

SUBJECT	ISSUE DATE	NUMBER
COVID Q&A Circular 2 October Arrangements	Tuesday, 28 September 2021 Version 2 (Issued 8 Oct 2021)	11/21-22 Version 2

To	Club Presidents, Club Captains, Club Secretaries, SOG	
From	Peter Agnew ESM President	Elissa Hancock Director of Administration
CC	BOM, LSEC, JDC, SSC, MSC	

VERSION CONTROL

As the NSW Health Orders change from week to week – this Circular will be updated as required. Update will be circulated as required. The Change Table will provide an overview of changes.

VERSION CONTROL TABLE

Version/ Date	Change	Change
Version 2	Nipper involvement	Clarification provided that nipper vaccination is not required to participant in NSW Roadmap so Question 18 has been rewritten
Version 2	Patrol Numbers	From 9 October patrols can return to normal numbers
Version 2	Proof of Vaccination	Question 3 rewritten based on NSW Government advice on proof of vaccination
Version 2	Vaccination	Question 12 rewritten based on advice of “reasonable proof” guidelines issued by NSW Government
Version 2	Maximum numbers outdoors	Numbers increased from 20 outdoors to 30 at 70% and 50 at 80%

BACKGROUND

Surf Life Saving Sydney (SLSS) Circular 06 provided Clubs with guidance for the start of the 2021/22 Season. This Circular provides an update as agreed by the SLSS Branch Council and provides advice now that we’ve surpassed a 70% vaccination rate and move towards an easing and change of restrictions from **11 October 2021**. It is expected that we will transition to normal activity through November with limited restrictions by 1 December 2021.

This Circular should be read in conjunction with the Surf Life Saving NSW (SLSNSW) [COVID information page](#)

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KEY DATES FOR OCTOBER – NOVEMBER

Government Timing

The NSW Government's ease of restrictions has been triggered by the 70% double dose vaccination and come into effect on **Monday 11 October 2021**. The modelling indicates that 80% vaccination will be achieved in **late October**. The requirements for full vaccination status will be reduced on **1 December 2021**. Between 70% community vaccination rates and 1 December 2021 the NSW Government is asking that we exercise extreme caution.

Vaccination

SLS Sydney has adopted a vaccination policy (Appendix A) for Member involvement between now and 1 December 2021. This aligns with NSW Government Health Orders for the opening of community facilities and a requirement for patrons to be fully vaccinated. It also takes an additional step and requires Members undertaking group, or activity that involves some risk of exposure or transmission, the need to be fully vaccinated. This policy is temporary in nature, includes exceptions and may change with health orders. The policy will expire on or before 1 December 2021.

Clubhouses

Clubs (gyms and indoor recreational/sporting facilities) may open from 11 October 2021 for fully vaccinated Members under the one person per 4sqm rule. Classes can be undertaken for up to 20 people.

Patrol Season

Patrols will return to normal member numbers on the 9 October 2021. As of 28 September 2021. Only fully vaccinated (or exempted) Members can patrol in Sydney Surf Life Saving Clubs as per the vaccination policy (Appendix A). Check your Club requirements and exemptions.

Education and Skills Maintenance

Face to face training and skills maintenance can return between 11 October and 1 December 2021 for fully vaccinated participants, trainers, assessors, and facilitators in groups of up to 30 or as directed by NSW Public Health Orders and with a COVID safety plan in place.

Other Members will still be able to complete the online Skills Maintenance learning in the meantime – all Members should have been auto enrolled.

The SLSS Director of Lifesaving and Education may provide exemptions during this period for critical training required to meet lifesaving agreements.



Junior Activity:

Nippers may return in segregated groups of up to 200 from Sunday 31 October 2021 (or when the state reaches its 80% vaccination level - expected to be Monday 25 October). See Question 18 for details.

Surf Sports Competition

Sport activity will be limited to 30 people from 11 October 2021 for fully vaccinated Members. 200 people fully vaccinated can attend COVID Safe events from 80% vaccination levels. From 1 December 2021 events with more than 1000 people will require a COVID Safe plan. SLSS will be planning Surf Sports Carnivals from 1 December onwards.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CLUBHOUSE AND VENUES

Q1. Can Clubs open when we reach a 70% vaccination level?

