

## NT180-21 National Operations Circular – COVID

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**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**To:** All Members

**From:** Chief Operations Officer

**Description:** An update on current policy for COVID Vaccinations

**Action Requested:** Read, understand and comply

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[Ops Circular NT139-21](#) issued on 3<sup>rd</sup> September said;

According to current Government timelines, all members will have the ability to be vaccinated before the start of the season. Therefore, having taken advice from our Medical Director, the current SLSNZ Policy is;

- SLSNZ very strongly recommends that all members are fully vaccinated before carrying out any club activity, including training, participating in life saving sport, patrolling, SAR Response and interacting with the public.

However, as we have seen, the situation with COVID-19 and its variants is complex and constantly changing. On Mon 11<sup>th</sup> October the Government made vaccines for all health workers and those involved in our education system mandatory.

Whilst the activities of training and patrolling by SLSNZ Clubs is now specifically provided for under the Health Response Act 2020, SLSNZ is still seeking clarity from the Ministry of Health, Department of Education and Sport New Zealand to understand which of our members are also required to be vaccinated.

However, SLSNZ believes that it is highly likely that we will be specifically included in the Government list of those who are required to be vaccinated and as such we are putting in place the necessary processes to prepare for the situation where;

- The role of Paid Lifeguard can only be carried out by someone who is fully vaccinated by 1<sup>st</sup> December, which is in line with current Government timelines for health workers which includes frontline first aid providers.
- The role of Beach Education Instructor can only be carried out by someone who is fully vaccinated by 1<sup>st</sup> Jan, which is in line with current Government timelines for education workers.

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In addition, SLSNZ believe that because SAR Squad Members can be tasked by NZ Police to respond to SAR incidents under Level 3 and Level 4, they are particularly ‘at risk’ and so going forwards, SLSNZ has decided that;

- The role of a SAR Squad Member can only be carried out by someone who is fully vaccinated by 1<sup>st</sup> Dec.

SLSNZ will continually monitor the situation, take necessary guidance where appropriate, and update members should this policy need updating. We understand that there are going to be implications for club resourcing if a mandate is confirmed, so we will wait until we have had confirmation of exactly what the Government position is for our roles that provide first aid care and interact with children before we pass on that advice. However, in the meantime the writing is on the wall and we strongly encourage clubs start preparations now for an environment where anyone in a lifeguard role and involved with children at the club has to be vaccinated.

We are aware that some clubs have already taken this step to provide certainty for their own operations and this is fully endorsed by SLSNZ.

Please direct any questions to;

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