



POLICY: COVID-19 Delta Infection Control for NZAC People (Staff, Member Volunteers, Subscribed Members and Contractors)

Policy Number:	CVD001
Short Description:	This policy details the actions undertaken to manage the infection spread of COVID-19 and the Delta variant among NZAC people (employees, member volunteers, members and contractors).
Relevant to:	All NZAC people (member volunteers, members, staff and contractors) of the New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC)
Authorised by:	General Manager
Date effective:	17 December 2021
Document Owner:	General Manager
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Superseded documents:	Nil

Introduction

The New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) is committed to mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on it's people - members, member volunteers, staff and contractors.

Covid-19 continues to spread within New Zealand communities. Many of our people are regularly exposed to the risk or presence of Covid-19 as part of their work and daily life which increases the risk of infection across the Club. We have a responsibility to mitigate the risk until covid-19 becomes endemic and manageable.

This policy and the Covid-19 Procedure is for the purpose of supporting the NZAC in it's management of Covid-19 infection control and the health and safety risk Covid-19 poses in



our workplace, to Club social events and instruction events, and the use of NZAC accommodation facilities.

This policy and its implementation is led by evidence based risk assessments and the practical management of reasonable Covid-19 infection control measures. It is accepted that NZAC events and engagements, workplaces and use of NZAC owned facilities present specific and individualised challenges to the management of Covid-19 infection control. The Club is dedicated to undertaking all practicable measures to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on it's people.

This policy applies to all NZAC employees, contractors, volunteer members and subscribed members.

- The General Manager will advise all NZAC people of changes to this policy.
- Members are entitled to request a copy of this policy.

Vaccination

We believe that vaccination is the strongest protection against Covid-19. We strongly encourage our people to be vaccinated.

We are committed to supporting vaccines as an important management measure to infection control and will promote vaccines among our people. Among our employees, volunteers, members and contractors there may be circumstances where vaccines are mandated. There are 3 ways that will require mandated vaccines:

1. Risk assessment:

Using the attached risk assessment table, a risk assessment may be undertaken by authorised NZAC workers only to identify the category of an NZAC activity that requires a vaccination mandate for people to attend or engage with a Club activity.

The risk assessment will take into account the nature of the activity, whether it is indoors or outside, proximity of individuals to each other during the event and the relative time of the proximity, the practical nature of mandate enforcement and relative resources available to monitor and manage, also respect, privacy and support of Club members who cannot for health reasons be vaccinated.

A risk assessment will not be undertaken where a Government mandate requires vaccination for engagement with the activity, sector or work place. Or where an



organisation the NZAC engages with requires only vaccinated people attend their engagements or facilities.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) has mandated that only vaccinated members of the public (with proof of vaccination) can use DOC accommodation facilities from 15 December 2021. The NZAC has followed this mandate advice and communicated the same position for use of NZAC accommodation facilities.

- [Department of Conservation Vaccine policy for DOC visitor facilities](#)

The General Manager will engage with authorised NZAC individuals to conduct/ oversee/ approve risk assessments for specific NZAC events and engagements. Authorised NZAC individuals include any staff or volunteer member who is leading a NZAC engagement event/ project that includes the interaction of NZAC people and guests and where the risk of Covid-19 infection spread is perceived or evident.

All NZAC events where infection control of Covid-19 is a risk requires a risk assessment to be completed. It is the responsibility of the authorised individual to use the attached risk assessment table and share the risk assessment results with the General Manager (and Section Chairperson if the event is operated by a regional representative of the NZAC).

2. Requirements of collaborating organisations and facilities

All NZAC people are expected to respect and adhere to the health and safety requirements and policies, including Covid-19 related to collaborating organisations and their facilities.

Where a collaborator or facility provider has identified that only vaccinated people can use their facility or engage with their people or facility, we will inform our people and respect the requirements.

If a NZAC person is not vaccinated, they may not be able to attend the event or engagement. The Club will engage with those people on any impact this may have on them undertaking their duties and identify any suitable alternatives that may be available, including potential relocation or redeployment options (if available).

3. Government mandate



In the event the Government (or other relevant health authority) mandates vaccinations for a community sector that includes our people, all NZAC people covered by the mandate will be required to meet requirements and could include the mandate to be vaccinated, within a timeframe set by the Government.

