



COVID-19 information for the marine industry

This fact sheet applies to all international voyages entering Australia, except for cruise ships. There is a separate factsheet specifically for cruise ships.

Additional immigration, reporting requirements and isolation requirements apply to travellers who have been in, or transited through, a country other than Australia in the past 14 days.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness and shortness of breath. Difficulty breathing is a sign of possible pneumonia that requires immediate medical attention.

What is Australia doing?

From 1200 AEDST 28 March 2020, all persons entering Australia will be required to undertake a period of mandatory isolation in the state in which they disembark. Maritime crew entering Australia to undertake their next work voyage are exempt from this requirement.

Australian citizens and Australian permanent residents are restricted from travelling overseas from 1200 AEDST 25 March 2020.

Australia will deny entry to foreign nationals from 2100 AEDST on 20 March 2020. Exceptions include permanent residents (and their immediate family) and New Zealand nationals resident in Australia. International maritime crew will also have exemptions. More information on the ban and exemptions is available from Australian Border Force.

On the 15 March 2020, the Australian Government announced a temporary ban on cruise ships that have left a foreign port. More information on the ban and possible exemptions is available from Australian Border Force.

For more information about requirements for travellers, read the 'Information for Travellers' fact sheet and 'Isolation guidance' fact sheet on Health's website. Go to www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers.

Information is being provided to travellers at international ports explaining the symptoms of COVID-19 and encouraging them to report to biosecurity officers if they have symptoms while in the port.

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

What happens to international maritime crew subject to the travel ban?

More information on the ban and exemptions, including exemptions for international maritime crew, is available from [Australian Border Force](http://www.border.gov.au).

Maritime crew disembarking commercial vessels are still subject to self-isolation requirements outlined in this document.

What vessels have additional COVID-19 isolation requirements?

- International cruise vessels
- Vessels with crew or passengers who have left, or transited through, any country other than Australia in the last 14 days.
- Vessels that have ill crew or passengers on board.
- Vessels that have crew or passengers who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

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

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

A biosecurity officer will then meet the vessel to screen for COVID-19 and other serious infectious diseases. Biosecurity officers do this by administering the Traveller with Illness Checklist (TIC) to the ill crew member, or by discussing case diagnoses with the vessel's doctor.

Depending on the outcome of the TIC, a state and territory human biosecurity officer will provide advice to the biosecurity officer. The biosecurity officer will then tell the person what they need to do next. A biosecurity officer or human biosecurity officer may also issue directions for the management of a suspected case of COVID-19 and contacts of that person.

If testing for COVID-19 is recommended by a human biosecurity officer, the vessel will be directed to berth at a port and the ill person can either be tested at the port or transferred to a medical facility. This will be at the discretion of a human biosecurity officer. A health care worker will not board a vessel at anchorage and a port authority should not stop a vessel berthing because of an ill traveller.

What if a crew member requires medical attention?

If a person is very ill and needs further medical attention, notifying a biosecurity officer will not interfere with the vessel being met by medical or ambulance services. The operator of the vessel is responsible for requesting medical or ambulance services. The operator should inform medical or ambulance services if anyone on board has been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, and the travel history of the ill passenger and the vessel over the past 14 days.

What are the mandatory isolation and self-isolation requirements?

From 29 March 2020, travellers who enter Australia are required to undertake a period of mandatory isolation at a designated facility on arrival in Australia. Travellers arriving in Australia will be transported directly to accommodation in the state or territory of arrival and required to remain there for a period of 14 days. The designated accommodation for isolation will be free of charge for travellers.

Maritime crew are exempt from this requirement and are instead required to self-isolate at their home or accommodation until their next work voyage. Self-isolation means that when not in transit they should remain in their accommodation and not attend public places or have visitors. Detailed information can be found in the 'Isolation guidance' on Health's website. Go to www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers.

Are crew disembarking a vessel required to self-isolate?

Yes. Crew disembarking a vessel that has been in, or transited through, a foreign port prior to arrival in Australia are required to self-isolate. The Australian Border Force has published the 'Restrictions on entry to Australia for commercial vessels' detailing requirements for crew disembarking from commercial vessels.

Maritime crews will be required to continue to undertake the existing precautions where they self-isolate in their accommodation until their next work voyage.

How long are crew required self-isolate?

