

# Updated guidelines for international travel for New Zealand high-performance sports

Dated 24 March 2021

This document is an updated version of the guidelines first published in December 2020. The guidelines have been updated to respond to some additional queries received and include new sections providing advice on:

- obligations in relation to overseas travel by minors under the age of 18 (pages 5-6)
- obligations where athletes travel overseas independently of National Sporting Organisations (NSOs)(pages 6-7).

Other minor changes have also been made to other aspects of the guidelines. These guidelines supercede the version issued in December 2020.

## Purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted on sport related international travel. The New Zealand Government currently recommends that New Zealanders do not travel overseas, but New Zealanders are not prevented from doing so. Despite the international pandemic, professional and high-performance athletes and teams have a number of motivations for travelling overseas to train or compete in international competitions.

This document has been prepared to assist NSOs to make effective decisions about whether their athletes should travel internationally and, if they do travel, to help them plan this travel. The guidelines are intended to:

- facilitate effective and engaged decision making in relation to international travel for sport
- ensure that NSOs, High Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ), and Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ) enable as safe an environment as is reasonably practicable for athletes, coaches, and staff who travel overseas, and in so doing fulfil the organisation's respective health, safety and wellbeing obligations.

These guidelines reflect the current state of knowledge and processes in place at the time of issue. They are intended to provide initial high-level guidance which will be updated as policy and processes are developed and improved.

## Overview

These guidelines are in three sections:

**Part 1: COVID-19, Sporting and Travel Background** - This section sets out the background to the current situation to provide context for Parts 2 and 3.

**Part 2: Facilitating effective and engaged decision making** - This section sets out key considerations for NSOs to consider when making decisions on overseas travel.

**Part 3: Considerations for developing COVID-19 management plans** - This section sets out key considerations for developing an offshore health and safety plan for each instance of travel.

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## **Part 1: COVID-19, Sporting and Travel Background (as at 24 March 2021)**

### **COVID-19 and Health**

COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and is readily spread by respiratory droplets. The majority of COVID-19 cases result in mild upper respiratory symptoms. However, older individuals (over 65), individuals with underlying health conditions or those who may be immunocompromised are at increased risk of serious life-threatening complications and death.

There is growing evidence that COVID-19 can have a significant impact on a range of organs including the heart, kidneys, lungs and brain, and can have a significant ongoing impact on exercise capacity, performance and recovery. The medium and long-term health implications of COVID-19 for high-performance athletes are not yet well understood but contracting COVID-19 may have a negative impact on their future health and performance. The impact of 'long COVID' following even 'mild' cases may ultimately be as significant a risk as an acute infection requiring treatment.

While vaccines are now being delivered around the world it will still be some time before vaccination levels reach the stage where travel restrictions can be relaxed. There is significant international variability in COVID-19 epidemiological status, but many countries are still experiencing high rates of COVID-19 transmission. In those countries where COVID-19 infection rates are high, health care services are often compromised, with the result being that routine healthcare (including access to life saving surgery or facilities) may not be readily available.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Sport**

The cessation of national and international sport (including the postponement of the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games) due to COVID-19 has resulted in significant disruption to elite athletes' training and competition schedules, as well as to potential sources of income. International sporting federations, sports medicine practitioners and kindred organisations have established protocols, relevant for specific countries and sports, to enable local and international level sport to continue safely during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

There remain many uncertainties as to the viability of the plans for the continuation of international sport and the long-term impact COVID-19 may have. Irrespective of the current uncertainties, in the coming weeks and months New Zealand athletes will be hoping to travel overseas for international competitions, for both commercial and qualification imperatives.

Technical support for athletes, including coaches and support staff employed or contracted by NSOs and HPSNZ, may also be requested to travel internationally to support athletes' preparation and competition strategies.

### **COVID-19 and International Travel**

Many countries and territories have imposed strict travel restrictions and airline travel has been severely disrupted.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommends that New Zealanders do not travel overseas at this

time.<sup>1</sup> In making this recommendation, the Ministry notes that:

- Any destination could experience a sudden increase in cases of COVID-19 and a heightened risk to travellers of contracting the virus
- Travellers may be placed in quarantine, be required to self-isolate or be subject to strict movement restrictions
- Strict travel restrictions can be imposed suddenly, and this can impact on New Zealanders ability to return home to New Zealand or travel onward to another destination
- The ability of the Government to provide consular assistance may be limited due to local restrictions on movement and other services.

