

TENNIS AND COVID-19 IN NSW – FAQs

Updated as at 20 September 2021

The clear message from government is that those living in a stay-at-home area or an area of concern should be **STAYING AT HOME** unless they have a reasonable excuse to leave home with the NSW Government making clear that they intend to enforce these new rules with increased penalties and fines.

We encourage our members to locate and read the latest [Public Health Order on the COVID-related legislation webpage](#) and to seek independent advice regarding particular circumstances for your venue or business.

Q. Are we allowed to play tennis under the current Government restrictions?

A. There are currently three levels of restrictions that may apply at any time to Local Government Areas (LGA) across NSW. These restrictions inform the Tennis NSW guidance in relation to tennis activities under the Public Health Order. Tennis NSW has developed a matrix to guide its members as to suggested tennis activity under the current Public Health Orders within the varying levels of restrictions. Refer to the [Return to Tennis Guide](#).

Q. How do I know what level of restrictions my area is under?

A. Use the NSW Government [‘Rule Finder’](#) site to search for a specific location. It will tell you your area’s current level of restrictions and whether you live in:

- *an area of concern* (highest levels of restrictions to date);
- *a stay-at-home area*; or
- *a general area* (lowest level of restrictions).

Q. Is coaching permitted?

A. Suggested coaching activity differs depending on the current level of restrictions of your LGA. Please refer to our [Return to Tennis Guide](#).

If you live in an **area of concern**, you can only coach tennis within that LGA. If you live anywhere else, you can continue to coach tennis at your usual locations. Additionally, you cannot enter an area of concern to conduct tennis coaching (if you live in a stay-at-home area or a general area) without a permit.

**Areas of concern as of 20 September include Bayside, Blacktown, Burwood, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Georges River, Liverpool, Parramatta, Strathfield, and some suburbs of Penrith.*

Q. How do I apply for a work permit?

Only coaches who live **outside** an area of concern can apply for a permit to work **within** an area of concern. If you fall into this category, you can complete the form available [here](#) to obtain a permit. Please note that Tennis NSW is not responsible for the issue of work permits and we do not know whether tennis coaching will be permitted by Service NSW. We encourage our workforce to make their own enquiries with Service NSW.

Remember, if you live within an area of concern you can only coach tennis within that LGA and you will not be permitted to obtain a permit unless you are an authorised worker. Tennis NSW understands that tennis coaching is not currently on the list of authorised workers.

Q. Do I need to wear a mask while playing tennis?

A. **Tennis NSW advises everyone in New South Wales to wear a mask when outside your residence unless engaging in physical exercise, or you fall within one of the permitted exemptions.** You should check the current Public Health Order for exemptions that may apply to your circumstances.

Q. Can we facilitate local competition in a general area while adhering to the 1 per 4sqm rule?

A. The Tennis NSW [Return to Tennis Guide](#) refers to 'local competition' being permitted in a general area. Tennis NSW considers that the term 'local competition' is directed at private groups or club-organised competition between members, for example, Tuesday night Social Ladies' competition. It does not include sanctioned tournaments.

In a general area, limited outdoor gatherings may be permitted which may allow for small internal competitions if the venue complies with the requirements for a *COVID-safe outdoor public gathering* within the meaning of the Public Health Orders. Refer to the matrix [\[LINK\]](#) for more information.

Tennis NSW suggests that local competition of less than 50 attendees (including players, spectators and/or club officials or organisers) can resume if the venue complies with the requirements for a *COVID-safe outdoor public gathering* within the meaning of the Public Health Orders. Tennis NSW also strongly advises that any form of local competition should be conducted on the basis of a 'play-and-go' policy, and not encourage any gathering of players either before or after matches.

Please note that Tennis NSW suggests that any form of local competition should not occur in a stay at home area or an area of concern at this time.

Q. Are tournaments and competitions still going ahead?

A. Tennis NSW has cancelled all tournaments across NSW until 1 November 2021. Tennis NSW is working through the relaxing of restrictions to consider whether competitive play under restrictions may occur in a general area.