Yes. The NSW Government has indicated that recreational and sporting facilities can open using the 4sqm rule from 11 October 2021. Club Management Committees will determine what sections of the Club will be opened and the timing of the opening in accordance with their COVID Safety plans.

Q2. Do I need to be vaccinated to enter the Club?

Yes. The NSW Government has indicated that only vaccinated Members will be able to enter community sporting facilities at this stage unless under the emergency services exemption for critical duties. Each Club will provide information on how this will be managed. SLSS will distribute 'Condition of Entry' posters as part of this requirement.

Q3. How will Clubs monitor Member access?

Surf Clubs are responsible for taking reasonable steps to prevent unvaccinated people from entering their premises. Some examples of 'reasonable steps' include:

- having prominent signs stating requirements (see posters distributed)
- Service NSW QR Codes sign in at club, gym or bar entry
- Officers or patrol captains checking vaccination status upon club or patrol area entry
- Using club tag system and switching on members access once proof of vaccination has been shown
- Promoting to members the need to be vaccinated before returning to duty



- Only accepting valid forms of evidence of vaccination QR ID or Certificates etc, or medical exemption.

Examples of reasonable steps that clubs are taking

- 1) Asking members to enter their vaccination type and number into Surfguard member portal (at the moment via the Hep B comments section before turning on their tag) Or asking to sight their vaccination certificate before granting access
- 2) QR Code sign into bar and sighting vaccination status
- 3) QR Code sign in at patrol and sighting vaccination status

SLSA were due to include the COVID vaccination status button and details in Surfguard but all work has been frozen during a major migration – this has delayed the release and it is expected to be two or more weeks before going live!

Q4. Will gyms be open?

Gymnasiums will be allowed to open for fully vaccinated Members and a COVID Safety plan. Clubs will determine the circumstances and timing of their gym openings that will depend on their ability to meet the Health Orders once released. The 4sqm rule will apply to the number of participants that will be able to gain access at any one time. From 1 December this will move to 2sqm rule.

Q5. Will the Surf Club bar / function area be open?

Club bars can reopen subject to Club COVID planning and one person per 4sqm inside and one person per 2sqm outside, with standing while drinking permitted outside. From 1 December this will move to 2sqm rule for indoor and outdoor settings.

Q6. Will masks be required to be worn in venues?

Masks will remain mandatory for all indoor public venues. Only hospitality staff will be required to wear a mask when outdoors. Children aged under 12 will not need to wear a mask indoors. Mask wearing outdoor will be subject to current Health Orders.

Q7. Will we require COVID Safety Plans/ Signage?

COVID Safety Plans will be central to reopening and we'll review our current template and monitor the release of industry templates. Member awareness material such as posters and plan templates have been provided to Clubs.

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VACCINATION

Q8. Does Surf Life Saving have a vaccination policy?

Yes. SLSS has a Vaccination Policy for transition between now and the government's easing of mandatory vaccination restrictions. This Policy will expire on or before 1 December 2021. The Policy is attached in Appendix B.

Q9. Do I need to be vaccinated to participant in SLS?

Public Health Orders require those entering clubhouse facilities, gyms and bars to be fully vaccinated.

During this transition period and based on government advice for us to exercise extreme caution, all Patrolling Members, Trainers, Assessors, Facilitators, Support Operations Members, Age Managers, Water Safety and those participating in groups and teams such as education squads, who are eligible to be safely vaccinated must be doubly vaccinated, unless they are exempt on medical or other grounds.

Q10. Why do we have a vaccination policy?

The policy's primary purpose is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Members and the community as NSW moves from restricted movement to greater public autonomy. This increase in movement has been recognised as a greater risk factor to those who are unvaccinated while vaccinations rates have not reached optimal levels.

Q11. Can SRC Candidates be vaccinated?