New Zealand has had significant success to date in combatting COVID-19. The Government's elimination strategy relies on ensuring that cases of COVID-19 are not imported into the New Zealand community from overseas. There are currently very few cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand and the goal is to keep it that way. Subsequently, New Zealand's borders are currently closed to almost all travelers except New Zealanders.<sup>2</sup>

Any persons arriving in New Zealand are legally required to complete 14 days in a Government-run managed isolation facility (MIF) to ensure they do not have COVID-19 prior to entering the community. Currently, this requirement applies even to those people who have been vaccinated. This protects public safety and minimises the potential spread of COVID-19.

### **Implications of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015**

The primary obligation of an NSO under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA), as a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), is to eliminate workers and others (which includes their athletes and members of sports teams) from being exposed to a risk or hazard while at work, so far as is reasonably practicable. The most effective way to achieve that is to not permit overseas travel. The officers of NSOs must exercise due diligence to ensure that the NSO complies with its duties and obligations as a PCBU.

Despite this obligation and the Government's 'do not travel' advisory, some NSOs may decide that is necessary for high-performance athletes and teams to travel overseas to compete in international competition. In making that decision, the relevant NSO officers should balance the risks of travel (taking into account the measures that are likely to be taken, as discussed below) against the benefits of travel. If a decision is made to permit or support travel, the NSO will have responsibilities as a PCBU under HSWA to ensure that any risks arising from this travel (including those related to COVID-19) are mitigated as far as is reasonably practical.

#### *Responsibilities of NSOs*

Under HSWA, NSOs that are PCBUs are responsible for:

- ensuring, so far as reasonable practicable, the health and safety of workers (which includes employees and contractor) while working, including when undertaking overseas travel
- consulting, cooperating with and coordinating activities with key individuals and other

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<sup>1</sup> Up to date advice is available at <https://safetravel.govt.nz/>

<sup>2</sup> Information on those eligible for entry is available at <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/border-closures-and-exceptions>

organisations (e.g. athletes and staff who may be travelling, HPSNZ, Sport NZ, NZOC, PNZ etc) in the planning, preparation and management of risks for any travel.

NSOs are primarily responsible for planning and making decisions on specific instances of overseas travel. The relevant NSO officers will need to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken before the trip begins to minimise the risks associated with the travel for athletes and support staff as far as is reasonably practicable. NSOs need to ensure that officers (i.e. Board members, CEOs and any other senior management with delegated authority or decision making over health and safety management) are aware of their health and safety obligations and the management system on an on-going basis, and that any decisions in relation to the risks posed by instances of overseas travel are reviewed regularly.

### ***Responsibilities of Sport NZ / HPSNZ***

Sport NZ and HPSNZ want to ensure that NSOs understand their obligations and will provide support (such as these guidelines) to help NSOs ensure they are meeting their health and safety obligations.

NSO's will need to provide written assurance to their Sport NZ Partnership Manager and their HPSNZ Performance Team Leader (if they have one) prior to any travel confirming that the NSO understands their health and safety obligations in relation to their athletes and any other travelling staff, and that they have comprehensive plans in place to minimise any risks associated with the travel.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, Sport NZ and/or HPSNZ have particular responsibilities when their staff are requested to travel in support of an athlete or team they have been working with, and will also have to ensure that the risks associated with this travel are minimised as far as is reasonably practicable. NSOs will need to consult, coordinate and cooperate with Sport NZ and/or HPSNZ in respect of HPSNZ staff who are required to travel with an athlete or team (and each of Sport NZ and HPSNZ must also consult, coordinate and cooperate with NSOs). HPSNZ has established guidelines and an approval process for requests for HPSNZ staff to travel internationally during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Where it is proposed that staff from either Sport NZ or HPSNZ should travel, NSOs should contact their relevant relationship manager at Sport NZ and HPSNZ as early as possible in travel planning in order for all parties to meet their obligations.

### **Obligations in relation to travel for young people under the age of 18**

Some NSOs have asked whether there are any specific obligations that apply when young athletes under the age of 18 are travelling overseas.

There are no separate obligations that NSOs (or other organisations) owe in relation to travel by young people under the age of 18. However, the risks associated with travel by these young people may be greater than the risks associated with travel by adults and so may need to be more carefully managed. For example, if a young person is travelling overseas without direct supervision<sup>4</sup> from a parent or guardian then there may be particular risks because of the young

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<sup>3</sup> As outlined HPSNZ, Sport NZ, and the NSO each have obligations in relation to the health and safety of athletes and workers travelling overseas. Written assurances from the NSO that they understand their own obligations and have plans in place to minimise the risk of overseas travel, as far as is reasonably practicable, will support the Joint HPSNZ and Sport NZ Audit and Risk Committee to meet its obligations in relation to the health and safety of athletes and workers travelling overseas.

