



# COVID-19 Information Pack

## Lifesaving

26 August 2021 (Version 2)



## Lifesaving

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### COVID-19 – Areas of concern and ‘stay at home’ areas

As we approach the start of the 2021/22 Surf Life Saving season, a range of restrictions are in place across NSW.

We continue to monitor the latest information aligned to official sources including the Australian Government Department of Health, NSW Health and NSW Sport, and the impact of this information on Surf Life Saving activities.

For up-to-date information about what SLS activities you can and can't do your area, review the **SLSNSW COVID-19 Activity Matrix** on the SLSNSW website or contact your branch.

Given the high frequency of changes that are occurring throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the guidance within this document may be out of date if downloaded or printed. This document will be updated as restrictions change.

The following information packs are also available:

- Training and Education
- Sport
- Junior Activities

## COVID-19 Checklist (Lifesaving)

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- Work with your club and branch to identify and address any capability gaps for which critical training may be required.
- Review and update your COVID-19 Safety Plan against the **Considerations for COVID Safe Activities & Events** factsheet and this Information Pack. Keep your plan available for inspection if required. Plans should be comprehensive, as failure to comply may result in [penalties](#) or similar action.
- Work with your club to ensure a COVID-19 safe environment for areas of the clubhouse that may be used (e.g. bathroom signage, sanitizer stations and cleaning schedules).
- PPE is prepared and available for all patrolling members for each patrol.
- Communicate with patrolling members (see **email template** below).

## FAQS

Question	Local Government Areas with Restrictions	Local Government Areas without Restrictions
<p><b>Is the 2021/22 patrol season commencing on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021?</b></p>	<p><b>YES.</b> As of August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the 2021/22 patrol season will commence as planned on Saturday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021.</p> <p>SLSNSW will continue to review our operational practices to ensure that we meet the changing nature of this issue. SLSNSW will continue to provide you with regular communications containing the most-up-to-date advice, policies, and information relevant to your roles as lifesavers, emergency first responders and community members.</p> <p>Greater details are provided throughout this document to address specific areas of concern and questions.</p>	
<p><b>What are the arrangements for patrols at the start of the season?</b></p>	<p>Clubs/Services should ensure that the minimum provisions are provided as per the Club/Service Lifesaving Service Agreement. Clubs must limit patrol numbers to a maximum of six (6) members on any one patrol.</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that clubs within a LGA with restrictions should roster one (1) patrol per day e.g. No split day patrols.</p> <p>Members under the age of 16 years old are not permitted to undertake patrols whilst restrictions are in place.</p>	<p>Clubs/Services should ensure that the minimum provisions are provided as per the Club/Service Lifesaving Service Agreement.</p> <p>Clubs/Services are to follow their COVID Safe Plans and ensure that appropriate precautions are put in place to minimise the risk of transmission.</p>

	Clubs/Services are to follow their COVID Safe Plans and ensure that appropriate precautions are put in place for the safety of members and to minimise the risk of transmission.	
<b>Does our Club/Service need to meet the requirements within the lifesaving agreement?</b>	<p><b>Yes.</b> Considering the NSW health advice at the time of this publication, Clubs/Services are expected to meet the minimum requirements as outlined within their Lifesaving Service Agreement for the beginning of the 2021/22 season.</p> <p>SLSNSW is constantly monitoring and reviewing the relevant Health Orders and should a Local Government Area where clubs or services exist become an outlined area of concern then SLSNSW will continue to review the current position and update Clubs/Services.</p>	<b>Yes.</b> Clubs/Services are required to meet the requirements as outlined within their Lifesaving Service Agreement.
<b>Do I need to be vaccinated to undertake my patrol?</b>	<p>SLSNSW is committed to ensuring the safety of our members. Although not mandatory, except if you reside in a LGA of Concern (see below), vaccination is strongly encouraged for all patrolling members considering the current cases of COVID in the community, and to assist with maintaining operational capability across the coming patrolling season, both on the beach and within Support Operations. Any concerns should be discussed with your doctor.</p> <p>Visit the <a href="#">SLS Members Area</a> to find out more and to download the Letter and Eligibility Declaration Form.</p>	
<b>Can I patrol if I'm from a Local Government Area of concern?</b>	<p>As of August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, members who reside in a LGA of concern must complete a Service NSW permit and have had at least their first vaccination dose to undertake patrols or any other SLS activity. The Service NSW permit application can be undertaken <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>Local Government Areas of concern can be found <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>Any member who resides within a LGA of concern must also complete a SLS exemption letter request which can be found <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>Any member who resides within a LGA of concern will not be permitted to travel to their Club/Service if the Club/Service is within a LGA without restrictions.</p>	

