

Omarama Hang Gliding XC Classic 2022

Saturday 5 February to Sunday 13 February 2022

Covid-19 Meet Protocols

Background - Controlled Access Gathering Protocols under the Covid-19 Protection Framework

The following outlines protocols that will be in place for the Omarama Hang gliding XC Classic 2022 . These protocols endeavour to meet obligations under Clause 13 of the Ministry of Health Order as a "controlled access gathering" under the Covid-19 Protection Framework.

The key situations that need to be addressed are those that involve gathering in groups which most often occurs prior to the flying of each day. In those situations the rules of the 'Covid-19 Protection Framework' apply regarding the numbers of people in one place. At most launch sites there is ample room for the pilot attendees that may be present to spread well out prior to and during take-off. Once airborne, keeping to the two metre separation rule will not be an issue. For pilot attendees gathering together after landing, it most commonly becomes an individual's responsibility as there are no gatherings planned after the flying activity has ended for the day.

The full prescription of the 'Covid-19 Protection Framework' can be found at this link:

<https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-protection-framework/events/>

The Omarama Hang gliding XC Classic 2022 meet is classified as a "Controlled Access Gathering". The following explains the requirements of this classification under the Covid-19 Protection Framework for the 'Red' alert level and refers to distancing requirements between groups per defined space. A defined space in this case is a space that is separated from another space by a prescribed distance.

Red alert level: When the gathering doesn't require vaccine passes, gatherings are limited to 25 people per defined space (i.e. two metre gap between groups).

Note: With respect to accommodation and hospitality, the rules are set by those respective businesses, and their rules and requirements override any of ours.

Omarama Hang Gliding XC Classic Meet Covid-19 Protection Plan

For the Omarama Hang Gliding XC Classic meet, the vaccination status of each attendee will not be ascertained, which means that any gathering of attendees is limited to 25 persons. Attendees will use separation to their advantage to manage obligations under the Covid-19 Protection Framework.

Under the Covid-19 Protection Framework, obligations can be met if each group of up to 25 persons remains separate from each of the other groups during the pre-flight part of the day.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency whereby a pilot has 'landed' and requires assistance, there is a NZHGPA protocol which all pilots are required to know and execute. It may involve (when safe) a pilot(s) 'landing to assist'. Under these circumstances the immediate well-being of the possibly injured pilot will override COVID protocols until such time as the public emergency services (if required) are on-site and are able to stand-down the 'first responders'.

Likewise, if a dangerous situation arises at any time during the meet that risks life or physical injury of a person, then some aspects of the Covid-19 Protection Framework may be overridden in the interests of prevention of injury (for example, not necessarily keeping the two metre separation in a dangerous or emergency situation).

Contact Tracing Requirements

Detailed contact information for each participating pilot will be held via the mandatory "Contact List Form". For each flying day, each participating pilot will need to sign a daily register to confirm they are present and flying on that particular day. Each driver or non-flying person is to sign a separate, different, daily register.

Separation During Meet Registration

It is mandatory for pilot attendees to fill in a (paper) "Contact List Form", and the completion of the Search and Rescue Information Form doubles as registration for the meet. The forms, and paper informational hand outs, will be placed on an outside table and pilot attendees will only be allowed to collect them, one pilot at a time, keeping two metres away from other pilots while they are waiting. Pilots will be asked to take the Contact List Form away from the table to fill the form in, and a box will be provided for the pilot to drop the form back into. The filling-in of the Contact List Form will double as a contact-tracing sign-in. or email in the same data each day, headed 'Omarama Classic Rego.' Do this and theres no physical contact required.

Daily Weather Briefing

The daily weather briefing, with its recommendations for take off sites for the day, will not be an in-person meeting. Instead the briefing will be posted on the meet's message board web site or social media so that the information can be accessed remotely.

Communication between groups can be done using WhatsApp or other social media platforms. Commonly Hang gliding meets in NZ do not attract more than 20 to 40 (at most) and more commonly less.

