



## AusDBF Infectious Diseases Procedure and Guidelines

|                    |   |                             |            |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Title</b>       | AusDBF Infectious Diseases Procedure and Guidelines | <b>Policy No</b>            | PN-0031    |
| <b>Version</b>     | 1.2   | <b>Date of Approval</b>     | 29/05/2021 |
| <b>Pillar area</b> | Governance  | <b>Schedule review date</b> | 2023       |

### Introduction

The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the strategies and actions AusDBF will take to protect its members, employees, officials, volunteers, and the general public from the risk of transmission of infectious diseases during dragon boat training and events both in Australia and when Australian teams are competing overseas.

Infectious diseases can spread in a number of ways from person to person including coughing and sneezing, aerosol spread, touching contaminated surfaces, eating contaminated food and direct contact with infected blood or other secretions.

The infectious diseases most likely to be transmitted during dragon boat activities include respiratory pathogens (e.g., Influenza, Coronaviruses, bacterial respiratory infections and common colds), food borne pathogens (e.g., Hepatitis A, Norovirus, Campylobacter and Salmonella) and blood-borne pathogens (e.g., Hepatitis B and C and HIV).

Common infectious diseases such as colds, flu and gastroenteritis can easily spread through close contact at training and competition and, while the illnesses are usually not serious, they are likely to reduce performance and may have a significant adverse effect on a team's ability to compete if a number of paddlers are infected at the same time.

Infectious diseases such as Covid-19 (a new virus) and Influenza (which can evolve into new strains) have the potential to develop into epidemics or pandemics. As with Covid-19, there is no community immunity at the beginning of a pandemic and hence the infection spreads rapidly. The infection continues to spread until the level of immunity in the community has increased, either as a result of infection or immunization (herd immunity), to a level where the virus becomes more difficult to transmit. Similar pandemics have occurred in the past with several Influenza strains such as Swine Flu and Spanish Flu. Epidemics occur by a similar process but tend to be more localized either because the virus is not as contagious, the virus can be contained and prevented from spreading as far or some of the population already have immunity.

### Procedure

AusDBF will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the management of declared epidemics and pandemics.

AusDBF will, as far as possible, plan and prepare for the possibility that its operations will be affected by the outbreak of infectious disease especially if declared as an epidemic or pandemic.

In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease including an epidemic or pandemic, AusDBF will, as far as possible:

- Support and assist its members, employees, officials, volunteers and others to take reasonable precautions to minimise their risk of exposure to the infection concerned.
- Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they may already have the infection to obtain a diagnosis and avoid contact with others.

- Provide standard precautions such as personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, sanitiser, and gloves) to volunteers, officials, employees and others when required.
- Manage the risk to competitors, volunteers and officials from paddlers congregating in large numbers during events by providing alternative means of marshalling, boat loading and medal presentations.
- Cancel or reschedule events when the risk of infection is too high to proceed.
- Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern.

## Further Guidelines

### Blood-borne and other infections

There is increasing awareness of the risks of transmission of infectious diseases through participation in sport. In addition to respiratory infections, a number of other infections have the potential to be transmitted during sporting activities. Individuals and sporting clubs share responsibility for preventing the spread of infection during participation in sports including dragon boat racing. Participants, race officials, coaches, and first aiders should be blood and infection aware and be able to maintain a safe and clean environment for players and spectators.

**Food-borne infections** usually result from ingestion of contaminated food or drinks or from poor hand washing prior to consuming food. Food contamination can be either the result of the inadequate preparation, cooking, or refrigeration of food prior to consumption or the poor hand hygiene of food handlers. Hepatitis A, Norovirus (which causes gastroenteritis) and bacterial infections including *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* can be transmitted this way.

Organisations supplying food at regattas must have appropriate local government accreditation. Organisers must also provide facilities to enable thorough hand washing for food providers and consumers. Hand sanitiser alone is insufficient to prevent transmission of gastroenteritis viruses such as Norovirus.