<sup>4</sup> If a parent or guardian is travelling with an athlete, NSOs should ensure the parent understands their

person's inherent vulnerabilities and lack of relevant life experience. NSOs with young persons' travelling would be expected to:

- identify what those risks are and why they arise;
- identify how to manage those risks (i.e. what practical measures can be put in place to eliminate or minimise the risks associated particularly with an athlete's young age);
- monitor compliance with, and effectiveness of those measures; and
- ensure there is a reporting regime in relation to any issues with how those risks are being managed.

More information about how to create safer organisations and environments for children and young people in play, active recreation and sport can be found at the following link:

<https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/child-safeguarding-policies-and-procedures/>

### **Obligations where the athletes travel independently of the NSO**

We have also been asked to provide advice on situations where an athlete may travel overseas independently of an NSO. Two relevant scenarios are outlined below:

- Scenario 1 - An athlete travelling overseas against the wishes of the NSO
- Scenario 2 - An athlete travelling overseas with the support of the NSO but not accompanied by the NSO

#### *Scenario 1 - An athlete travelling overseas against the wishes of the NSO*

In this situation, if an athlete is travelling overseas against the wishes of the NSO (for example, the NSO has chosen not to send athletes to an event but an individual athlete still chooses to travel using private funds) then the NSO would not have any obligations in relation to the health and safety of the athlete while they are overseas. The situation would be no different than if the athlete was travelling overseas for a holiday.

#### *Scenario 2 – An athlete travelling overseas with the support of the NSO but not accompanied by the NSO*

In this situation the NSO will have some obligations in relation to the overseas travel. The extent of these obligations will depend on the nature of the support provided by the NSO and the degree of influence and control the NSO has over the travel.

For example, if the support provided by the NSO is only to endorse or approve an athlete's travel plans and permit the use of NSO funding for the travel then the NSO's obligations will be limited. In this case the obligations would be to provide high level advice and assistance to the athlete to ensure the athlete is aware of the risks of travel and reasonably practicable steps are taken by the athlete to address those risks.

If, however, the support provided by the NSO relates more to specific aspects of the trip such as booking accommodation, entering competitions, arranging support persons etc, then the NSO's obligations are likely to be greater. For example, even if the NSO's only involvement in the trip is to enter the athlete into the competition then they have some obligations in relation to the travel (although these obligations will not be as great as if they were also organising other aspects of the trip such as booking flights and accommodation). This is because the NSO has

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responsibilities and the NSO's expectations of them when travelling.

more control and influence over the travel that occurs even if no NSO staff member is travelling with the athlete.

## Part 2 – Facilitating effective and engaged decision making related to international travel for sport

### Approaches to International Travel Decision-making

It is important that sports organisations charged with making complex decisions involving significant uncertainty and which may have significant health, financial and career implications, establish a clear framework or process for their decision-making. Evidence from previous pandemics suggests that a framework or decision-making process should incorporate the following considerations:<sup>5</sup>

- Inclusiveness - Ensuring all relevant parties are effectively consulted and listened to
- Transparency - Establishing a clear process, incorporating effective communication
- Reasonableness - A fair process that incorporates values, principles and evidence
- Responsiveness - Adaptability to new information and evolving knowledge
- Accountability - Taking responsibility for decisions, and having an appeal and review process

It is strongly recommended that NSOs establish a two-step process, where NSOs undertake a full risk assessment for the proposed travel, followed by a formal consideration for a decision.

As with any framework or decision-making process, both the risk assessment and the formal decision should be informed by values and principles. In times of significant uncertainty, this has been shown to enhance the quality and engagement of stakeholders in the decisions.

Values and principles relevant to the risk assessment and decision making include:

- Minimising harm to all relevant parties
- Respecting individual liberties / autonomy
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Fairness to all impacted parties
- Duty of care to individuals and stewardship of the system
- Trust
- Reciprocity

### Step 1 - Risk assessment considerations for international travel

A full risk assessment is recommended as the first step of an informed decision on a travel request. NSOs must be transparent and consistent about what their risk assessment process is going to be and how various factors considered will be weighed.

#### Specific considerations informing a risk assessment

When undertaking a risk assessment of a travel request, NSOs should consider a range of relevant factors to assess if the benefits from the travel are commensurate with the known and potential risks. These factors will vary for each case, but may include:

*Athlete/staff specific 'need to travel' considerations:*

- The specific performance or training need (and gap) met by the proposed travel
- The health and wellbeing of the athlete/staff:

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<sup>5</sup> For a full consideration of this topic see NEAC 2007.