Meet Attendee Separation during Vehicle Travel to the Take Off Site

When vehicles travelling in convoy need to stop for a period of time, and there is insufficient open space available off the road or vehicle track to keep meet attendee groups completely separate from each other, then the meet attendees are to largely remain inside their vehicles. Any attendee leaving a vehicle when there are other persons in the vicinity, will need to wear a face mask and keep a two metre separation from those other persons. If the meet's site access advisor needs to communicate with the occupants of a vehicle, they are also to wear a face mask and keep a two metre separation.

Meet Attendee Separation at Take Off Sites

The take off sites will either be large open areas on the tops of hills, or a large open area on the tussock slopes of a hill. On the take off sites, at all times members of a group will be required to maintain at least a two metre separation from members of a different group. This should be easy to do at the proposed take off sites which have large open areas available. Furthermore, pilots can launch at any time, so pilots do not need to congregate on launch.

Meet Attendees Returning to their Accommodation

When a pilot attendee takes off and commences their paragliding flight, they have effectively left the paragliding meet. When a pilot attendee lands after a paragliding flight, it is the responsibility of the individual to keep to the Covid-19 Protection Framework rules as they make their way back to their accommodation and/or make their way back to their home.

Group Meals and Post-flying Social Gatherings

No group meals or post-flying social gatherings are officially planned but may be held when numbers allow. It will be an individual's responsibility to keep to the Covid-19 Protection Framework rules if they choose to dine with others after the day's flying activities.

Masks

Any meet attendee performing an in-person verbal briefing or communication to a group is to keep two metres away from the group and wear a face-mask to decrease the risk of airborne transmission.

People are encouraged to wear a mask whenever they leave their accommodation. During the period of the meet, Covid-19 Protection Framework rules stipulate that you must wear a face mask when attending a gathering (except where you have the exclusive use of the venue).

This means that in an outside space, whenever there are persons present who are not registered attendees of the meet, then masks need to be worn by all attendees.

Guidance from Sports NZ on mask use under the Red Traffic Light setting is as follows (<https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/covid-19-protection-framework-faqs>):

At Red, you need to wear a face mask in food and drink businesses, close-proximity businesses, Gyms, retail settings, at events and gatherings, and public facilities, but not swimming pools. You do not need to wear a face mask at non-public facing workplaces and gatherings where you have the exclusive use of the venue. Face masks are encouraged whenever you leave the house. This includes before and after playing sport or engaging in a recreational activity. You do not need to wear a mask when exercising, eating or drinking. A face mask needs to be a proper mask that attaches around the head or ears-scarves, bandannas and t-shirts should not be used. Workers who are covered by the Vaccination Order, including Gym, events and hospitality staff need to wear a medical grade mask when in public facing roles. A medical grade mask is a Type IIR/Level 2 mask or above.

In light of this guidance, no mask use will be required when any meet attendee is hiking to a take off site, or when eating or drinking.

Falling Ill or Developing Symptoms During the Meet

Immediately prior to the meet, anyone who is not well or is exhibiting flu-like symptoms is asked to keep away and not attend the meet.

During the meet, if someone presents flu-like symptoms of sore throat, runny nose etc., then they should immediately withdraw from the meet, inform the organiser of the situation, and arrange to get a Covid-19 test as soon as they can.

Medical centres are at Twizel, Kurow, Wanaka or Cromwell, whichever is closest.

Should any one person attending the competition become a confirmed Covid case, many of the attendees will also likely to be required to self-isolate in which case a call to cancel the meet may need to be made. In the event that such a situation does arise, decisions will be made based on the specifics of the situation, direction of Health Authorities, and in the best interests of the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone concerned.

How to Protect Yourself and Others

The following "Healthy Habits" have been taken directly from the Government Covid Website and are encouraged to be followed at all times by all persons attending the seasons paragliding meets.

If you have cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms, stay home and call your doctor or Healthline for free on 0800 358 5453.

- Regularly wash and thoroughly dry your hands.
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow.
- Keep a two metre distance from people you do not know.
- Clean or disinfect shared surfaces often.
- Wear a face covering when around people you do not know.
- Keep track of where you have been with the NZ COVID Tracer app.

Footnote

With the above measures in place it is possible to host and conduct a "controlled access gathering" that includes everyone and meets the requirements of the NZ government Covid 'traffic light' framework. Though not ideal, the NZHGPA asks attendees and associated members of the public to appreciate that either we work with the framework that's in place, or the meet may be cancelled.