



Surf Life Saving Australia - Bulletin

Title:	Novel Coronavirus – UPDATE to membership
Document ID:	03/19-20
Audience:	Board, EMG, Lifesaving, Education, Sport, Presidents, Secretaries, Chief Instructors
From:	Shane Daw ESM General Manager Coastal Safety
Date:	12 March 2020
Summary:	The details below provide the latest advice and information relating to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1 Overview

Health authorities have identified cases of novel coronavirus in Australia in January 2020.

The novel coronavirus originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Health authorities have also identified novel coronavirus cases in several other countries, with travellers from mainland China, Iran or the Republic of Korea and Italy required to follow special restrictions.

On 30 January 2020, the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) declared the coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

On the 11 March 2020 declared the COVID-19 outbreak a Pandemic (The World Health Organisation defines a pandemic as "an outbreak of a new pathogen that spreads easily from person to person across the globe").

The Australian Government has issued this health alert as a precaution, based on the latest and best medical advice. The information provided is changing daily and is updated through the Australian Government.

The novel coronavirus outbreak represents a significant risk to Australia. It has the potential to cause high levels of morbidity and mortality and to disrupt our community socially and economically.

The national approach to this plan has been based on the AHMPPI, noting that the response to the novel coronavirus outbreak is now in the Initial Action stage. Accordingly, the preparedness and standby stages have not been included.

Australia will approach this novel coronavirus outbreak by undertaking activities to:

- monitor and investigate outbreaks as they occur;
- identify and characterise the nature of the virus and the clinical severity of the disease;
- research respiratory disease-specific management strategies;
- respond promptly and effectively to minimise the novel coronavirus outbreak impact;
- undertake strategies to minimise the risk of further disease transmission; and
- contribute to the rapid and confident recovery of individuals, communities and services.

The activities required to support our community during this novel coronavirus outbreak will involve state and territory governments, the Australian Government and many other health sector parties. Coordination and communication at the national level will be particularly important.



What is novel coronavirus

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can make humans and animals sick. They cause illnesses that can range from the common cold to more severe diseases. Severe diseases have included:

- Middle East respiratory syndrome ([MERS](#))
- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome ([SARS](#))

The novel coronavirus is called 'novel' because it is new. It had not been detected before this outbreak.

Symptoms of novel coronavirus

Symptoms can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily, and others may get very sick very quickly. Affected people may experience:

- fever
- flu like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue
- shortness of breath

What to do if you become unwell

People who have returned from a country or region that is at high or moderate risk for COVID-19 should monitor their health closely.

If you develop symptoms including a fever and cough you should isolate yourself immediately and urgently seek medical attention. Go to www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers for an up to date list of at-risk countries.

People who think they may have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus should also monitor their health and seek urgent medical attention.

While coronavirus is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or tiredness are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness – not coronavirus.

2 What you need to do

The Australian Government, Department of Health advises

You need to isolate yourself in the following circumstances:

- if you have travelled from **mainland China, Iran or the Republic of Korea and Italy** within the past 14 days, you must isolate yourself until 14 days have elapsed
- if you have left, or transited through, mainland China, Iran, Republic of Korea and Italy **on or after 1 February 2020** you must isolate yourself until 14 days after leaving
- if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus, you must isolate yourself for 14 days after last contact with the confirmed case

What do I do if I am sick right now?

If you have fever, sweats, chills or shortness of breath, contact the biosecurity officer at your air or seaport and let them know now if travelling or if in Australia contact your local doctor.



What do I do if I get sick?

If you develop mild symptoms:

- Isolate yourself from others and use a separate bathroom if available. [See here for guidance on isolation](#)
- Put on a surgical mask and if you don't have one, practise good sneeze/cough hygiene
- Practise good hand hygiene
- Call a doctor or hospital and tell them your recent travel history.

If you have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing:

- Call 000, ask for an ambulance and notify the officers of your recent travel history.

3 How you can help prevent the spread of the virus

Everyone should practice good hygiene and other measures to protect against infections.

Clean your hands often

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for **at least 20 seconds** especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- Avoid close contact **with people who are sick**.
- **Put distance** between yourself and other people **if COVID-19 is spreading in your community**. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

4 Take steps to protect others

Stay home if you are sick

- Stay home **if you are sick, except to get medical care**. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).

