

NT179-21 National Operations Circular – COVID

Date: 20th October 2021

To: All Members

From: Chief Operations Officer

Description: An update on current policy for the wearing of Facemasks

Action Requested: Read, understand and comply

SLSNZ has previously issued guidance on the use of Facemasks. In addition, SLSNZ has purchased branded 'patrol' facemasks, which are available to purchase online [here](#).

Further advice from the SLSNZ Medical Director has resulted in the change from encouraged to strongly recommended under Level 2.

Level 4: Masks are required at all times.

Level 3: Masks are required indoors. Masks are required outdoors when physical distancing (2m) cannot be maintained.

Level 2: Masks are strongly recommended indoors. Masks are strongly recommended outdoors when physical distancing (2m) cannot be maintained.

Level 1: Masks are encouraged when indoors, or outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

In addition, the following advice for the use of facemasks whilst lifeguarding has been provided;

- Fabric facemasks, such as the SLSNZ-branded 'patrol masks', may be used during routine patrol duties.



- Surgical masks, sometimes referred to as clinical masks, should be used for all dry-land patient contacts. These are the disposable type, are readily available and should be added to all First Aid Kits and carried in the same way as disposable gloves.



- All patients should be asked to wear a surgical mask where possible.

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- N95 or KN95 masks may be used for close and prolonged indoor patient contacts >15 minutes. These have been previously issued to all SLSNZ SAR Squads and are available from stores such as Bunnings and can be stored in the first aid room and/or first aid kit.



Remember to use routine PPE including eye protection (safety glasses, face shield, or goggles) and nitrile gloves for patient contacts. Fabric facemasks should be multi-ply. No mask with an exhalation port should ever be used.

Mask use is critically important in reducing Covid risk, along with vaccination and avoidance of unnecessary indoor group activities. It is also important to remember that overall Covid risk for a lifeguard is likely to be far greater from whanau, friend and colleague contacts than patients.

Be safe, and keep each other safe.

Please direct any questions to;

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