<https://neac.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/getting-together-jul07.pdf>



- General health
- Age
- Medication use
- Physical and psychological impact of not traveling
- Qualification, ranking, or progression needs (e.g. based on the athlete or team tracking, how heavily weighted is this event/training period towards meeting qualification, ranking, or progression needs)
- Financial, commercial, or other implications.

*Situational considerations:*

- Current (and projected) COVID-19 epidemiology at the intended destination and transit points (this should be a critical consideration)<sup>6</sup>
- Current border controls and regulations at intended destination (from government websites of relevant countries)
- Nature of the event – risk profile
- Event COVID-19 mitigation strategies established (e.g. does the event have a specific COVID-19 safety plan?)
- Viability of personal, group and event mitigation strategies
- Access to, and quality of, healthcare support at the intended destination
- Funding for potential isolation / quarantine at the destination (if border controls change)
- Availability of travel insurance or specific funding for supporting COVID-19-related medical and logistics issues (including symptoms, hospitalisation, intensive care support and potential relocation)
- The ability to secure (and meet the cost of) a place in a managed isolation facility on return, and the potential impact of the limited training available in these facilities<sup>7</sup>
- The robustness of the specific health and safety plan for the travel, and the robustness of any event/the event's governing body's COVID-19 Management Plan
- Potential for rapid changes in New Zealand and international travel accessibility, with the consequences of being 'marooned' in a foreign country

*New Zealand-specific considerations*

- New Zealand Government regulations and guidance<sup>8</sup>
- HPSNZ or Sport New Zealand regulations on staff travelling internationally for work purposes during the pandemic (currently, HPSNZ does not routinely support staff traveling internationally while the Government position recommends against overseas travel). Contact your HPSNZ Performance Team Leader if you have questions about international travel for HPSNZ staff working with your athletes.

## **Step 2 - Decision making considerations**

If, following a risk assessment, a travel request is progressed, decisions should be made consistent with the framework or process established, and the health and wellbeing of athletes, coaches and support staff should be placed at the centre of decision-making.

In making decisions, NSOs should seek to make fair, reasonable, and objective decisions on

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<sup>6</sup> For COVID-19 epidemiology information by country, see [Reported Cases and Deaths by Country or Territory](#) and information in the World Health Organisation's [Weekly Epidemiological Update](#)

<sup>7</sup> For more information on booking MIQ please see <https://allocation.miq.govt.nz/portal/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://covid19.govt.nz/travel-and-the-border/>

travel that seek to balance the needs of athletes with the risk of the potential travel. Decisions should consider:

- Athlete equity
- Precedent
- Moral hazard concerns (for example, not advantaging athletes willing to take higher risks than other athletes or encouraging New Zealand-based athletes to relocate overseas in higher-risk environments).

NSOs should ensure that appropriate engagement and consultation is undertaken, and advice and education (including health risks) is provided as part of the decision-making process, as well as prior to any ultimate travel.

As part of the considerations of stewardship, reciprocity and fairness, it is important that decisions on travel take into account the health and financial consequences of a worst-case COVID-19 scenario.

After completing a risk assessment and decision-making process, NSOs must be confident to advise athletes and staff not to travel if they consider that the health (or other) risks are too high, or cannot be appropriately managed. NSOs must also incorporate an appropriate and timely appeals or review process for all decisions.

### **Board Oversight and Approval**

Due to the liability carried by officers of NSOs (e.g. Board Members/Directors/Chief Executive), under HSWA, it is recommended that final oversight and approval of travel should be granted by the board of the NSO.

### **Post approval actions**

Given the ongoing uncertainty due to COVID-19, NSOs are recommended to keep approved travel under active review and be prepared to reconsider any decision in the event that circumstances change. In particular, destination country epidemiology must be reviewed and considered regularly up until travel departure and even while the travel is underway. The clear potential for rapid changes in epidemiological state at a destination may significantly impact on potential risk mitigations relied on for an initial decision to travel.

## Part 3 – Providing as safe an environment as is reasonably possible for athletes, coaches, and staff who travel overseas

### Mitigating COVID-19 risk for international travel: Developing a health and safety plan

A COVID-19 Management Plan should be developed and considered for each instance of international travel. It should be developed on a case-by-case basis recognising the varying circumstances of travel, events, and host destination.

Key areas of focus may include (but not be limited to):

1. Preparing for travel
2. Medical, personal protective equipment (PPE) and insurance
3. Pre-departure
4. Flights and transit
5. Arrival at destination, internal travel and accommodation
6. Training and competition environment
7. Return to New Zealand

Suggested considerations for each of these areas are set out below.