Yes. Every Australian aged 12 years and over is eligible for a COVID-19 Vaccination. SRC Candidates now have access to vaccination programs and will be able to join activity once they are fully vaccinated.

Q12. How will vaccination status be shown?

Members will be requested to provide proof of vaccination or medical exemption. The NSW Government COVID website provides details of ways of providing [proof of vaccination status](#). Each Club will communicate with its Members its method of requiring proof of vaccination. See Question 3 for examples.

- Proof includes: A COVID-19 digital certificate displayed through the Medicare App, Service NSW App or equivalent smartphone wallet.
- Printed version of the COVID-19 digital certificate or immunisation history statement.
- Successful completion of a Service NSW QR check-in that includes vaccination confirmation.



All health-related records will be kept confidential and secured by the club in line with SLSA Privacy Policy. The SLSA SurfGuard portal is also in line with federal privacy legislation.

Q13. What exemptions are in place?

As an Emergency Service, SLSS has been provided with a number of exemptions around the use of facilities and for critical education training. The Club or SLSS Board of Management may endorse appropriately risk assessed activity for the exemption on the use of facilities and the SLSS Director of Lifesaving and Education will provide exemptions on critical education training.

Clubs may also, through resolution of their Club Board, put alternative arrangements in place for Member vaccination requirements that fall outside of the Public Health Orders. (see exemptions in the Vaccination Policy, Appendix B)

LIFESAVING AND PATROLS

Q14. What are the arrangements for Patrols between 70% and 80% vaccination rates?

Patrols will return to normal patrol status of Members who are fully vaccinated (or exempt). If Health Orders change, a number of contingency arrangements are contained within our COVID plans.

The SLSS Director of Lifesaving and Education will continue to liaise with Club Captains regarding any changes to requirements. The overarching goal is still to minimise Member, public and gear/equipment exchanges/interactions to reduce the risk of exposure.

Q15. Can SRC holders now patrol?

As vaccination programs are now open to Members aged 12 years and over, SRC Members can now rejoin patrols once fully vaccinated.

As per Circular 06, Members are not compelled to Patrol and should not be penalised for not turning up for Patrols during this period.

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EDUCATION

Q16. Can we start training a SRC/Bronze Squad or other face to face award training?

Yes, for fully vaccinated Members between 11 October and 1 December 2021. A COVID Safety Plan will need to be in place and current NSW Public Health Orders followed (mask wearing and gathering size limits etc). All personnel involved in the training will need to be fully vaccinated during this period.

Q17. Can we undertake Skills Maintenance?

Club should be undertaking the online component for all Members at the moment. Small group (max 20) face-to-face practical components may be undertaken for fully vaccinated Members between 11 October and 1 December 2021. All skills maintenance sessions must be scheduled and notified to Branch via the Area Education Coordinators, it is expected that the majority of Members will complete their proficiency later in November and December 2021.

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

Q18. Can junior activities return?

Yes. There is no compulsion under the health orders that Under 16s are required to be vaccinated to return to the current roadmap freedoms (note SRC holders are required to be vaccinated when returning to patrols or group education training).

From 11 October U12s can participate in groups of up to 30 outside (20 inside) with U16 members or 16+ vaccinated members. This can include exercise and squad training.

From around the 25 October the 30-person limit can be increased to one person per 2sqm outside up to 200 people, but this would make it a COVID Safe event, and a COVID-19 Safety Plan would be needed.

The 200 people rule can be undertaken in time slots or where there is no co-mingling between groups (participants, officials, water safety, parents) or concurrent groups that are clearly defined with buffer zones between them, again with no co-mingling.

As described earlier we would recommend that nippers return from Sunday 31 October 2021 based on current advice however the exact timing will be up to clubs to decide based on their COVID safety planning.



SPORT

Q19. When will carnivals return?

Sport activity will be limited to 30 people from 11 October 2021 for fully vaccinated Members. Modified Surf Sports Carnivals are being planned at this stage for December and the New Year 2021.

Q20. Can we undertake squad training?

