

Covid-19 Guidance Announcement

Thursday 2nd December, 2021

The New Zealand Lacrosse (NZL) Board has been receiving many enquiries regarding Covid-19 protocols, and vaccination mandates/passes, and how these may impact the facilitation of our sport.

In line with other sport organisations, NZL is opting to be guided by information from the New Zealand Government and Sport New Zealand. Our aim is to ensure all our regions and their participants are well informed as to how best safely return to play under the new Covid Protection frameworks.

This communiqué is the first of what we expect will be many, that outlines our current approach and best practices for managing, participating in, and supporting the sport of lacrosse. As we transition to the new Covid-19 Protection Framework, we provide you with this initial guidance, but do want to stress that further updates and greater clarity is expected from Sport New Zealand over the coming weeks and months as the situation evolves.

Background and Rationale

The Delta and Omicron variants of COVID-19 has proved to be a game changer and carry significantly higher risks of transmission than previous strains of the virus. The Government has repeatedly emphasised the importance of vaccinations – to protect individuals and to give the country more possibilities in managing the virus. Vaccination is widely considered critical to protecting people’s health and safety, by reducing the risk of transmission and minimising the clinical impacts of COVID-19 infection.

Under current legislative settings, all organisations can require visitors to their facilities, and/or participants in activities that they run, to be vaccinated as a condition of entry, subject to having undertaken a risk assessment to inform a final policy decision. When the new COVID-19 Protection Framework comes into force, vaccination status will be a key feature in determining what is possible under different settings (green, orange, red).

NZL Statement

At NZL, we encourage and support our members being vaccinated against COVID-19, so that we can reduce the risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19. It is important that we provide you with a safe community, in which you can undertake lacrosse. We recognise that COVID-19 poses a very real and serious risk to the safety of our staff, members and volunteers, and in accordance with our health and safety obligations, we are required to take reasonably practicable steps to put in place control measures to manage and minimise (or eliminate) any such risk.

NZL Requirements

From December 3rd, 2021, all participants are required to comply with regulations in place at the venue and region at which they are playing, officiating or administering in any paid or voluntary capacity in the Sport of Lacrosse.

Vaccination Status

Where vaccinations are required, NZL may ask individuals to disclose, and/or provide proof of, their vaccination status. Information regarding vaccination status is collected for the purposes of our health and safety management planning, implementing this policy, and to identify any relevant support measures (related to Covid-19). NZL will hold this information in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.

You are not required to give this information and if you choose not to provide proof of having received the vaccine, or do not wish to disclose your vaccination status then we will respect your personal choice and right to that privacy. In the interests of health and safety, those unable or unwilling to provide proof of vaccination when requested, will be treated as though they have not been vaccinated.

Exemptions

NZL respects the rights of individuals to choose whether to be vaccinated, and acknowledges that there may be medical or other reasons or circumstances, for not being vaccinated, for which you may seek an exemption. Where an employee or contractor seeks an exemption from the requirement to be vaccinated, NZL may require them to provide confirmation of this, which may include a letter from their medical practitioner or religious leader.

If, in future, a role within NZL is required to be performed by a vaccinated person under the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 (Order), exemptions to the COVID-19 vaccine will be subject to that Order. Currently, exemptions under the Order require a suitably qualified medical practitioner or nurse practitioner to apply to the Ministry of Health on an employee's behalf, on the grounds that the employee meets the specified exemption criteria.

Even where an exemption from being vaccinated is obtained by an individual, [Organisation] may have to determine whether it still safely manage the relevant risks posed by that individual not being vaccinated, and whether any accommodations can be made.

NZL will work with those people who are not vaccinated on a case-by-case basis, respectfully and in good faith to explore options and try and find a way forward.

- For NZL employees this may involve steps such as working from home, providing alternative duties, or redeployment where practical, but depending on the role, this may not always be possible. Termination of employment is also an option, but this will be used as a last resort, and only after [Organisation] has explored and considered other alternative options first.
- For NZL members (including coaches, officials, athletes, parents and other visitors), this is likely to be more challenging given the nature of our settings and operations. As a result, unvaccinated members should expect to be denied entry or participation rights as a result of their non-vaccinated status.

Key Support Information and Documents

We encourage our Regional Sport Organisations (RSOs) and Clubs to follow the guidance of the New Zealand Government and Sport New Zealand. In addition to the information we have provided above, we have also provided some important and useful links on the following page. In addition to these links, the NZL Board are available to assist with any queries or concerns. You can contact us on our Board email: admin@nzlacrosse.nz

Links to key information and guidance documents provided by Sport New Zealand are provided below.

How sport and recreation will operate under the Covid Protection Framework - CPF (an overview)

https://sportnz.org.nz/media/4675/snz-cpf-one-pager-3_6-1-2.pdf

There are full guidance documents available for the red, orange and green levels on this link:

<https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/covid-19-protection-framework-overview/>

Covid-19 Protection Framework FAQs

[https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/covid-19-protection-framework-faqs/ework FAQs](https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/covid-19-protection-framework-faqs/ework%20FAQs)

Aktive have also put together a number of resources and templates that clubs and regional associations are encouraged to utilise (i.e. there's no point reinventing the wheel as we're all in the same situation. The link to these resources is provided below. The noted risk assessment template will be particularly useful to those considering hosting gatherings, events and tournaments.

<https://aktive.org.nz/covid-19-resource-hub/covid-19/>

With thanks and best wishes. Kia kaha, kia manaaki, kia haumaruru (be strong, be kind, be safe).

The New Zealand Lacrosse Board