#### 1. Preparing for Travel

A significant amount of work will be required to develop plans prior to travel and as a result NSOs should establish a point of contact in their organisation for COVID-19 related matters (e.g. a 'COVID-19 Officer'). This individual will have accountability and responsibility for addressing COVID-19 considerations, including those arising from travel planning. This person should be sufficiently senior and have reasonable health and safety experience.

In preparation for both the decision regarding travel and travel itself, NSOs will be required to undertake a specific risk assessment of current COVID-19 related factors to inform planning, including:

- NZ Government country-specific travel recommendations<sup>9</sup>
- Local COVID-19 epidemiology at both destination and transit locations<sup>10</sup>
- Travel controls at transit and destination points
- Public gathering restrictions and stay-at-home requirements at the destination
- Internal movement restrictions at destination and transit locations
- Requirements for pre-departure testing
- Arrival quarantine or isolation protocols at destination
- Specific health support (including COVID-19 and emergency non-COVID-19 care) availability at destination
- Testing and contact tracing requirements at destination
- In-flight requirements (e.g. face masks, physical distancing, sanitation etc.)
- Travel and health insurance status
- Event organisation COVID-19 restrictions
- Athlete and staff COVID-19 education and information sharing
- Return to New Zealand requirements

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>

<sup>10</sup> For example, see <https://ourworldindata.org/policy-responses-covid#international-travel-controls>

- Adequate availability of hand and surface sanitisation for the duration of travel
- Communication and monitoring strategies

Early in the planning process, organisations should begin consulting, coordinating, and cooperating with other stakeholders as to how potential exposure to COVID-19 will be managed. This will include engaging and consulting with the event organisers to gather information about the management plan in place and to determine what procedures will be followed to ensure the wellbeing of workers, athletes and others. NSO medical support should be consulted early to ensure a comprehensive health approach is established.

NSOs should ensure appropriate and ongoing engagement, consultation, and education is undertaken with athletes and staff on how the risks of COVID-19 are to be managed in advance of travel, with all individuals having the opportunity to ask questions and provide input as planning develops. As part of ensuring athletes and staff are provided with sufficient information, training, instruction and supervision necessary to protect them from the risks of exposure to COVID-19 whilst travelling overseas, NSOs should consider creating specific COVID-19 resources, checklists, guidelines, and information sheets for travelers.

NSOs must also ensure that arrangements are in place for support staff and athletes to return to NZ such as:

- Ensuring they have the right to re-enter New Zealand with the borders restricted
- They have a place booked in a MIF and that funding is available to pay for this if required
  - Currently, MIF places must be secured at the same time as a flight booking<sup>11</sup>
- Arrangements for any 'in-room training' in managed isolation have been arranged in advance of travel

*[Further information on MIF, vouchers, training in MIF, and training exemptions is set out in section 7, 'Returning to New Zealand' below].*

## **2. Medical, Personal Protective Equipment, and Insurance**

COVID-19 requires significant planning prior to travel to manage the potential health and logistical impacts of contracting the virus.

Any respiratory or fever-based illness while in a COVID-19 endemic country must be considered COVID-19 until proven otherwise. Subsequently, any illness in an athlete or support team member will have significant implications (including COVID-19 testing and a period of isolation). Furthermore, in extreme circumstances, in those countries with significant numbers of COVID-19 cases, health care facilities may no longer be able to support the care of either minor or significant injuries or illnesses that are not COVID-19 related or the evacuation of unwell persons. As a result, care for athletes and staff while overseas must consider 'worst case scenarios'.

Strategies (including the location of medical support) for managing 'unwell' athletes or staff, should be established and understood in advance of travel. This should include protocols to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 if a worker or athlete becomes unwell or tests positive for COVID-19 during international travel. This will require strategies for self-isolation in accommodation, COVID-19 testing, access to medical advice, communication, and the

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on booking MIQ please see <https://allocation.miq.govt.nz/portal/>

management of logistical impacts.

It is likely that a COVID-19 infection within a group will have a significant impact on the travel and intended competition for the entire group, which may be prevented from travelling. A medical and logistics contingency plan for managing a COVID-19 infection within the touring party should be in place prior to departure. This plan should be constructed in consultation with an appropriately informed medical practitioner.

Further information on managing suspected COVID-19 cases is set out in Appendix 2, and NSOs should also refer to specific protocols and support provided by the organisers of specific events.

