



SURF LIFE SAVING SYDNEY POLICY

Title	COVID Vaccination Policy and Risk Assessment
Date	28 September 2021 (updated 14 December 2021)
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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 while community transmission is still prevalent. It is temporary in nature and will be amended as required. **It is expected to expire early in 2022 once a master Surf Life Saving Policy is developed.** SLSNSW will provide advice on any ongoing organisational vaccination requirements after this date.

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.

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Further, members and visitors will need to comply with any NSW Government Public Health Orders relating to clubhouse facilities, gymnasiums and hospitality services.

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 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.

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.

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

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	Social distance	
COVID -19 transmission between Patrolling Members indoors	Possible/Significant	Med High	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	
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	