



# LIGHT CONTACT COMBAT SPORTS

## Policy for exemptions

Chief Minister, Treasury &  
Economic Development

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# LIGHT CONTACT COMBAT SPORTS EXEMPTION POLICY

## What is an exemption on a light contact basis?

A light contact combat sport is defined by the Act as:

***A combat sport that is not likely to involve forceful contact with a person’s head, neck, spine or groin.***

A person or organisation may apply to have a light contact combat sport exempted under Section 8 of the *Controlled Sports Act 2019*. A sport deemed to be an exempted light contact combat sport must be approved by the Minister for Sport and Recreation. It is then exempt from all requirements of the Act for a period of three (3) years. After three (3) years, the exemption will be reviewed in consultation with the applicant.

## HOW TO APPLY

A person or organisation can apply at any time using the online form to have their combat sport (or one style or discipline) exempted as a light contact combat sport. Applications will be sent to the Controlled Sports Registrar for consideration, before seeking ministerial approval.

While applications can be received at any time, applications prior to the Act commencing will have a closing period to ensure that light contact combat sports can be exempted from the beginning of the legislation’s operations. Table 1 below shows when applications will be considered for exemption status:

**Table 1**

Applications Open	Applications Considered
1 August 2019 - 16 September 2019 (prior to commencement of legislation)	17 September 2019 – 4 October 2019
After 11 October 2019 Open all year	Considered within six weeks of submission*.

\* This time period may also include a referral to the Controlled Sports Advisory Committee for advice.

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions on page 5 for more information.

## What to include in your application

The following information in Table 2 provides guidance on the key material that will be considered in granting an exemption as a light contact combat sport. It is recommended that you provide as much information as possible that supports your application, otherwise an exemption may not be granted.

**You do not need to answer all of these components, however a comprehensive response will improve the chances of your application being approved.**

**Table 2**

Criteria	Tips
The techniques and the amount of force used in the light contact combat sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Why and how particular techniques should be considered as light contact</li> <li>&gt; How the proper use of the techniques can limit the risk of injury</li> <li>&gt; The amount of force used (including measurements of force)</li> </ul>
The rules of the light contact combat sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Rules in place to limit contact with the head, neck, spine or groin</li> <li>&gt; Penalties in place for contact with the head, neck, spine or groin</li> <li>&gt; Personal Protective Equipment used and how can this limit injury</li> <li>&gt; How contestants compete e.g. against another person, individually</li> <li>&gt; Is there limited contact between contestants engaged in the light contact combat sport?</li> <li>&gt; Techniques conducted to only demonstrate artistic context either with or without a weapon</li> <li>&gt; The light contact combat sport involves only light contact activity conducted solely for the purpose of determining the proficiency of a person engaged in the sport</li> <li>&gt; The light contact combat sport involves only light contact activity and for which scores are not kept or for which there is no outcome or result</li> </ul>
The likelihood the light contact combat sport could involve forceful contact with a person’s head, neck, spine or groin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Frequency, amount, and permitted use of forceful contact with the head, neck, spine or groin</li> <li>&gt; Penalties in place (e.g. in rules) for contact with the head, neck, spine or groin</li> </ul>
The risk of injury to a person participating in the light contact combat sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Statistical analysis or anecdotal evidence of injury risk using the permitted rules of the light contact combat sport</li> <li>&gt; The types of injuries often reported to your organization (or affiliate organisation) from participation in the light contact combat sport</li> <li>&gt; The significance of the injuries reported from participation in the light contact combat sport e.g. peer reviewed evidence or published research on impact on participation in employment, schooling or education; recovery times; potential for life-long or long-term impacts</li> </ul>

**You may supply any other evidence that doesn’t meet the criteria above, providing it supports the case for light contact combat sport exemption.**

## HOW APPLICATIONS WILL BE ASSESSED

Applications will be assessed on the evidence supplied by the applicant. A comprehensive response that clearly addresses some or all the criteria listed above is preferred.

Initially, the application will be assessed by the Controlled Sports Registrar or their delegated representative. It may then be referred to the Advisory Committee for advice (see FAQ for membership).

