

NT017-22 National Operations Circular – COVID

Date: 4th March 2022

To: All Members

From: Covid Support Manager

Description: Process for supporting compromised patrol location during the peak of Covid-19 Omicron outbreak

Action Requested: Read and distribute widely among club admins and committees

Covid infections have reached 20,000 cases per day this week. We are preparing for the possibility that a club or patrol will be compromised to the point of being unable to deliver service.

The facts so far,

- Our paid lifeguard season has already come to an end in most parts of the country with the last few paid guard locations ending next week. As such, our risk now largely sits with volunteer patrols.
- The volunteer guard season is also winding down with some parts of the country finishing up this weekend, however some key areas will keep patrolling until Easter weekend (6 more weekends after this weekend). These are most at risk as they will coincide with the project peak of Omicron in the community.
- We moved to Phase 3 of the RED setting last Thursday the 24th of February.
- Only Household Contacts are now required to Isolate with confirmed cases for 10 days. This will significantly reduce the number of people having to self-isolate, but the sheer number of people catching Covid will still see large numbers of people having to stay at home.
- Household contacts can self-report and notify close contacts.
- Only household Contacts can access the Close Contact exemption Scheme (CCES).
- Household Contacts can access the CCES and RAT via the same process that was in last week's Op's Mail if they are critical for patrol operations - [Here](#)

The following process is to support clubs in filling possible gaps where patrol members are required to isolate at home and cannot gain exemption to patrol.

If a club or patrol is operationally compromised do the following,

1. Club to canvas all of its own membership to replace missing patrol members before **Monday of the week prior to patrol**
2. If unsuccessful, Club to check with neighbouring clubs to see if they could supplement patrol members before **Wednesday of the week prior to patrol**
3. If unsuccessful, report to your Regional Lifesaving Manager detailing what skills are required to cover patrol operations. The Region will assist with:
 - Advice on CCES and RAT access to fill the patrol from existing resources who may be isolating at home but don't have Covid. If individuals pass the RAT test on the morning of



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their patrol, they will be allowed to take part. [Click Here for CCES process](#)

Nb: this is clearly a higher risk strategy due to the known exposure these individuals will have to Covid from within their household, so should not be relied on for key roles.

- A call for help to other local clubs (beyond the close neighbours).
- If needed, a call for help from outside the Region.

Should all the above measures be unsuccessful, a decision will be made collectively between the club and regional staff whether it is still possible to,

- Provide Observational Patrols only or,
- Raise the Red Flag, place danger signs and have no presence on the beach
- Rely on SAR Squads to respond

If a patrol cannot be provided this will be announced via local media to ensure public safety.

The key to maintaining patrols is following health advice to keep yourself safe and Covid free

- **Mask up** – Wear one whenever you don't know the crowd you're with. Make sure it's good quality, 3 ply or better and fits you well. Random humans about? Get your mask out!
- **Vaccinate** – It's still your best protection from serious on-going health issues and you are less likely give it to your grandma!
- **Ventilate** – Its summer, hang out outside. Exercise outside, socialise outside. Open all the doors and windows.
Risk in the outdoors is minimal. Get outside and enjoy the rest of this amazing summer.

Please direct any questions to,

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