Cover coughs and sneezes

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Wear a facemask if you are sick

- If you are sick: **You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office**. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room.
- If you are NOT sick: **You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask)**. Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

Clean and disinfect

- Clean AND disinfect **frequently touched surfaces** daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, taps, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them: Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.



5 Within Surf Life Saving

Individuals

Anyone who has recently travelled to the identified areas are to follow the guidelines and directions as detailed earlier in this Bulletin. If they are not feeling well, no matter the specific diagnosis they should not be participating in strenuous activities.

If you have visited the above areas or have come into contact with any people diagnosed with the virus, please ensure you do not access the Club or undertake Club activities, including patrol, competition or training squads for a period of 14 days from either the time you left the areas or came into contact with the affected person.

Anyone who has, or develops, flu like symptoms and has recently travelled to these areas or been in contact with people diagnosed with the virus is being advised to seek medical attention immediately. If this precludes you from performing a rostered patrol please advise your patrol captain.

If you are not feeling well, do not go to your Club!



First Responder | Emergency Care

Regardless of the current situation, good hygiene and other measures to protect against infections should always be practiced. This includes gloves and other PPE as required (i.e.: hand hygiene, gloves, safety glasses, long sleeves, P2mask).

There is a duty of care to help those who are sick, injured or distressed. This will be balanced against risks. The risks of contacting the virus are currently identified as quite low. However, PPE is stressed as vital at all times.

When patrolling, during your *"danger to self"* checks, if feasible please ask the patient or people accompanying patient if they have travelled to identified areas in the last two months and if so, increase personal protection, minimise treating staff, and isolate patient until paramedics arrive.

Follow safety protocols for first aid, wear PPE

First Aid & CPR Training

Members are advised that if they are undertaking any training that involves resuscitation the following should be considered:

- Training courses that involve the use of manikins should ensure that all disinfection and hygiene are followed at all times including:
 - use disinfected manikin faces
 - use resuscitation hygiene wipes and face shields/masks for each person, along with gloves
 - each person to follow personal hygiene requirements - wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol prior to commencing their practical assessment
- Ventilation may be simulated if the member prefers. If it is to be practised then new bag systems must be used for each person
- For assessment purposes actual demonstration of ventilation is required. In these cases all hygiene protocols must be adhered to (for cases where a person does not wish to perform ventilation they may be issued a participation certificate instead of the unit of competency)

Ensure disinfection and hygiene practices are followed at all times

Events

Australia **does not have evidence of significant transmission currently**, therefore cancellation of public gatherings at this time would not be proportionate nor particularly effective.

The Government has advised that while it is **difficult to predict how the outbreak will evolve in Australia**, and the situation **may change rapidly**, when significant community transmission is occurring social distancing measures such as cancellation of public gatherings will be considered.

Members participating in events need to ensure that they meet the obligations for participation, this includes being fit and healthy. Members and supporters attending SLS events are advised to not attend events if feeling unwell or have been exposed to the Novel Coronavirus.

While athletes and younger people may appear well, they may act as carriers and caution should be taken around young children and the elderly.



For any events you should review the latest information available and ensure liaison with other agencies i.e. Dept of Health, Public Health bodies.

Where there is concerns of an event being conducted that may pose a risk, then consideration to not conducting the event should be taken.

If you are not feeling well, do not go to events

Other activity

Within SLS Clubs a range of other activities take place including meetings, presentation functions and similar. For these activities members who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 or are not feeling well should not attend these events. Clubs and members may also need to consider the necessity for the conduct of these activities during this period.

For meetings alternatives may include, teleconference, skype, zoom or other mediums.

6 Further information

This information has been prepared in consultation from advice available from:

- The Australian Government, Department of Health

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of your state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.

Prepared with the advice of SLSA Medical Advisor Representatives

- Dr Natalie Hood
- Dr Ned Douglas
- Dr Lucinda Remilton
- Dr Paul Hotton

Links:

- [Australian Government, Department of Health](http://www.health.gov.au)
- [World Health Organisation](http://www.who.int)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Infection](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [Health NSW](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)
- [Victoria Health and Human Services](http://www.health.vic.gov.au)
- [QLD Health](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)