It is critical that NSOs also:

- Ensure there is appropriate and adequate access to medical and emergency care and treatment at the destination if required. This can be either through insurance, if available, or by ensuring funding is available to cover any costs.
- Determine the total PPE requirements for the proposed travel and ensure that sufficient and adequate PPE is provided for the trip or ensure it can be reliably sourced while overseas if that is not practicable.

#### *Travel and Health Insurance*

It is recommended that all individuals travelling have comprehensive health and travel insurance.

The pandemic has impacted the insurance market, and coverage for matters relating to costs relating COVID-19 impacts on health and travel can vary. NSOs are strongly encouraged to review, understand, and clarify the COVID-19 support available (or not) for existing travel and health insurance policies in advance of travel.

If insurance does not provide the necessary financial and logistical cover for potential health and travel COVID-19 impacts, NSOs must ensure that the funding approach to any potential COVID-19 related health expenses is clear, understood and appropriate for the specific travel situation. All travellers must have appropriate financial cover for potentially incurred medical and logistics expenses – this includes the potential for significant financial implications from local quarantine, hospitalisation, intensive care support and potential relocation.

#### *COVID-19 related expenses and the HPSNZ Carded Athlete Health Insurance*

The HPSNZ Carded Athlete Health Insurance:

- Does not cover acute care in New Zealand (as this is managed by the public health system)
- Supports costs related to sport specific requirements relating to COVID-19 (e.g. cardiac evaluations) through the normal HPSNZ Performance Health processes

International travel is typically not covered by Athlete Health Insurance and requires specific travel insurance (but this may exclude some elements in Australia).

In addition, HPSNZ Athlete Performance Support (APS) will continue to be available to athletes who have decided to travel internationally, within the constraints of the New Zealand

environment and the limitations of the Performance Health and other APS Guidelines. Health and mental wellbeing support will continue to be available to athletes via teleconferencing or other means as necessary, when and where possible and appropriate.

### *Healthcare Availability and Reciprocal Health Care Agreements*

New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK), and Australia have reciprocal public health care agreements. This means that New Zealand citizens travelling to Australia and the UK are eligible for limited subsidised health services for medically necessary treatment. The reciprocal health care agreement covers treatment that is medically necessary prior to returning to the individual's home country.

For all other countries, the specifics of publicly available healthcare should be identified in advance. Available medical support may be restricted depending on the destination.

It is also recommended that irrespective of reciprocal health support, NSOs should plan where possible for medical support to accompany travelling athletes.

### **3. Pre-departure**

In the 14 days immediately prior to travel, it is recommended that:

- Athletes/staff should be free from respiratory or other infectious symptoms – it is recommended that NSO's implement a process for daily symptom checks for these 14 days and during the entire period of travel
- In the absence of any symptoms or COVID-19 contact in the 14 days preceding travel, COVID-19 testing immediately prior to travelling is not a routine requirement but may be required by some countries. However, best practice would be to require the consent and agreement of the support team and athletes to a COVID-19 testing regime either as a condition of travel or on request.
- Any individual who has been unwell during the 14-day pre-travel period will require specific medical clearance in advance of departure. This may include the requirement for a pre-departure COVID-19 test<sup>12</sup>
- Where medical resources are available, immediate pre-travel evaluations (i.e. brief symptom check, resting heart rate and temperature) of travelling individuals should also be considered
- Any pre-departure COVID-19 testing should be completed and formal, written results available in advance of boarding a plane
- All individuals travelling should have a medical review prior to travel, to ensure any underlying risk factors for COVID-19 are identified and appropriately managed, and individuals are informed and educated regarding the current COVID-19 situation
- All travelling individuals should have all required medications (and additional supplies) and health care requirements in their possession, and
- All individuals should be encouraged to maintain a high level of hygiene and sanitation practice at all times.

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<sup>12</sup> Advice on obtaining a pre-departure test is available at <https://covid19.govt.nz/travel-and-the-border/leaving-new-zealand/>

#### **4. Flights and transit**

Flights and transit represent a particular risk, and plans should consider how risks will be managed. Once in transit and on subsequent flights travellers should consider themselves to be in a high-risk environment and should be vigilant about taking appropriate precautions.

Precautions for flights and transit may include:

- Booking a window seat when possible (there is evidence for reduced exposure when away from the aisle)
- Wearing a mask at all times, even when this is not a specific requirement
- Increased hygiene practices, particularly during and after flights, during interactions with others and while in the airport and flight environment (e.g. security screening, lounges, check-in, plane tray tables, screens). Actions should include:
  - Increased hand washing/ sanitising
  - Increased cleaning of high-touch items (e.g. phone) or items touched by others (e.g. passport)
  - Sanitising arm rests and tables in flight
  - Strict avoidance of touching face or eyes
- Maintaining appropriate social distancing outside of travel group (1.5 metres minimum)

Travelers are also recommended to allow more time than usual for travel as additional screening measures will be in place in most overseas airports and hubs.

