COVID-19 information for the marine industry

This fact sheet applies to all international voyages and maritime crew entering Australia, except for cruise ships and cruise ship crew.

Additional immigration, reporting and quarantine requirements apply to maritime crew who have been in or transited through another country.

This factsheet should be read in conjunction with state and territory information for maritime crew. Web links to this information can be found at the end of this factsheet.

What's new?

This fact sheet was updated on 05 August 2020 to clarify quarantine requirements.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, coughing, sore throat, tiredness and shortness of breath. Other symptoms can also include night sweats, chills, loss of smell and loss of taste.

What is Australia doing?

Foreign travellers from all countries cannot enter Australia. Australian citizens and permanent residents (and their immediate family) and New Zealand nationals who live in Australia can travel to Australia.

All travellers entering Australia must quarantine in the state or territory in which they disembark.

Australian citizens and permanent residents cannot travel overseas.

International maritime crew can apply for an exemption to these restrictions.

Crew disembarking commercial vessels must quarantine. The quarantine requirements are outlined in this document.

Maritime crew exemptions to mandatory quarantine do not apply to oil rig personnel or cruise ship crew.

QUARANTINE IS ENFORCED UNDER STATE AND TERRITORY PUBLIC HEALTH LEGISLATION.

MANY STATES AND TERRITORIES ARE QUARANTINING PEOPLE IN DESIGNATED ACCOMMODATION AT THE POINT OF ARRIVAL. SOME STATES AND TERRITORIES MAY ALLOW SELF-QUARANTINE. THE MARINE INDUSTRY SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STATE AND TERRITORY REQUIREMENTS BEFORE CREW DISEMBARK.

YOU MUST APPLY FOR EXEMPTIONS FOR CREW FROM THE RELEVANT STATE OR TERRITORY.

GO TO WWW.HEALTH.GOV.AU/STATE-TERRITORY-CONTACTS FOR CONTACT INFORMATION OR SEE THE LINKS AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT.

What vessels have COVID-19 requirements?

- Vessels with crew who have left, or transited through, any country other than Australia.
- Vessels that have ill crew or passengers on board.
- Vessels that have suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 on board.

If a vessel has sick crew or a suspected case of COVID-19 on board, a state or territory human biosecurity officer will decide the appropriate action. This may include:

- isolating the crew member
- hospitalising the crew member
- testing the crew member for COVID-19.

Crew cannot unload goods or disembark until a biosecurity officer or a human biosecurity officer clears the vessel.

What should commercial vessels do if a crew member is ill?

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) is in contact with international vessels. This is to ensure they understand the requirements and comply with pre-arrival reporting of ill travellers.

As per the normal pre-arrival reporting process, it is a legal requirement to report all crew who have been ill, through the Maritime Arrivals Reporting System (MARS). The ill crew member should isolate on the vessel in a single cabin. They should isolate until a biosecurity officer or human biosecurity officer gives further direction.

DAWE may ask the vessel master for information in addition to the usual MARS questions. This enables DAWE or the relevant state or territory health department to assess COVID-19 risk.

A biosecurity officer will meet the vessel to screen for COVID-19 and other serious infectious diseases among ill crew. Biosecurity officers use the Traveller with Illness Checklist (TIC) with the ill crew member, or discuss the case with the vessel's doctor.

Depending on the TIC outcome, a state and territory human biosecurity officer will give advice to the biosecurity officer. The biosecurity officer will tell the vessel master what

they need to do next. A biosecurity officer or human biosecurity officer may also direct the management of a suspected case of COVID-19 and contacts of that person.

If a human biosecurity officer recommends testing for COVID-19, the vessel will likely be directed to berth at a port. The ill person may either have a test at the port or transfer to a medical facility. A human biosecurity officer will decide what is allowed. Health care workers should not board a vessel at anchorage.

What if a crew member requires medical attention?

Notifying a biosecurity officer of a sick crew member will not stop medical or ambulance services meeting the vessel. The operator of the vessel is responsible for requesting medical or ambulance services. The operator should tell medical or ambulance services if they suspect someone has COVID-19 or has been in contact with someone with COVID-19. The operator of the vessel should also provide the travel history of the ill crew member and the vessel over the past 14 days.

What are the quarantine requirements for international maritime crew on arrival in Australia?

Maritime crew are anyone needed to be part of a crew operating or providing services to support the operation of a vessel. This can be a commercial or government vessel, but excludes cruise vessels. This includes support staff such as livestock handlers and veterinarians. This does not include oil rig personnel.

1. **Maritime crew must not join a vessel or travel domestically if they have any signs of illness and should seek medical assistance.**

2. **Many states and territories now require international maritime crew arriving in Australia (via aircraft) to quarantine for 14 days at the point of arrival.**

- Some states or territories may allow crew to travel directly to the vessel or quarantine until they join a vessel.
- It is important to check the requirements with the relevant state or territory before the vessel or the crew arrive in Australia. Links to state and territory requirements are at the bottom of this document.
- Operators should apply for exemptions from the relevant state or territory.
- Crew may be subject to additional biosecurity screening.
- After quarantine, crew must travel directly to the vessel or domestic flight, observing physical distancing.