NZAC Employer Responsibility

In accordance with the NZAC's responsibilities as an employer and its health and safety obligations, as far as practicable, the health and safety of our people, and others in our workplace.

Covid-19 and in particular the Delta variant has a high transmission rate, and poses a health threat to our Club and National Office community.

All NZAC related interactions between any groupings of NZAC people which are based on the representation of the NZAC must comply with Government COVID-19 management advice and requirements and all will be required to meet the obligations of the prevailing Alert Level and the 'Traffic Light' Protection framework (introduced 03 December 2021).

Responsibility of NZAC people

This policy applies to all NZAC people. Our people have an express duty to keep themselves and others safe at NZAC events and engagements, in the NZAC workplaces, and in NZAC facilities. This includes adhering to all health and safety policies and procedures and taking all reasonable steps to ensure they are keeping themselves and others safe.

Any NZAC person who has Covid-19 or suspected symptoms must not attend a NZAC event or engagement, a NZAC workplace or facility owned by the NZAC. They must follow the directions of public health officials. All NZAC people attending a NZAC workplace must provide evidence of a negative test before returning to the NZAC workplace.

All our people are expected to behave in an acceptable and appropriate manner whilst attending a NZAC place of work or engagement. While we recognise that everyone has a right to their own opinion NZAC people should not engage in social pressure to others for the purpose of influencing them on the subject of Covid-19 vaccination or otherwise.



Responsibility of NZAC employees, volunteers and contractors

Because of personal reasons staff, contractors and volunteers may choose not to get vaccinated. Staff, contractors and volunteers need to disclose their vaccination status to the President (for Board), and to the General Manager (for staff, contractors, and other volunteers) if they are not fully vaccinated.

1. Sharing vaccination status information of individuals (NZAC representatives) without permission is a breach of privacy, and only the President or General Manager will have access to this information on individuals.
2. All NZAC people have the right to keep their vaccination status private.
3. Vaccination status may affect staff, contractors or volunteers of the NZAC to undertake their role.
4. Staff, contractors or volunteers if questioned about their vaccination status by Club members are not obliged to provide that information to a member.

Accordingly, all official representatives of the NZAC (including staff, volunteers, Board and contractors) are expected to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

The General Manager may amend this policy within the Pandemic review process and report any amendments to the NZAC Board.

Disclosure of Vaccination Status

If a NZAC member chooses not to be vaccinated, the NZAC requests that this is disclosed to either their Section Chairperson, the President, or GM, whichever is appropriate, but there is no requirement for this to be disclosed if the person chooses not to. All and any disclosure needs to be relayed to the General Manager.

The Section Chairperson, President or General Manager has the obligation to ask that question of individuals if this is not self-disclosed.

If a NZAC staff member or volunteer receives self-disclosure of the vaccination status of anyone, they must ask the person whether the information can be shared with the General Manager, Section Chairperson or President and if the person declines that privacy must be protected.



If the person chooses not to answer a direct question about their vaccination status, the Section Chairperson, President or General Manager will assume they are not vaccinated and will act accordingly.

The vaccination status of an individual is private to that individual and will not be shared.

Procedure if a person is not vaccinated

If any NZAC person chooses not to be vaccinated and discloses this to the NZAC the first consideration will be to maintain the relationship with the person and provide ways for that person to be accommodated to continue their role. For example, a Board member or regional committee member may still provide input through non-contact meetings (Zoom), where their vaccination status does not put them or anyone else at risk.

A staff member will be given full consideration in exploring alternatives to possible non-contact, and if no option is available, work-from-home option, or alternative duties cannot be contemplated or accepted by the staff member, and all options have been explored the process for termination of employment in the persons employment agreement may be set in motion.

If a staff member or volunteer who is not vaccinated is in a NZAC representative role or function that does not require any face-to-face contact with others in any circumstances the General Manager or President has the final decision on whether the vaccination requirement can be waived .

Contractors to the NZAC who are in close contact, face-to-face proximity with members are required to be vaccinated. If a contractor who is engaged in face-to-face interaction with NZAC people is not vaccinated, the General Manager may terminate the contract after consideration of other options with the contractor to mitigate the frustration of the contract.

Any new staff, volunteer and contractor will be required to be vaccinated and will provide proof of vaccination prior to appointment.