### **If your application is supported**

If your application is supported, the Controlled Sports Registrar will make a recommendation to the Minister to approve an exemption of the light contact combat sport. This will then be added to the list of light contact combat sports that will be listed on the Legislation Register with the Act. **Your exemption will come into effect only after this list is notified.**

You will be advised of the outcome once approval is received.

### **If your application is not supported**

If your application is not supported by the Controlled Sports Registrar based on the evidence provided in your application, you will be given the opportunity to provide further information to substantiate your case. If supported at this time, the Controlled Sports Registrar will follow the process outlined under “if your application is supported”.

Applications with additional information may be supplied to the Advisory Committee for advice. If after supplying additional information, your application is still not supported, you will be notified of the outcome and the reasons why it was not supported. You must then comply with all the requirements of the Act.

Should you wish to appeal the decision after this time, you may do so by following the reviewable decision notice supplied, through the ACT Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

### **When will applications be assessed?**

Applications will be assessed in accordance with **Table 1**. During the first year of operation, applications will be assessed prior to the commencement of the legislation on 11 October 2019, and then upon submission.

## CONTACTS

If you have any questions regarding this policy or how to apply, please email [controlledsports@act.gov.au](mailto:controlledsports@act.gov.au) or call Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

You can also contact Access Canberra using the [online feedback system](#), [in person](#) or by [post](#).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **I/ my organisation has multiple styles of combat sport. Can I apply for an exemption for only one style?**

Yes, you can apply to exempt all styles, or only one style or combat sport. In instances where approval is granted for one style, only this style is exempted from the requirements of the Act. If you host events where other, non-exempted styles are also contested, then you must comply with the Act for these styles.

*Example – A taekwondo non-registrable event is held featuring multiple styles ranging from Tai Chi to Sanda. The tai chi style has been exempted as a light contact combat sport. The Tai Chi contests, contestants and officials are not bound by the requirements of the Act. The remaining styles of combat*

sport are bound by the requirements of the Act. The promoter must therefore notify the Controlled Sports Registrar regarding this component of the event (as a non-registrable event).

### **Can I run a registrable or non-registrable event concurrently with my exempted light contact combat sport?**

Yes, you can run a registrable or non-registrable event concurrently with an exempted light contact combat sports event. The components that are not exempted must be reported in accordance with the type of event i.e. registrable or non-registrable.

*Note – a registrable and non-registrable event are not permitted to run concurrently. In these instances, the whole event is considered a registrable event.*

### **Does an exemption granted to another person/organisation apply to me if I offer the same light contact combat sport?**

No, exemptions only apply for the person or organisation that applied for the exemption. This is due to the many varieties of rules used within and across combat sports. Applications from different persons or organisations must therefore be assessed individually.

### **Is my light contact combat sport exempted as soon as I submit my application?**

No, your exemption is not in effect until you are notified that it has been approved and the date it takes effect. You must comply with all requirements of the Act in the meantime.

### **Can my application be assessed outside of the indicated timeframes?**

Applications will only be assessed outside of the indicated timeframes in exceptional circumstances. This is because the Minister must notify each exemption on the Legislation Register. It is therefore logistically more difficult to process applications separately.

### **Why review exemptions every three (3) years?**

Exemptions will be reviewed every three years in collaboration with the applicant to determine if there have been any changes that may impact on the Minister's decision to grant an exemption e.g. a change in rules that now allows forceful contact with the head, neck, spine or groin.

### **Who is on the advisory committee?**

The Advisory Committee consists of:

- > Two industry representatives (merit process appointments)
- > A Medical Professional
- > A member of ACT Policing
- > The Controlled Sports Registrar (Chair)
- > A representative from Sport and Recreation, ACT Government.

The Advisory Committee does not have decision making powers, but can provide advice that may influence a decision.

### **What if my exemption is not granted?**

In some instances exemptions will not be granted. This can be for many reasons. Your individual circumstances will be discussed with you.

You will be given the opportunity to supply additional information to support your case. Your application will then be reconsidered.

When an exemption is not granted, you will be supplied with a 'reviewable decision notice'. This means you can appeal the decision through the ACT Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal.



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