<p><b>Can I patrol if my club is in a different Local Government Area to where I reside?</b></p>	<p>Yes, however members who are required to leave their LGA of residence to attend patrols in a different LGA (live in Randwick LGA but patrol in Waverley LGA) must complete an exemption letter request located <a href="#">here</a></p>	<p>Members who reside within a LGA that have restrictions in place will <b>not</b> be permitted to travel to their Club/Service if the Club/Service is within a LGA without restrictions.</p> <p>An example of this is where a member may be travel to a secondary residence/holiday home and be an active member of a Club/Service.</p>
<p><b>Can we assist neighbouring Clubs/Services with patrols?</b></p>	<p>Any Club/Service within a LGA with restrictions must seek assistance from localised resources e.g. neighbouring Clubs/Services within the same LGA.</p> <p>Any Club/Service experiencing difficulty in meeting their minimum Lifesaving Service Agreement should seek the assistance of their respective Branch in the first instance.</p>	<p>Clubs/Services who rely on assistance from other Clubs/Services that are outside restricted LGA will not be able to utilise this assistance until at least September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. An example of this is where Clubs/Services from metropolitan may provide assistance in regional areas.</p>
<p><b>What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to protect me whilst on patrol?</b></p>	<p>SLSNSW is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our members. Members should take all personal precautions wherever possible to minimise their chance of exposure however SLSNSW will be providing all Clubs/Services with the following PPE as a minimum for the start of the 2021/22 season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masks</li> <li>• Face Shields</li> <li>• Gowns</li> <li>• Protective Glasses/Goggles</li> <li>• Alcohol Wipes</li> <li>• Hand Sanitiser</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What if I don't turn up to patrol?</b></p>	<p>Members will not be compelled to patrol if wide-ranging restrictions are in place. Members should make an individual decision about patrolling and liaise with their club.</p> <p>Clubs should ensure that they have open conversations with their members well in advance of the 2021/22 season commencement so that patrol rosters can be implemented that reflect members who may wish to not patrol until restrictions have eased.</p>	<p>Whilst SLSNSW understand members may be reticent to undertake patrols due to the uncertainty that COVID creates there is an expectation that any Club/Service that is within a LGA without restrictions will undertake their patrols as per the relevant Lifesaving Service Agreement.</p>

<p><b>How many members of the public can we have at our beach?</b></p>	<p>Each Local Government Council should have in place a plan to manage their open spaces inclusive of beaches. It is recommended Club/Services are aware of their respective council plan and incorporate this within their Club/Service COVID plan.</p>	<p>Any Club/Service located in a LGA without restrictions will not have any beach capacity limits applied.</p> <p>Any Club/Service located in a LGA without restrictions are encouraged to make themselves familiar with their LGA's COVID open space management plan to ensure that the information is contained within their Club/Service Covid plan should circumstances change.</p>
<p><b>What will happen if beaches are closed?</b></p>	<p>SLSNSW have been in dialogue with all coastal Local Government areas across NSW who have indicated that beaches should remain open, have flagged swimming areas provided, and available for the community to undertake exercise at. Local Government will determine when and if their beaches should be closed due to COVID related factors. The services that SLSNSW's clubs and branches provide to the community will help facilitate the ability to retain flagged services and a safe environment for those members of the community who wish to utilise our beaches for exercise.</p>	<p>Clubs within a Local Government Area without restrictions should follow the normal processes for managing beach closures. Any Club/Service unsure of how to manage beach closure should refer to the SLSNSW Standard Operating Procedures located <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>Local Government will determine when and if their beaches should be closed due to COVID related factors</p>
<p><b>Are we expected to police social distancing on our beach?</b></p>	<p><b>NO.</b> Members are not expected to engage in any situation which presents a risk to their safety (e.g. policing social distancing). If comfortable to do so, PA announcements or conversations with the public can be undertaken to remind beachgoers of requirements.</p> <p>If a situation of concern escalates, Patrol Captains should contact the SLSNSW State Operations Centre (SOC) for advice and support. Support may be in the form of their Branch Duty Officer, Lifeguard Supervisor, Council officers, Police etc.</p> <p>If patrol captains or lifeguards feel at any stage theirs or their patrol's personal safety is at risk, then they should proceed to their surf club until any disturbance has subsided. Further information and procedures can be found in <a href="#">SOP LS8.7 Public Order Incident</a>.</p>	



