

# Surf Life Saving NSW COVID-19 Vaccination Policy – Members

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### Purpose

This document provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) related to COVID-19 vaccinations in a Surf Life Saving NSW and lifesaving club context.

### Note:

Information in these FAQs is current as of Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022. These FAQs are subject to change and will be updated based on the latest information available from the NSW Government.

#### 1. **What is SLNSW's current position on COVID-19 vaccinations?**

To comply with our Work Health and Safety (WH&S) obligations, and ensure we provide the maximum safety protection for our members, staff and community, members undertaking Frontline Volunteer Activities need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before:

- Participating in any patrolling activity
- Participating in any Support Operations activity
- Delivering a training, facilitating or assessing activity

#### 2. **Why do our members participating in frontline volunteer activities need to be vaccinated against COVID-19?**

The Delta variant of COVID-19 is now known to be more severe and transmissible, resulting in more hospitalisations of patients in a serious condition. We are now dealing with the new variant Omicron which is more transmissible than the previous variant, and it is likely that more variants will develop in the future.

Whilst being fully vaccinated provides moderate protection against infection, it provides very strong protection against hospitalisation or death.

Our risk assessment has demonstrated that the core group of members undertaking frontline volunteering activities is the only group where we cannot introduce appropriate risk management processes and safeguards to mitigate or eliminate the risk of transmitting or contracting COVID-19.

To comply with our NSW Work Health and Safety (WH&S) obligations, to protect public health and ensure the safety of all members, as well as the broader communities we serve, we have implemented this policy position.

#### 3. **Who is required to be vaccinated against COVID-19?**

All members who are undertaking Frontline Volunteer Activities which include participating in any patrolling activity, participating in any Support Operations activity, or delivering a training, facilitating or assessing activity.

**4. Are Nippers' parents/guardians required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 for a child to participate in the Nipper Program?**

No.

For volunteer-run activities such as Nippers to be possible, we rely on the assistance of parents/guardians being actively involved with programs. We therefore strongly encourage parents/guardians to be fully vaccinated and engage in the programs.

Specifically, where parents/guardians are undertaking water safety (for which they must be a qualified and proficient SRC or Bronze holder), they fall within the policy as undertaking a Frontline Volunteer activity. i.e. water safety is for all intents and purposes the equivalent of patrolling activities.

**5. Is there a COVID-19 vaccination requirement to participate in a Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC) course, Bronze Medallion course, completing skills maintenance or participate in a lifesaving patrol?**

Yes, members must be double vaccinated prior to enrolling and commencing these activities.

**6. Do athletes, officials and parents/guardians have to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to participate in, or attend lifesaving sport competition and training events?**

Yes, if these members who are required to directly undertake frontline roles (eg Patrolling) to be eligible to compete in surf sports events, they then must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

All members to be eligible to participate in surf sports must be proficient regardless of any categories of membership which allow for reduced patrol hours, or indeed nil patrol hour requirements like Long Service Members. In order to be considered proficient as per policy 5.04, all members must be double vaccinated.

**7. Does SLSNSW consider Rapid Antigen Testing to an appropriate control to assist in the mitigating of transmitting and contracting COVID-19 to its members?**

SLSNSW considers Rapid Antigen Testing to be another mitigation control it may use in specified activities as required, where the risk mitigation supports this inclusion. These may also be considered within the parameters of approved exemption requests, if deemed appropriate to reduce the known risk. Members will be advised from time to time when the use of Rapid Antigen Testing will be applicable. The SLSNSW Regulation (3g) provide for SLSNSW its Branches and Clubs to require such testing at their discretion.

**8. Are there any exemptions for the requirement to be vaccinated?**

Yes. Based on the public health advice, exemptions do apply.

You may receive a medical exemption if you are unable to be vaccinated because you:

- have a medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccines; or
- have an acute medical illness, including COVID-19 infection for up to 6 months (or earlier if the medical practitioner specifies an earlier date); or

- Religious views

However, members should be aware that due to the inherent nature of the role they undertake in SLS, mitigations such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and social distancing may not be possible, and the exemption may not be approved.

**9. When do I need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by?**

As of 23 February 2022, it will be a requirement for any Frontline Volunteer Patrolling activity, Support Operations activity or training, assessing and facilitating activity that the Member must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have been granted an exemption by SLSNSW in accordance with this policy. Vaccination must be undertaken on the advice of an accredited health practitioner (including health practitioners at any authorised COVID-19 vaccination centres).

All those undertaking these activities will be required to provide evidence acceptable to SLSNSW of being Fully Vaccinated.

From 23 February 2022 we will accept for these purposes proof of vaccination through the Service NSW app, your COVID-19 Digital Certificate, or if you do not have one, your Immunisation History Statement. These documents should be sighted by the supervisor at the SLS activity you are undertaking (e.g. Patrol Captain, Support Operations Coordinator, Club President or delegate).

Note: Members are required to update their vaccination status in their members portal by 31 October 2022. Vaccination updates will be pending until approved by club administration.

If you require assistance lodging your status via the member portal please email [covid19@surflifesaving.com.au](mailto:covid19@surflifesaving.com.au) for assistance.

**10. Is it compulsory to tell SLSNSW and my club if I am vaccinated or not?**

No. However, to undertake any of the frontline activities described above, members must confirm they are fully vaccinated via the method described above. As per the SLSNSW privacy policy, this information is retained confidentially and is only made available to persons required to confirm all frontline volunteers are fully vaccinated.

**11. Can a club member continue their membership if they don't comply with SLSNSW's current position?**

Yes. It is expected that clubs will accept membership applications from unvaccinated members, however, these members will be unable to:

- Participating in any patrolling activity
- Participating in any Support Operations activity
- Delivering any training, facilitating or assessing activity
- Participate in other activities for which Frontline volunteering activities are a condition of entry until such a time as they are fully vaccinated.



**12. Can club members receive refunds for their membership?**

Yes, refunds are available for those members that elect not to be fully vaccinated and withdraw their membership.

These refunds will be offered on a pro rata basis.

**13. What if I choose not to get vaccinated against COVID- 19 and don't have a valid exemption?**

While we hope that all members will comply with this policy to keep themselves, each other and the public safe, we do recognise and respect the fact that some will choose not to be vaccinated.

Unfortunately, this may mean that members who fail to comply with this policy will be subject to restrictions around what roles and tasks the member can do while involved in SLS activities

If a member is not vaccinated, we reserve the right to refuse access to any frontline volunteering activities

**14. Which members need to comply with the policy?**

All Members undertaking frontline activities including all Patrol positions, support services roles, training, assessing and facilitating roles

**15. Who do I contact at SLSNSW for any specific questions?**

Please email: [covid19@surflifesaving.com.au](mailto:covid19@surflifesaving.com.au)

**16. Do I need a Booster Shot to be Compliant with this policy?**

Whilst Health Authorities are recommending all adults over 18 years of age receive a third or 'booster' shot, this is not currently a requirement to be considered fully vaccinated. At this point in time SLSNSW do not require members to have received a third vaccination shot, but this may change in the future dependant on NSW Health and government advice. We however recommend members who are eligible and approved to receive a booster shot to strongly consider doing so.

Tracking changes

Date	Change
18.03.2022	Members to log vaccination status in members portal – system now live.