> **QUARANTINE MEANS THAT WHEN NOT IN TRANSIT CREW MUST REMAIN AT THEIR ACCOMMODATION. THEY MUST NOT ATTEND PUBLIC PLACES OR HAVE VISITORS UNTIL THEY JOIN THEIR VESSEL OR THEIR 14-DAY QUARANTINE PERIOD IS COMPLETE. DETAILED INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND IN THE QUARANTINE GUIDANCE ON THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S WEBSITE**

3. **For maritime crew disembarking a vessel in Australia:**

- No matter how much time a crew member has spent on the vessel, foreign crew may travel internationally out of Australia. They can travel by vessel or air provided they go directly to the vessel or airport.
    - If there is a delay between disembarkation and international departure, foreign crew should stay in **quarantine accommodation** until they depart. They should wear PPE (face mask) while in transit, including on domestic flights.
- In some states and territories, crew who live in Australia who have visited a foreign port may **quarantine for 14 days** at home or in other private accommodation. They must go directly to their place of residence in this case.
    - Crew should wear PPE (face mask) while in transit, including on domestic flights.
- Crew who live in Australia who are returning from a round-trip voyage **are exempt from quarantine requirements** on arrival back into Australia. This is provided:
    - the vessel does not dock in any international ports or offshore installations
    - no new crew or other passengers join
    - there is no illness on board.
- Crew can apply for an exemption from these requirements directly from the relevant state or territory.

4. **At all times (even if crew have been at sea for more than 14 days) crew on-board a vessel:**

- Are permitted to undertake vessel functions at the port but should wear PPE (face mask) while performing these functions.
- **Should** limit interactions with non-crew such as marine pilots and government officers.
- **Should** wear PPE in public spaces on-board the vessel when non-crew are on-board.
- **Must** report if they have fever (37.5ºC or above), cough, sore throat, tiredness, shortness of breath, night sweats, chills, loss of smell or loss of taste.

5. **Crew should also follow measures to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 at all times.**

- See the [How can the marine industry reduce the risk to the crew of commercial vessels?](#) section.

Does time at sea count toward the quarantine period?

Some states and territories no longer count the period spent at sea from last international port towards the 14-day quarantine period. This is because COVID-19 symptoms can be difficult to detect.

Check the full quarantine measures of the state or territory you are arriving in before travelling.

Will crew have to quarantine more than once if they travel within Australia?

Crew need to complete their 14 days of quarantine on arrival. As long as crew are well, they will not have to complete a second 14 days of quarantine if they fly to another state or territory.

Crew should transit directly from the place they completed quarantine to the vessel or flight while maintaining physical distance where practical. If direct travel does not occur, it is possible they may be required to do a second period of quarantine on arrival in another state or territory. Crew who have completed their quarantine but then have been in a domestic 'hotspot' (an area in Australia where there is COVID-19 clusters), may be directed to quarantine again.

Can crew travel to another state or territory on arrival in Australia and quarantine there?

No. Quarantine must be in the state or territory of arrival.

Only under extenuating circumstances will a crew member be able to travel to a different state or territory without quarantining in the first. This must be prearranged before arriving in Australia with both state or territory governments. To do this, they would need to seek an exemption through state and territory processes before arriving in Australia. Crew granted an exemption to do this should wear PPE (face mask) while in transit, including on domestic flights.

How can industry reduce COVID-19 risk to crew?

You should advise crew to continue to follow infection prevention work instructions when in contact with anyone who is unwell. This includes using PPE when recommended by prevention work instructions.

The following measures will help reduce the risk of illness on board commercial vessels:

- Crew should practise good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough hygiene:
    - Wash hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet.
    - Cough and sneeze into the elbow or a clean tissue, dispose of the tissue and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
    - If unwell, stay more than 1.5 metres from other people.
- Crew should avoid touching the face (mouth, eyes, and nose) with unwashed or gloved hands.
- Crew should use appropriate PPE if they have to be in close contact with an ill person.
- If crew are using PPE, it should be fitted and worn correctly.
- Vessels should ensure crew practise the above precautions.
- Vessels should ensure the vessel is cleaned and disinfected often.

What cleaning and disinfection activities are needed for commercial vessels?

Commercial vessels should follow existing cleaning and disinfection protocols.

An expert group is developing environmental cleaning and disinfection guidelines. These will be published in future updates of this fact sheet. The following are general recommendations for cleaning and disinfection practices.

Routine sanitation

Routine cleaning and disinfection are essential in minimising the spread of infection. Increasing routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces is an important measure in controlling the spread of infection. Surfaces include:

- hand rails
- guard rails
- dogs
- hatch combings
- shared navigation equipment
- chair backs and arms.

It is recommended that all vessels arriving from areas affected by COVID-19 thoroughly clean and disinfect high-touch areas.

Response to an ill crew member

If a crew member is diagnosed with COVID-19, you should contact the local public health unit for guidance on areas to be disinfected and disinfection procedures.