#### **5. Arrival, internal travel, and accommodation at destination**

International destinations are likely to have particular COVID-19 management protocols upon arriving (e.g. confirming COVID-19 status from pre-departure testing, rapid diagnostic testing, temperature or medical checks, managed or personal isolation), as well as a variety of social practices and regulations (e.g. mandatory masks, social distancing requirements, and the use of tracing technology).

Planning should ensure travellers are informed and prepared for arrival requirements, but planning should also recognise and allow for fluidity and adaptability to country specific requirements, which are liable to change at any time.

In addition to appropriate airport protocols on arrival, plans should also consider requirements for:

##### *Internal travel*

Planning should address management of COVID-19 specific risks for internal travel within the destination country, such as:

- Rental cars (e.g. managing pickup and the potential need to disinfect rental car high touch points on collection)
- Wearing masks and maintaining physical distance when stopping at service stations or for food en route, and the need to wash hands thoroughly after every stop
- Appropriate mitigations for other transport, e.g. public transport.

## *Accommodation*

Consideration should be given to:

- Booking stand-alone accommodation if possible (no shared / common areas with public)
- Ensuring all athletes and staff have their own room – this reduces risk of spread and gives each individual maximum space (and ensures a room for isolation if needed).
- Two separate bathrooms if possible (ensures one is available for isolation if needed)
- Prohibiting entry for non-NZ team members to the accommodation at any time, including house-keeping staff.

On arrival at accommodation, consider:

- Disinfecting all high-touch points on arrival before unpacking
- Washing all clothes worn during travel straight away in hot water (60-90 degrees C)
- Taking a shower on arrival
- Shared areas should also be cleaned daily (e.g. kitchen, bathroom, door handles, light switches, remote control, etc. sprayed and disinfected regularly).

Planning should also account for other potential risk areas related to accommodation, including shopping, or the need to use a public launderette if there is no onsite laundry at the accommodation, recreational and social activities (including visiting restaurants, cafes and pubs), the use of public and other transport, and the use of public facilities.

## **6. Training and competition environment**

It is anticipated that events or competitions will have specific COVID-19 management plans which athletes and support staff would be expected to comply with. The NSO should review this plan to ensure it is sufficient.

Where an event plan is not available (e.g. the travel relates to training) or is not considered to be sufficient, steps to reduce COVID-19 risk in the daily living, training or competition environments must be considered. These may include:

- Daily symptom check (and/or temperature check) and recording/reporting<sup>13</sup>
- Ensuring masks are worn in public areas at all times, and that physical distancing is maintained
- Optimised hygiene practices are followed as appropriate
- Maintaining appropriate physical distancing at all times and limiting interactions with friends and competitors.

Training and gym use represent a particular risk. NSOs should consider appropriate mitigations relevant to the particular circumstances of the travel including not using public gyms, recreation centres or pools, restricting access to training equipment where possible, not sharing equipment, and enhanced cleaning and hygiene protocols during and after training.

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<sup>13</sup> Suggested questions are included in Appendix 1.



## 7. Returning to New Zealand

Asymptomatic travellers entering New Zealand are required to:

- Obtain a managed isolation voucher via the [MIQ allocation system](#) and
- Complete 14 days in a Government-run managed isolation facility.

Symptomatic travellers, or travellers testing positive for COVID-19 on arrival will be placed in a separate quarantine facility.

The COVID-19 Public Health Response (Isolation and Quarantine) Order 2020 (the Order) outlines what is required of people while they are in isolation. For example, people in managed isolation spend the majority of their time in their room, with movement outside rooms and in exercise areas strictly controlled. While the types of exercise permitted outside is limited, arrivals are also able to exercise in their room.

### *Managed isolation vouchers*

Having a 'voucher' (indicating a confirmed allocation) for managed isolation is now a legal requirement to fly into New Zealand (including for travellers returning from quarantine-free entry to Australia). Airlines will not be permitted to board passengers to New Zealand who do not have a voucher.