Vaccination status and unvaccinated members



The NZAC recognises and respects the people in its membership and their personal opinions. It has an obligation of service and to protect all NZAC members at NZAC events and engagements, workplaces and NZAC owned facilities.

- Members may choose not to get vaccinated. Members do not have to disclose their vaccination status unless they choose to.
- Sharing vaccination status information of individuals without permission is a breach of privacy, and members have the right to keep their vaccination status private.
- Vaccination status may affect member services provided by the NZAC. For example owners of facilities NZAC members use for gatherings may require chosen or mandated protocols to be followed.
- Members, if questioned about their vaccination status by other members, are not obliged to provide that information.
- If a staff member is concerned for their own welfare or that of other staff and has no knowledge of the vaccination status of a visiting member or other, the staff member may request required protocols be implemented to protect their own safety.

Provision of service to members who are or may be unvaccinated under pandemic

- A phone or email communication will first be used to resolve or address the service requirement. Unnecessary meetings and visits to the NZAC National Office are discouraged.
- If the requirement for service is considered urgent or outside the possibility of phone/ or email support to resolve, for example, in the field where:
 - Service is required to maintain the necessities of life
 - Service without which there is the likelihood of significant harm
 - Failure to provide service will result in significant worsening of the condition or situation
 - Where delay in provision of service will impact the person's ability to maintain functional independence.

Then close contact, face-to-face service to the member may be required.

- Close contact, face to face contact with members will require
 - Masks must be worn by member and staff
 - Outdoor engagement if possible
 - 2 metre physical distancing if practical
 - No food or drinks shared
 - No physical contact, including standard greetings such as handshakes



- Hand sanitiser used before and after any engagement
- The worker may wear full PPE equipment if they choose to
- Specific employees/ volunteers (warden) based at identified NZAC accommodation facilities may instigate proof of vaccine measures if they feel sufficient level of concern
- The worker must inform the General Manager of the engagement
- The General Manager will monitor close contact, face to face interactions of workers with members who are unvaccinated and will inform the Board of any apparent risk.
- The requirements for close contact, face-to-face interactions listed above will be reviewed with any change in alert levels.

Risk Assessment

The hazard

Covid-19 (novel coronavirus), SARS-Cov-2 virus (Delta variant), and any other variants of Covid-19 as may become evident in the future.

What we currently know

- There are active cases of Covid-19 evident in New Zealand and the infection spread is continuing.
- The Government is looking to open boundaries which are anticipated to increase the spread across New Zealand.
- Covid-19 is mostly spread in particles from an infected person's mouth or nose when they breathe, sneeze, cough, laugh, sneeze or sing.
- Covid-19 appears to not discriminate between hosts. People of all ages can be infected, require hospitalisation and potentially die from Covid-19. The majority of deaths occur in the elderly and those with underlying medical problems.
- Common symptoms of Covid-19 are:
 - Sore throat
 - Muscle aches
 - Loss of taste/ smell
 - Shortness of breath
 - Headache



- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Severe fever
- Joint pain
- General unexplained irritability
- It is identified that people who have been affected by Covid-19 and survive often suffer from long-covid (long term, chronic neurological health issues).
- Delta variant has a reproductive rate of 6 meaning that, on average, without vaccination, every infected person may affect 6 others. By comparison the normal flu has an R value of 1.2 on average. The rate of infection and severity of illness is substantially higher than the flu.
- People can be asymptomatic, carry the virus and infect others. The risk of infection increases with the closer proximity to each other and the longer you are in that proximity, and can be increased in poorly ventilated indoor spaces like small huts.
- It is evident that the Delta variant is different from earlier virus variants. The Delta variant presents a greater threat to the health of people who contract the virus and a significant challenge to infection control.
 - Delta in many cases has a more severe impact on individuals.
 - Hospital care is more often a requirement for infected individuals.
 - The rate of infection is high.
 - People with the Delta variant appear to carry a higher viral load, for a longer period of time than those affected with the original or other variants.
 - The time of exposure to the virus until the first positive test is shorter for the Delta variant. An average of 1-2 days before the individual develops symptoms.
 - Some infected people can present as asymptomatic and may still be infectious early in their infection.

Standard NZAC Items requiring overall risk assessment

NZAC National Office workplace operations

NZAC Employees are required to be vaccinated.