Other considerations

Baggage and packages:

- Take routine precautions for baggage and packages that accompany ill crew members.

Waste management:

- No additional precautions are recommended for handling standard waste. All crew handling waste should use standard precautions and perform hand hygiene after removing PPE.
- Dispose and destroy waste according to standard protocols, legislation and regulations.

How can industry reduce COVID-19 risk to marine industry staff (e.g. stevedores, marine pilots)?

Crew should continue to follow infection prevention work instructions when in contact with anyone who is unwell. This includes the use of PPE when recommended by employers.

Vessels should provide PPE to their crew to meet Australian requirements.

There are a number of factors that minimise the risk of crew transmitting an illness to marine industry staff. These include, health screening, risk profiling and the requirement for crew to wear PPE when interacting with non-crew.

The following measures will help reduce the risk of illness on board commercial vessels. They will also reduce the risk of marine industry staff boarding a vessel contracting an illness:

- Marine industry staff should practise good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough hygiene, including:
  - Washing hands often with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet.
  - Coughing and sneezing into the elbow or a clean tissue, disposing of the tissue and using alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
  - Staying more than 1.5 metres from other people.
- Marine industry staff should avoid touching their face (mouth, eyes, and nose) with unwashed or gloved hands.
- If marine industry staff become aware of any ill person on board, they must immediately contact the local port authority and public health authority. They should ask the vessel master to report the illness in their pre-arrival report.
- The ill crew member or members must isolate on the vessel in a single cabin until further direction is given by a biosecurity officer or human biosecurity officer.
- Marine industry staff must avoid all contact with vessel crew on board that are unwell. If unwell crew are essential to the vessel, there must be a prior agreement on how staff can avoid close contact.
- All crew should remain on-board while a vessel is berthed in Australia. Crew are permitted to conduct essential vessel functions at the port and should wear PPE while doing so.
- Crew should also wear PPE in public spaces on-board the vessel while non-crew members are on-board. Crew not performing essential work should quarantine when non-crew members are on-board. Restrict non-essential interactions with non-crew.

Additional advice for marine pilots:

- Marine pilots should wear appropriate PPE (face mask) while on board any vessel (even if the vessel has been at sea for more than 14 days). This is recommended for marine pilots due to the length of time marine pilots can be on board and the extended close contact they may have with crew.
- They should make sure they have enough masks for the time they are on board. The number of masks will depend on whether they will be in close contact with essential crew for short or long periods.
- Marine pilots should replace masks each time they become damp or soiled.

https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-marine-pilots

Are Australian marine industry staff (e.g. stevedores, marine pilots) subject to health screening and quarantine?

Australian marine industry staff are exempt from Australia's health screening and quarantine requirements when the guidance in this document is followed.

If staff have been in contact with people with symptoms of COVID-19 while on board the vessel, staff should tell the biosecurity officer.

For the most current testing criteria, please visit the Department of Health's guidelines.

What should marine industry staff (e.g. stevedores, marine pilots) do if they develop symptoms?

With appropriate precautions, it is unlikely that any illness or symptoms marine industry staff develop will relate to this virus. If staff do become ill, they should tell their doctor's clinic when making an appointment that they work at an international port.

They should also:

- Isolate themselves at home or in their accommodation and avoid contact with others until a doctor or respiratory clinic assesses them.
- Wash their hands frequently, with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and wash their hands afterwards, or use alcohol-based hand rub.
- Inform their supervisor of symptoms.

Other information

The Department of Health is monitoring the situation in collaboration with the World Health Organization and Australian states and territories.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee and National Cabinet meet regularly to consider and revise the restrictions on Australians and industry during the pandemic.

Downloading the COVIDSafe app helps protect you, your friends and family by speeding up the process of contacting people exposed to coronavirus. Find out more by visiting https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covidsafe-app

Who should vessels contact for further advice?

For travel restrictions:

- Contact the Australian Border Force Border Operations Centre at **+61 1300 368 126**

For human biosecurity:

- Contact the Maritime National Co-ordination Centre **1300 004 605** (operating hours 6am-6pm Australian Central Standard Time. For urgent after hours enquiries, call **+61 417 666 648**)

For general COVID-19:

- For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au
- Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on **1800 020 080**. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting, call **131 450**.
- If you have concerns about your health, speak to a doctor.

Contact the relevant state or territory public health agency about state and territory requirements and exemptions www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts

Or visit their websites with information relevant to maritime crew:

New South Wales - https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx#quarantine

Northern Territory - https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/chief-health-officer-directions

Queensland - https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/border-restrictions/protocol-for-maritime-crew

South Australia – https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/restrictions-and-responsibilities/travel-restrictions

Tasmania - https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/travellers-and-visitors/maritime-crew

Victoria - https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-overseas-travellers-coronavirus-disease-covid-19

Western Australia - https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/approval-maritime-crew-no-2

Shipping Australia Limited also regularly updates COVID-19 requirements at Australian ports: https://shippingaustralia.com.au/covid-19-shipping-restrictions-and-requirements-for-australian-ports/