Fully vaccinated Members will be able to train in groups of 30 from 11 October 2021. Unvaccinated Members will be able to train with a maximum of two people and will be restricted from group events until 1 December 2021.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be found on the SLSNSW COVID Information page.

<https://www.surflifesaving.com.au/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-updates-resources-slsnsw-clubs>

Further questions, amendments or suggested questions to this Q&A Circular can be directed to the SLSS Lifesaving Officer at lifesaving@surflifesavingsydney.com.au or the relevant portfolio director.

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President

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APPENDIX A

SURF LIFE SAVING SYDNEY POLICY

Title	COVID Vaccination Policy and Risk Assessment
Date	28 September 2021
Pages	1 of 5

Background

This Policy has been developed by Surf Life Saving Sydney (SLSS) and its Clubs as the organisation transitions from closed and restricted services to a return to more normal activity. Its primary purpose is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Members and the community as NSW moves from restricted movement to greater public autonomy. This increase in movement has been recognised as a greater risk factor to those who are unvaccinated while vaccination rates have not reached optimal levels. The NSW Government has asked us to exercise extreme caution during this period.

The Policy is designed as a risk mitigation strategy as the community transitions from 70% to 80% vaccination rates. It is temporary in nature and will be amended as required. It is expected to expire on or before 1 December 2021.

The Policy will complement NSW Government Health Orders that will require those using Surf Life Saving Clubs, gymnasiums and bar facilities being required to be fully vaccinated. It will be one risk mitigation strategy in a suite of initiatives provided to keep Members and the community safe.

Patrolling Members have been eligible for priority vaccine access 1B as Emergency Services workers throughout the year.

WH&S Duty of Care

Surf Life Saving Sydney's core value is that of safety and Branch & Club Management teams have a primary responsibility to ensure the physical and mental health & safety of all our volunteers and paid staff as reasonably practicable within our operating environment.

Further, our Members have a shared duty of care under WH&S legislation to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others under the suite of services we provide, so far as is reasonably practicable. Our Members must follow the reasonable WH&S instructions given by their Club, SLSS, SLSNSW and SLSA.



COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement

For the safety of Members and the wider community, SLSS strongly encourages all Members aged 12 years of age or older who can be safely vaccinated, to do so at the earliest opportunity.

During this transition period all Patrolling Members, Trainers, Assessors, Facilitators, Support Operations Members, Age Managers, Water Safety and those interacting with groups, and participating in teams such as education squads, who are eligible to be safely vaccinated must be doubly vaccinated, unless they are exempt on medical or other grounds.

Further, to comply with the NSW Government Public Health Orders those Members using clubhouse facilities, gymnasiums and attending hospitality services, or the club bar, when open, will need to be fully vaccinated.

SLSS and its clubs have the power to give a direction to volunteers and employees to be vaccinated (and provide proof of vaccination) against COVID-19 if the direction is:

- Lawful;
- Reasonable;
- Within the scope or subject matter of the volunteer's/employee's duties; and
- Provided following a risk assessment.

Any such direction must not be prohibited under legislation, industrial instruments, or contracts of employment. A direction must not discriminate against a volunteer or an employee, either directly or indirectly, on any basis, including on the basis of for example:

- Disability (eg a person with a medical contraindication to receiving a vaccine as certified by a treating medical practitioner)
- Sex (eg a volunteer or employee who is pregnant and not able to be vaccinated (if that is the case))
- Race or Age (eg if vaccinations were only mandated for at risk employees as defined by their race or age).

Any person who believes they should be exempt from the requirement to be doubly vaccinated on medical or other grounds is encouraged to contact their Club President. In any such exceptional cases (including with employees), the Club may consider if any reasonable adjustments may be made to an individual's duties (eg: for instance only conducting surveillance outdoors with suitable PPE and other measures). Clubs are encouraged to liaise with SLSS for further advice in such situations.

Risk Assessment Conclusion

A risk assessment, summarised below, has been presented to the SLSS Branch Council which considers the need for Members to be fully vaccinated when performing the duties of Patrolling Members, Trainers, Assessors, Age Managers and those interacting with formal groups and teams within the Sydney region.