NZAC managed and unmanaged accommodation facilities

The NZAC requires that access to NZAC owned accommodation facilities is only by individuals who are vaccinated and who can provide proof of vaccination if required to do so. This includes:



Arthurs Pass Lodge	Aspiring Hut	Beetham Hut	Cascade Hut
Centennial Hut	Colin Todd Hut	Elcho Hut	Esquilant Bivvy
French Ridge Hut	Godley Hut	H.E.L Porter Lodge	Murchison Hut
Pioneer Hut	Ruapehu Hut	Tukino lodge	Whangaehu Hut
Unwin Lodge	Homer Hut		

NZAC Events including indoor and outdoor events

Includes:

- NZAC national and regional events and engagements
- Mature Mountaineers meeting
- Instructional events

NZAC Items requiring individual risk assessments

- NZAC regional events and engagements
 - trips
 - instructions
 - meetings
- Banff Film Festival - by facility location
- National Indoor Bouldering Series - by facility location

Controls

Vaccinations are the only control mechanism currently available for infection management that reduces the likelihood of infection and to reduce the severity of the Covid-19 illness and variants.

Other control measures used to date include physical distancing, wearing face masks, hygiene management and digital tracing applications. These controls require individuals to comply and are not reliable controls by comparison to vaccinations which maintain effectiveness regardless of human behaviour. While these control measures do provide levels of effectiveness, the style of many NZAC accommodation facilities, events and engagements and some workplaces present practicality challenges to their management and monitoring.



As a result, the NZAC will take all reasonably practicable measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and variants within its parameters of operation including promotion of effective human behaviour, and monitoring management where reasonably practicable. However, the NZAC identifies that vaccination is the only reliable control mechanism currently available.

- **Government guidance on social event management** [HERE](#)
- **Government guidance on professional and volunteer led event management** [HERE](#)

COVID-19 Protection Framework Traffic Light system

The Government Protection Framework system involves a traffic light system, with red, orange and green levels - Red, Orange, Green

1. Red will be used if there's a need to protect both at-risk people and our health system from an unsustainable number of hospitalisations.
 - Face coverings will be mandatory on flights, public transport, in taxis, retail, public facilities, and recommended whenever leaving the house.
2. Orange will be used when there's increasing community transmission of COVID-19.
 - Face coverings will be mandatory on flights, public transport, in taxis, retail, public facilities, and encouraged elsewhere.
3. Green will be used when there are some COVID-19 cases in the community.
 - Face coverings will be mandatory on flights

Link to Government information release - COVID-19 Protection Framework [HERE](#)

Risk profile

The NZAC is a membership-based organisation made up of individuals who have a right to their own opinions.

It is anticipated that Covid-19 will continue for at least a further 12 months and beyond, and we anticipate that NZAC people will continue to be exposed to the risk of infection within the community.

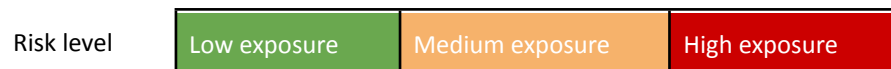
The risk assessment tables used for assessing NZAC risk of standard and individual NZAC items demonstrates the likelihood of exposure from various interactions and sources - by general activities typical to the NZAC. It also considers the anticipated exposure factor in the general community and has used the Government Protection Framework 'traffic light' system.



The NZAC has several activity and environmental factors that impact the risk of exposure to Covid-19. In table 1 below it can be seen that each element carries a score of 0 to 2 where zero is low exposure and 2 is high.

Table 1: Activity and environment risk factors

	0	1	2
Public facing	No contact with public	Public facing: controlled	Public facing: uncontrolled
Physical distancing	Able to maintain distancing	Able to maintain distancing of at least 1m	Cannot maintain distancing (ie close proximity)
Activity environment	Mostly done outdoors	Mostly done in an indoor space at least 100 m ²	Mostly done in an indoor space less than 100 m ²
Close contact with others	Brief contact (eg less than 20 mins)	20 mins to a few hours	More than a few hours
Travel	None	local	inter-regional
NZ traffic light	Green	Amber	Red



Additionally we have evaluated each of the general activity types across the NZAC, evaluating the risk factors and summarised the overall risk profile.