**Skin infections** including tinea, warts, and scabies may be spread via direct skin to skin contact or indirectly through the use of shared equipment, clothing (race tops, footwear) and other surfaces which remain moist for a period of time (shower floors, massage tables).

**Blood borne viruses** including HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C may be transmitted during sport either through blood-to-blood contact between people with broken skin or wounds or through contact between a person's broken skin, mouth, eyes, or other mucous membranes with another person's infected body fluid including blood and saliva.

### Implementation of Blood Procedures

All blood and body fluids should be treated as though they are infectious.

Any participant who has been injured and is bleeding, or has blood on their clothing, must immediately leave the area and seek medical attention.

The participant cannot return to training or competition until the bleeding has stopped, the wound has been dressed and any blood on the participant's body or clothing cleaned off.

Training or competition must cease until all blood spills have been cleaned up.

Anyone assisting with dressings or cleaning up blood and other spills, should first cover their own injuries with a dressing and wear gloves.

If blood or other body fluids have spilt onto anyone other than the injured person especially if contact has been made with an open wound, broken skin or mucous membranes including mouth and eyes, the following precautions are recommended:

- Wash the area of contact thoroughly with soap and warm water,
- If blood or other fluids have splashed into the mouth or eyes, rinse very well with water,
- See a doctor as soon as possible for follow-up.

Once bleeding has stopped and blood or body fluids on the injured person and others have been cleaned up, it is necessary to disinfect the area where the spill occurred. When doing this:

- Always wear gloves,
- Place a paper towel over the spill and carefully mop it up,

- Clean the surface with warm water and detergent or soap,
- Disinfect the area by wiping with bleach (use a bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite) and dry with a clean paper towel,
- When finished, remove gloves, put them with the used paper towels into a sealed plastic bag and place in rubbish bin.

### **Personal Hygiene**

Adoption of strict personal hygiene measures is important way of controlling the spread of blood-borne viruses and other infectious organisms. Never share clothing, razors, towels, face washers, nail clippers, drink bottles, mouth guards or any other personal equipment which may have blood, saliva, or other body fluids present.

### **Good First Aid Practice:**

- Individuals with a current first aid certificate should be present at training and competitions,
- A complete first aid kit should always available, including a supply of gloves,
- Protective eye wear and resuscitation bags or disposable mouth-to-mouth devices should also be available,
- Always have access to a telephone to be able to contact emergency services if necessary,
- Ensure that relevant people such as coaches, first aid officers, and officials know the location of the nearest hospital emergency centre.

### **Learnings and community messages from current Pandemic**

- Avoid congregating in large numbers at regattas and training.
- Maintain at least 1.5 metre distance and avoid hugging and shaking hands with others.
- Practice good hygiene and encourage others to do the same by covering mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of used tissues immediately.
- Regularly and thoroughly cleaning hands by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand rub and avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Staying home if feeling unwell and seek medical advice.
- Avoiding contact with teammates until fully recovered to reduce the risk of infecting others.
- Keeping up to date with information about the latest infection hotspots (cities or local areas where the pandemic or epidemic is spreading widely) and avoiding travel to and from designated hotspots.
- Following the directions of local health authorities including rules regarding mask wearing, QR codes, density limits and self-isolation
- Considering protective immunization when available

Immunisation is an effective and inexpensive way of significantly reducing individual risk. Anyone planning to compete or travel overseas should make sure that they are adequately immunised against the infectious diseases prevalent in those countries. It is important to speak to a qualified medical practitioner well in advance of the trip as some immunisations require more than one injection and need to be completed several weeks before travel.

**References:** Sports Medicine Australia – Blood Rules, OK - <https://sma.org.au/resources-advice/policies-and-guidelines/infectious-diseases/> and Our Community Policy templates - <https://communitydirectors.com.au/tools-resources/policy-bank>

AusDBF would like to thank and acknowledge Dr Cathie Urie for her input into this procedure.