



**New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union
Te Kāhui Kaipatuahi o Aotearoa**

COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

Everyone has a right to refuse medical treatment, a right to privacy including keeping their medical status confidential, and a right against discrimination. The challenge is the recognition and balancing of those rights with public policy designed for the protection of the public and for the greater good.

We accept that all Government-imposed restrictions on public movement and virus management plans have been implemented to protect the public health system and infrastructure. We understand that without those restrictions and plans, it was very likely the New Zealand health infrastructure would have been overwhelmed resulting in the inability to maintain the provision of the usual level of health service and the likely escalation in preventable deaths both Covid-19 related and other deaths that are not Covid-19 related.

For our members, the challenge is ongoing emergency medical response and other response to MIQ centres and borders during community transmission of the virus. This will be an ongoing and possibly an escalating risk as it is predicted the community transmission of the virus will not be contained once domestic restrictions are removed and international borders opened.

The New Zealand Government accepts the current vaccinations available may not prevent the contraction or transmission of the virus, but reduces the severity of the symptoms which will be critical in ensuring the public health system and infrastructure is not overwhelmed.

In recognition of the risks faced during the Covid-19 pandemic, we strongly support the voluntary vaccination of our members and the general public. In doing so we recognise that not everyone is able or eligible to be vaccinated, including those on advice from their medical practitioners. We do not support mandatory vaccinations or employment being dependent on vaccination status.

Mutually agreed safe systems of work including enhanced response protocols and the mandatory use of appropriate PPE continue to keep our members safe. Those protocols may need to be further adapted and enhanced for predicted ongoing and widespread community transmission. We will work with FENZ and the Government to implement reasonable and effective measures.

Dated 4 October 2021