Travellers must be aware that:

- There are limited places available in MIQ and limited ability to change a MIQ booking once made (for example if your travel plans change)
- They are unable to choose the city or location of managed isolation (this may impact the ability to provide specialist training equipment for in-room training), and
- The Government may seek to recover some of the cost of managed isolation.<sup>14</sup>

### *Can training be facilitated within standard MIF arrangements?*

Depending on the specific MIF circumstances, suitable exercise or other equipment that can be accommodated within the allocated MIF room space, can be provided (for example, an exercise bike), and this can be signalled during application for an managed isolation voucher. However, it is anticipated that the capacity for sport specific training during standard MIF will be limited.

Privately organised 'bespoke' isolation arrangements outside of the formal Government-run managed isolation and quarantine system will not be considered.

### *Exemptions to allow training while in managed isolation*

While acknowledging that high-performance athletes have particular training requirements to avoid detraining and future injury, the Government's expectation is that where possible athletes undertake standard managed isolation consistent with that available for all New Zealanders.

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<sup>14</sup> Detail on costs and who will have to pay is available at <https://www.miq.govt.nz/being-in-managed-isolation/charges-for-managed-isolation/>

In order to allow athletes to train over and above that which can be achieved in their allocated MIF room, the New Zealand Minister of Health must issue an exemption to 'the Order'.

A key consideration amongst a number of factors taken into account when evaluating an application for MIF exemption, is whether allocating an MIF exemption will enable participation in a Government-approved major event or programme (as listed on the [Immigration New Zealand website](#)).

In the event an exemption is provided, costs must be met by the sports organisation concerned.

Any exemption to 'the Order' will be accompanied by strict conditions and the overall experience while in the managed isolation facility (MIF) will differ only slightly from what is required by others in a MIF. Specifically, all MIF rules, including mask use, physical distancing, limited access to areas, and not entering other people's rooms, will continue to apply.

#### *Requesting a MIF training exemption*

Sport NZ works with relevant MIQ agencies to prioritise and get approvals for managed isolation exemptions and is the first point of contact for NSOs seeking an exemption. However, given the current approach to the allocation of exemptions, it is recommended that NSOs consider the implications of being limited to in-room training only following proposed travel.

## **Further information**

### **Further New Zealand Information:**

- > NZ Ministry of Health COVID-19 ['Updates, information and advice'](#)
- > NZ Government COVID-19 ['Unite for Recovery'](#)
- > Sport New Zealand ['Covid-19 Information'](#)
- > Sport New Zealand International Travel Updates and Guidance ['International Travel Updates and Guidance'](#)

### **New Zealand Health Related Resources:**

- > [Good hygiene](#)
- > [Hand washing](#)
- > [Prevent the spread of infectious disease](#)

### **World Health Organisation Resources**

- > [Hand washing guidance](#)

### **International COVID-19 Epidemiology**

- > [Reported Cases and Deaths by Country or Territory](#)
- > World Health Organisation's [Weekly Epidemiological Update](#)

## Appendix 1: Example of potential questions for a daily health check

Example of potential questions:

Have you been unwell with any of the following symptoms:

High Temperature/Fever or chills	Y	N
Cough	Y	N
Runny Nose	Y	N
Sneezing	Y	N
Shortness of Breath	Y	N
Sore throat	Y	N
Loss of smell	Y	N

Have you been tested for, or diagnosed with COVID-19?

Y N

Have you been in contact with anyone either suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?

Y N

Do you have any new concerns about your general health, and/or the risk of COVID-19?

Y N

If YES is answered to any of the questions, the respondent must [*proposed steps from planning*]

## **Appendix 2: Managing Suspect and Confirmed COVID-19 Cases**

Strategies (including location of medical support) for managing 'unwell' athletes or staff, should be established and understood in advance of travel.

All persons who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will require medical evaluation. Should there be an indication for COVID-19 testing, individuals will be tested by local health authorities, and self-isolated until the result is known.

Close contacts of COVID-19 suspect cases may also require self-isolation, until the test result is known.<sup>15</sup>

Individuals suspected to have COVID-19 will also be subject to local quarantine rules and regulations until the testing result is known.

If an individual is confirmed as a positive COVID-19 case, initial management protocols will be guided by local health authorities.

Following a COVID-19 test, individuals must not travel until the testing outcome is known, and they have been medically cleared to do so (either a team doctor or the local health authorities).

Individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 will require isolation, and will not be able to travel internationally (i.e. back to their home country/state) until they have adequately recovered and have been cleared for travel by the relevant (local and destination) public health authorities.

Close contacts of individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 will also require serial testing and self-isolation for up to 14 days.

Athletes diagnosed with COVID-19 will require a comprehensive medical evaluation (including specialty review from cardiology) prior to returning to training.

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<sup>15</sup> The Ministry of Health's definition of close and casual contacts is available at <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/contact-tracing-covid-19#close>