With the current vaccination levels and infection rates in the community, there is a higher risk that patrolling, and team management Members will be exposed to the virus as they interact with other Members and the public and cannot reasonably socially distance while performing rescues or more critical first aids. Patrolling Members are required to wear protective masks and to socially distance as much as possible, but there may be occasions especially in the aquatic environment where mask wearing, and social distances cannot be maintained in order to perform their duties (eg rescuing someone). As such, since PPE and other control measures are in the circumstances of patrol duties

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and group management inadequate to sufficiently protect volunteers, SLSS and its Clubs has decided double vaccination is required.

Each Club will communicate with its Members about this Policy. Members will be requested to provide proof of vaccination (eg: Service NSW app, MyGov.au app or Medicare app or through the SLSA Member Portal into SurfGuard) or medical exemption prior to activity. All health-related records will be kept confidential and secured by the club in line with SLSA Privacy Policy.

Individual Members may choose to not disclose their status and may choose not to Patrol or participate in formal activity.

All Members will be required to sign in via a QR code before Patrol or formal team activity or before entering their Clubhouses.

PPE

SLSNSW has provided all Clubs/Services with the following PPE:

- Masks
- Face Shields
- Gowns
- Protective Glasses/Goggles
- Alcohol Wipes
- Hand Sanitiser

NSW Public Health Orders largely determine where and when a mask is required to be worn. Currently masks are mandatory for outdoor use and should be worn on Patrol. In the event that members need to run, the mask may be removed to aid breathing. Masks should also be worn in enclosed workspaces such as Training Rooms, Gear sheds and Clubhouses.

It is not recommended to wear masks in aquatic activities such as on boards, IRB's or when swimming.

Exemption

As an Emergency Service, SLSS has been provided with a number of exemptions around the use of facilities and for critical education training. The Club or SLSS Board of Management may endorse appropriately risk assessed activity for the exemption on the use of facilities and the SLSS Director of Lifesaving and Education will provide exemptions on critical education training.

For broader exemptions to Patrol Members and other group activity, a Club Board of Management through resolution of their Board may submit to the SLSS Branch Council its intention for exemption accompanied by a detailed COVID Safe plan for their activities.

Other Guidance

For other COVID guidance and information (including on temporary minimum age requirements for Patrol) please see SLSS Circular 06 and Circular 11

Further information can be found on the SLSNSW COVID Information page.

<https://www.surflifesaving.com.au/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-updates-resources-slsnsw-clubs>

Risk Assessment

Risk	Likelihood/ Consequence	Inherent Risk Rating	Proposed Controls	Notes
COVID-19 transmission between Patrolling Members on beach	Unlikely/ Significant	Medium	Masks/Social distance	
COVID -19 transmission between Patrolling Members indoors	Possible/ Significant	Med Hi	Masks Social distance Double vaccination	
COVID -19 transmission between Patrolling Members & public while in water doing training and proficiencies	Unlikely/ Significant	Medium	Social distance Double vaccination	
COVID -19 transmission between Patrolling Members and patient during first aid treatment	Likely/ Significant	Med Hi	N95 Masks PPE Mask on patient Double vaccination	
COVID - 19 transmission between Patrolling Members and patient during water rescue	Possible/ Significant	Med Hi	Double vaccination	
COVID -19 transmission between Patrolling Members while in IRB on the water	Unlikely/ Significant	Medium	Double vaccination Air movement	
COVID -19 transmission between member from LGA of concern and other members and public	Likely/ Significant	Med Hi	Double vaccination LGA concern members need to apply for exemption on a case by case basis	
Training and Education Groups / Assessments indoors	Likely / Significant	High	Double vaccination Social distancing	

			Sanitation Masks	
COVID -19 transmission between members & public while in water doing training, assessment and skills maintenance	Unlikely/ Significant	Medium	Social distance Double vaccination	
COVID -19 transmission between Age Managers and Coaches & public while in water or on beach training and activity	Unlikely/ Significant	Medium	Social distance Double vaccination	