day; Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 2020.
- The staff room will have a maximum capacity of 3 people at a time, maintaining social distancing inside. A hand sanitiser has been installed by the door.
- The staff changing room will have a maximum capacity of 1 person at a time.
- Both routesetting cupboards will have a maximum capacity of 2 people at a time each.
- All rules applying to the public (hand washing/sanitising, social distancing when possible, toilet capacity, climbing capacity, etc.) also apply to workers both when working and not working.
- Before or after hours climbing for staff only will be allowed as long as the guidelines listed in this document are maintained, in the presence of a manager as usual.

- Shall any MECW worker have any doubt or disagree on any of these guidelines and procedures, they should contact a senior manager immediately and, if possible, before their return to work.

## 7) ACCIDENTS, SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Objective: To prioritise safety during incidents.

In an emergency (e.g. an accident, provision of first aid, fire or break-in) people do not have to stay appropriately distanced if it would be unsafe.

People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

- Although there may be heightened concerns around first aid, this will continue as normal.

The below adaptations will be used when needed:

- a. Staff undertaking rescue at height will use suitable PPE.
- b. Gloves and resuscitation face masks will be provided to all first aiders for emergency first aid.
- c. Face masks will be worn when administering general first aid.
- d. Government Guidance here will be followed.
- e. If the first aider deems the situation too urgent they should continue with administering first aid and medical advice should be sought afterwards.
- f. Used PPE should be disposed of in line with government guidelines.

## 8) VENTILATION

Ventilation is an important part of mitigating against the transmission of COVID-19. Ventilation into the building should be optimised to ensure a fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the facility and increased wherever possible.

Due to the amount of air flow and space usually present in our facility, it is not a concern that lack of ventilation will be a problem at MECW.

- All doorways will be kept open during opening hours.
- All extractor fans will be on during opening hours.
- All windows will be kept open unless weather doesn't permit it.

## 9) CLEANING

Objective: To make sure that, before re-opening, any site or location that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart. To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces. To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day.

- A professional clean of all the premises will take place on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup>, the day before re-opening.
- Regularly used surfaces will be cleaned every 2 or 2.5 hours (reception counter, toilet cubicles, door knobs, self-scan machine, water fountains, etc.).
- The facilities will be professionally cleaned daily after closing or before opening the centre.
- Sanitising spray and tissue will be available for customers to use in their locker and locker key if they wish to do so.
- Due to the lack of information on the best way to sanitise safety gear without compromising its integrity, all rental harnesses will be quarantined for 48 hours after each rental rather than being cleaned.

## 10) APENDIX

### APENDIX 1: REDUCED SERVICES:

To minimise the risks of COVID19 and have a period of adaptation to all these new guidelines and procedures after more than 4 months closed, we have decided to limit the services that we usually offer. We will keep a constant dynamic risk assessment and are looking forward to reintroducing services as soon as we deem it reasonable and safe, whilst adhering to government and ABC guidelines. Current restrictions will be:

- No supervised roped climbing; adult novices won't be allowed in the rope area.
- No supervised under 18's: The only under 18 year old's allowed to climb in the centre will be the ones previously registered as "independent climbers", having passed a test.
- No new registrations; only customers that are already registered will be allowed.
- No instructed session or coaching.
- No prepaid sells (10 passes, monthly or yearly passes). We will honour those that had already been purchased before we had to close and explain how to use them on the booking page of the website.
- No competitions or events.
- No spectators.
- No shared equipment other than rental shoes and harnesses.
- No roped climbing. Rope bay climbing will be available only for autobelays and only for customers registered as "competent climbers". Three extra autobelays have been put in place to allow for more climbing in the rope bay.
- No café. Food and drinks will not be sold.

As previously stated, we will look into reintroducing some of this services as soon as possible, and expect some of them to be available again within weeks or even days. Some others might need to wait longer until they can be offered again.

### APENDIX 2: CHALK:

There is a great deal of talk about the value of liquid chalk. We do not believe that there will be agreed proof that liquid chalk is an appropriate way to sanitise hands but we do believe that it will be a useful back up for customers.



Due to the way chalk is applied by a climber (before, not after a climb) it should not replace hand washing/sanitising. If a customer wishes to use liquid chalk, the ABC can find no evidence that it will increase any risk of COVID 19 transmission. Whether it will reduce transmission is still unproven.

Customers will be able to purchase liquid and regular chalk at the Rock On shop, as usual.

### APENDIX 3: IF COVID CASE IN FACILITY:

MECW will follow the PHE Guidance – ‘COVID-19 – Cleaning in non-healthcare settings’ while cleaning all areas of the facility.

*“In the event of an identified case in your centre, you will be asked for customer data – who attended on the same date at the same time as the infected case. You must ensure that you are able to produce this data and you may want to inform your customers that you will be doing so.”*

MECW supports test and trace:

If a case of Covid19 is identified at Mile End Climbing Wall we will be asked to provide customer/employee data to aid the government track and trace system. It is a condition of climbing/attendance at the centre that MECW will provide personal data to the track and trace authorities of all persons at MECW at the same date and time as an infected person in its support of the fight against the virus.