<p><b>Do I need to wear a mask while on patrol?</b></p>	<p><b>YES.</b> Under the current Public Health Order mask wearing is mandatory when outside your home, except when exercising from August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021.</p> <p>In general, Public Health Orders largely determine where and when a mask required to be worn. Masks should be worn in enclosed workspaces such as gear sheds and clubhouses while undertaking patrol.</p> <p>Mask should always be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. treating a patient). Members may choose to wear a mask as part of their outdoor surveillance operations. It is not recommended to wear masks in aquatic activities (inclusive of IRB and RWC).</p>	<p>In general, Public Health Orders largely determine where and when a mask required to be worn. Masks should be worn in enclosed workspaces such as gear sheds and clubhouses while undertaking patrol.</p> <p>Mask should always be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. treating a patient). Members may choose to wear a mask as part of their outdoor surveillance operations. It is not recommended to wear masks in aquatic activities (inclusive of IRB and RWC).</p>
<p><b>Do I need to social distance on patrol?</b></p>	<p><b>YES.</b> Social distancing is important to prevent the transmission of COVID however there will be times where lifesavers will not be able to maintain 1.5 metre distance (such as IRB Driver and Crew or in managing a patient). General COVID precautions should be taken as per the clubs COVID plan.</p>	
<p><b>Can I use the emergency service exemption to travel to my Club/Service?</b></p>	<p><b>YES.</b> Currently there are wide ranging movement restrictions currently in place across the breadth of NSW. These movement restrictions may impinge on our services abilities to respond to critical callouts or to undertake necessary pre-season preparation.</p> <p>SLSNSW have put in place an exemption request process that will allow members to put forward an application for an exemption to travel.</p> <p>Exemption letter requests must be submitted 7 days in advance of the required travel. The exemption request letters are only required for those members who are required to leave their residential LGA to undertake one of the outlined duties as outlined <a href="#">here</a></p>	<p>Members who reside in a LGA without restrictions will not be required to obtain an exemption to travel to their Club/Service if their Club/Service is also within a LGA without restrictions.</p>

<p><b>Do I need to undertake a skills maintenance this season?</b></p>	<p><b>YES.</b> On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, SLSNSW announced abridged conditions for the 2021/22 season skills maintenance requirements. The 2021/22 Skills Maintenance Circular can be found <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>SLSNSW will continue to monitor the NSW Government’s Public Health Orders and relevant restrictions that are put in place.</p> <p>SLSNSW will provide updated advice in early October 2021 regarding skills maintenance requirements should wide-ranging restrictions still be in place past September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.</p>
<p><b>What will be the requirements for competition hours this season?</b></p>	<p>The SLSNSW Board has moved to continue with the amendment to the minimum service hours required for competition that were outlined for the 2020/21 season. It should be noted that the amendment is <b>only</b> for the 2021/22 COVID-affected season and the competition hour requirements will revert to the previous requirements in 2022/23.</p> <p>Effective for the 2021/22 season only, members wishing to compete in Surf Sport events will be required to log a minimum of 15 hours for active members and 7 hours for active reserve members. This is instead of the usual 25 hours for active members and 12 hours for active reserve as outlined in Policy 5.04.</p> <p>Active members are required to undertake a minimum of 8 patrol hours and minimum 7 hours of service for other activity as endorsed by a Club/Service.</p> <p>Active reserve members are required to undertake a minimum of 4 patrol hours and minimum 3 hours of service for other activity as endorsed by a Club/Service.</p> <p>Further information relating to Sport can be found in the Sport Information Pack.</p>
<p><b>Will paid lifeguards be used to support gaps in volunteer lifesaving services?</b></p>	<p><b>NO.</b> Clubs/Services are still obligated to adhere to their Lifesaving Service Agreements (LSA) and cannot delegate their responsibilities to lifeguard services. If your club is concerned about fulfilling its LSA, please discuss with your Branch Director of Lifesaving <b>as soon as possible</b>.</p>



**What other safeguards can I put in place to protect myself, other members, and the community?**

- Not attending patrol if you have any symptoms;
- Consider getting a COVID test 72 hours prior to patrol and after patrol;
- Being vaccinated prior to undertaking any lifesaving activity;
- Be familiar with your club safety plan and follow club directives.