Tennis NSW has put together a tournament calendar that outlines what tournaments are currently scheduled, with events that are impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, Tennis NSW has committed to making a decision regarding the rescheduling and reallocation of impacted tournaments by no later than 14 days prior to the event. For more information regarding tournaments please head to our [website](#).

Q. Am I restricted with how long I can exercise for?

A. There are no longer restrictions on the time limit for exercise in either stay at home areas or areas of concern. However, in those areas you can only exercise within your LGA, or within 5km of your home if in another LGA.

Q. Can we allow doubles play for fully vaccinated persons not from the same household?

A. We have engaged NSW Health and NSW Office of Sport to get clarity and confirmation on whether it is the responsibility of the individual or the club/venue to ensure that they are fully vaccinated. Without receiving clarity on ultimately who is liable, then our advice is as follows:

1. Doubles play at a venue in a stay at home area or an area of concern is NOT permitted unless the Club / Venue Operator has means by which they can verify the vaccination status of anyone wishing to play doubles at their venue. Alongside of this, the Club should be implementing all relevant COVID protocols including having a COVID-19 Safety plan, COVID-19 check-in stations and all other necessary protocols to effectively implement the 1 person per 4sqm rule (outdoor courts only). All play at the venue should be on a 'Play and Go' basis and the Club / Venue should not permit any gatherings at the venue.
2. We believe that the large majority of our members across the State will be unable to meet the above requirements, however any Club / Venue wishing to implement appropriate processes should conduct their own risk analysis and make a decision based on their own circumstances and resources.

Clubs should also note that we are aware that the NSW Police have interpreted the current Public Health Order differently in different parts of the State and should therefore be prepared to provide evidence of how they are effectively implementing and monitoring the vaccination status of those using their venue should they be asked to.

We believe that in the spirit of the Public Health Order then it is reasonable for a Club / Venue Operator to ask for evidence of a person's vaccination status prior to play commencing.

Q. Is there a position on requirements for coaching, court hire or competition participants to be fully vaccinated moving forward?

A. At this stage, it is too early to provide a definitive position on this matter until we have received further guidance from the NSW Government and the Office of Sport in regards to a roadmap back for Community Sport. There is also the broader matter of whether it will legally permissible to require all users of a tennis venue or entrants into a tennis competition/tournament to be fully vaccinated. We will continue to liaise with Tennis Australia, our other Member Associations and the other State Sporting Organisations in NSW to provide a consistent position across our sport and the wider sports community.

Q. What if someone refuses to provide evidence of their vaccination status?

A. It will be a matter for a Club / Venue Operator to set its own terms and conditions of entry to the venue. Clubs and Operators should seek independent advice as to whether they wish to set provision of vaccination status as a condition of entry and whether that is appropriate for its membership and/or community.

The Tennis NSW Board will be considering its policy position on vaccination status as a condition of entry to sanctioned tournaments and competitions when competitive play reopens and will advise members when this position is finalised.

Q. Why is the guidance a limit of 8 persons (including coach(es)) for group coaching and school holiday camps in a general area?

The current Public Health Order provides that an outdoor gathering in a general area may include up to 20 people, subject to the 1 person per 4sqm rule.

However, Tennis NSW is aware that complaints have been received in various areas (particularly in regional NSW) where people have been observed crossing over court space during coaching sessions resulting in larger than permitted numbers. Because of this, Tennis NSW considers that a maximum of 8 persons per group coaching session or school holiday camp enables multiple groups to use multiple courts and to prevent overcrowding in large venues.

Q. What is 'Community Sport' and how does tennis fit in to that definition?

A. Tennis NSW is aware that the NSW Government often refers to 'community sport' in its communications. We also understand that some of our stakeholders have received advice from NSW Health and/or the Office of Sport which has stated:

Community sport may be undertaken if it complies with the gathering rules and is not done at premises required to be closed.

Tennis NSW's guidance is based off the current Public Health Orders that are in effect from time to time. There is currently no definition of 'community sport' under those Orders and as such our advice continues to be guided by the limits based on outdoor gatherings in the various areas of restriction.