Table 2: Risk of Covid-19 by activity profile

	Office based	Indoor event/ meetings	Outdoor event/ instruction	Managed accommodation	Unmanaged accommodation
Risk of activity exposing our people to Covid-19					
Public facing	1	1	2	1	2
Physical distancing	1	1	2	1	2
Activity environment	1	1	0	1	2
Close contact with others	0	1	0	2	2
Travel	0	1	2	2	2
Risk of people bringing Covid-19 to the activity site and infecting others					
Total risk	3	5	6	7	10



As a result we can see that people involved in NZAC activities will experience a variation of risks to Covid-19 infection exposure due to the specifics of the activity, while Covid-19 is actively spreading in the community.

Activity profile

Office based

- Roles are predominantly office based, and have limited, if any requirement to travel to other workplaces.
- Team members share spaces with other team members, including open plan office spaces, stairwells, kitchenette & toilet facilities, library/ meeting room and stationary equipment.
- Team members can generally maintain at 1 metre distance.
- Visitors and suppliers attend the workplace and can generally maintain a 1 metre distance.



Indoor event/ meeting

- Members can generally maintain at least 1 metre distance.
- Generally performed in a space greater than 100 m2.
- Members share toilet and kitchenette facilities.
- Members mostly travel locally only

Outdoor event/ instruction

- These events happen generally outdoors.
- Members share limited close proximity with each other and the instructor.
- Members can be instructed to wear face masks and use hand hygiene measures.
- Members mostly travel locally only but regional travel may be involved.

Managed accommodation (Unwin Lodge/ homer Hut)

- Usage is by vaccinated individuals only, with the ability to provide proof of vaccination if required.
- Public facing can be controlled.
- Communicating the importance of 1 metre distancing can be achieved directly.
- Members share toilet and kitchenette facilities.
- Both local and regional travel may be involved.
- It is reasonably practicable to reliably provide and monitor covid-19 management measures on site.
- Members can be instructed to wear face masks (while indoors) and use hand hygiene measures.

Unmanaged accommodation (other NZAC huts and lodges)

- Usage is by vaccinated individuals only, with the ability to provide proof of vaccination if required.
- Public facing cannot be controlled.
- Generally hut living and sleeping areas are small
- Communicating the importance of 1 metre distancing can only be achieved through proactive communications and at the point of online booking.



- Members share toilet and kitchenette facilities.
- Both local and regional travel may be involved.
- It is not reasonably practicable to reliably provide and monitor covid-19 management measures on site.
- The wearing of face masks (while indoors) and use of hand hygiene measures can be promoted through proactive communication and online at the point of accommodation booking.

Control measures

While we will communicate control measures, such as wearing face masks and physical distancing, which are helpful in reducing the speed of spread of Covid-19, they will not stop the spread and only provide partial protection from Covid-19. These control measures are also reliant on human behaviour – this requires people to know, understand, and do the right thing to comply.

Vaccinations provide the greatest control measure, reducing the likelihood of infection by an average of 75% and severity of illness by 95%.

Vaccination reduces the risk of contracting and transmitting Covid-19 and the risk of becoming seriously unwell. However, there is the potential for a vaccinated person to get Covid-19 and not have any symptoms.

Priority is with communicating the importance of being vaccinated; additionally the importance of wearing a face mask (while indoors or in prolonged close proximity) and hand hygiene.

Physical distancing

This is difficult to maintain and administer in small indoor areas such as some NZAC huts. There is a reliance on people having spatial awareness, and understanding the distancing required. It is not reasonably practical to enforce or monitor social distancing in huts.

Mask wearing - indoors and during prolonged close proximity

This control measure is reliant on people wearing the mask properly, the mask being fitted correctly, and masks being worn when required. This control measure helps reduce the speed of spread, but does not stop the spread of Covid-19. It is not reasonable to require our people to wear masks at all times during some activities including during rest and meals and some outdoor activity situations.



Working from home

Isolating people is an effective way to reduce the spread and exposure of Covid-19 in the workplace and can be practically managed.

Temperature checks

While this can be used as a method of detecting Covid-19, this does not detect asymptomatic individuals.

Reducing number of visitors to activity site

This control measure, while appropriate for a short-term control measure, is not practicable for a longer-term control measure. Further, this would limit but not remove exposure to Covid-19.

ENDS