# First Aid and Rescue Protocols – COVID-19

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## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Watch SLSA's [2-minute video](#) on donning and doffing PPE to reduce the risk of infection and review the SLSA [COVID-19 Patient Treatment Guidelines](#).

## Minor First Aids

1. Sit the patient outside the club first aid room, patrol tent or observation tower.
2. Ensure that correct PPE is utilised.
3. Provide the patient with the appropriate first aid supplies to self-treat (band aids/alcohol swabs etc.).
4. Ensure that you wash your hands for at least 20 seconds after treatment.
5. Maintain at least 1.5 metres distance where possible.

If the patient cannot self-treat, follow the Major First Aid advice.

## Major First Aids

1. Treat as per training, however take extra caution with ensuring correct PPE utilised.
2. Minimise exposure to other patrol members or lifeguards where possible e.g. one (1) patrol member/lifeguard to treat one (1) patient.
3. Ensure that you wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or shower after treatment.
4. Extra care should be taken with cleaning ALL facilities/equipment after treating a patient.

## Rescues

1. As always, there should be a major focus on preventions and proactive patrolling.
2. Patrols should continue to undertake inflatable rescue boat, rescue board and rescue tube pickups.
3. After the rescue is finalised, ensure you have taken retrospective action to minimise any risk e.g. showering if possible, cleaning equipment.

## Resuscitation

Please review the SLSA [DRSABCD during COVID-19](#) poster. In summary:

1. Do not attend the patient without PPE
2. Do not use suction
3. Do not use OP airways
4. Do not use Bag Value Mask (BVM)
5. Do not give rescue breaths

The ARC suggests that in the current COVID-19 pandemic, rescuers who are willing, trained, and able to do so, consider providing rescue breaths to infants and children in addition to chest compressions.

## Email Template to Patrolling Members

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Dear Members,

We are looking forward to getting back to patrolling this season, with the flags planned to go up on Saturday 18 September 2021.

### **What will patrolling look like this season?**

While restrictions are currently in place across NSW the patrol season will commence as planned on Saturday 18 September 2021. There are a suite of measures that have been put in place by SLSNSW, Branch and the club to ensure your safety and wellbeing. We encourage you to review the relevant information that SLSNSW, Branch and the club have provided you and make informed decisions when undertaking patrols.

### **Staying safe**

For your information, we have attached our COVID-19 Safety Plans for Lifesaving and for general use of the club house. We will walk you through these at our pre-season meeting, but please take the time to familiarise yourself with it.

Some of the ongoing measures in place this season to help us to meet Government requirements and stay COVID-19 safe include:

- Scaling back the practical skills maintenance (proficiency) requirements for the Bronze Medallion – this season, the practical proficiency will consist of a run-swim-run and tube rescue or solo paddle, conducted at the start of your patrol.
- Modifications to the way in which we will be administering first aid and performing resuscitation – we are encouraging self-treatment where possible, advising against performing rescue breaths, and providing PPE (including face shields, masks and other PPE items) for situations where physical contact with patients is unavoidable.
- Providing clear guidelines around the expectations of lifesavers in their interactions with the public – specifically there is no expectation that members will be policing physical distancing on beaches.

Please ensure that you attend the pre-season meeting this season to hear more about the changes due to COVID-19, and about how we are working to keep you safe on patrol.

If you feel uncomfortable patrolling this season, please do let us know as soon as possible to assist with our planning.

We are committed to keeping all members of the club safe, and we thank you for your support and understanding in these changing times. As Government restrictions continue to change prior to season start, we will endeavour to update you on information as it becomes available.

Kind Regards,  
Director of Lifesaving

### **Template Text Message to Patrolling Members:**

The patrolling season is set to start on Saturday 18 September 2021! Join us on [DATE] for a [virtual] Lifesaving Pre-season Meeting to hear how we can stay COVID safe on patrol this session.