It is preferable that all crew disembarking from commercial vessels undertake the full 14 days of self-isolation after disembarking from a vessel. However, it is acknowledged that this may not be feasible for crew providing essential services. For isolation period concessions and precautions for maritime crew, refer to advice from the Australian Border Force.

Can disembarking crew who are required to self-isolate fly home within Australia or take public transport?

Crew and passengers should firstly follow any instruction given to them by Australian Border Force officers, biosecurity officers and state or territory health authorities at the time of disembarkation.

Providing no alternate advice has been given, crew who are not ill can travel domestically to reach their accommodation within Australia to self-isolate before their next work journey. Crew must follow the precautions on the "Information for domestic travel following international travel" factsheet. Go to <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>

What requirements apply to crew not disembarking from a vessel with COVID-19 isolation requirements?

All crew must remain on-board while a vessel with COVID-19 isolation requirements is berthed in Australia. Crew are only able to disembark to conduct essential vessel functions and crew must wear personal protective equipment while performing these functions. Crew must also wear PPE in public spaces on-board the vessel while non-crew members are on-board. Non-essential interactions with non-crew should be restricted.

Do international crew flying into Australia to join a commercial vessel need to self-isolate?

All crew are subject to Australian Border Force's immigration requirements and exemptions. All international crew must comply with Australian Border Force's immigration requirements as the principal requirements.

On arrival in Australia, these additional health recommendations apply, international crew:

- May take a domestic flight/s in Australia to their final destination to meet their vessel but must self-isolate at their accommodation if they have a layover at any time and follow all precautions in the “Information for domestic travel following international travel” factsheet. Go to <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>
- Must proceed directly to the vessel and must self-isolate at their accommodation if not joining the vessel immediately
- Who are ill, must not join a vessel
- May leave the vessel to undertake vessel functions and must wear personal protective equipment while performing these functions once on the vessel
- Joining a vessel taking domestic legs within the 14 day self-isolation period, will result in the 14 day isolation requirement recommencing for the vessel and all crew on-board.

Is COVID-19 information available for crew and marine industry staff (e.g. stevedores)?

The Department of Health is providing additional communication material for travellers (including passengers and crew) at Australian international airports and seaports. This material informs travellers about COVID-19 and what to do once they have arrived in Australia. The information sheets are updated regularly and are available at www.health.gov.au/covid19-resources

How can the marine industry reduce the risk to the crew of commercial vessels?

Crew should be advised to continue to follow existing employer infection prevention work instructions when in contact with anyone who is unwell, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when recommended by employer work instructions.

Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 can occur, but it is not yet understood how easily this happens. The following measures will help reduce the risk of illness on board commercial vessels:

- Crew should be encouraged to 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; and
 - Cough and sneeze into the elbow or a clean tissue, dispose of the tissue and use alcohol based hand sanitiser
 - If unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).
- Crew should be encouraged to avoid touching the face (mouth, eyes, and nose) with unwashed or gloved hands.
- Crew should use appropriate PPE if close contact with an ill person is required.
- If PPE is used, it should be fitted and worn properly.
- Vessel should ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfection activities are undertaken.

What cleaning and disinfection activities are appropriate for commercial vessels?

Commercial vessels should follow existing protocols for cleaning and disinfection.

Environmental cleaning and disinfection guidelines are being developed by an expert group and will be published in future updates of this factsheet when available. The following are general recommendations for cleaning and disinfection practices:

Routine Sanitation

Routine cleaning and disinfection practices are essential in minimising the spread of infection. Increasing the frequency of routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces is an important measure in controlling the spread of infection. It is recommended that all vessels arriving from areas affected by COVID-19 thoroughly clean and disinfect frequently touched areas.

Response to an ill crew member

Following identification of a crew member with COVID-19, the local public health unit should be contacted for specific guidance on areas to be disinfected and disinfection procedures.

Other considerations

Baggage and Packages:

- No additional precautions are recommended for baggage and packages that accompany ill crew members. Routine precautions are recommended.

Waste Management:

- No additional precautions are recommended for the handling of standard waste. All personnel handling waste should use standard precautions and perform hand hygiene after removing personal protective equipment.
- Waste disposal and destruction should be conducted according to standard protocols, legislation and regulations.

How can the marine industry reduce the risk to marine industry staff (e.g. stevedores)?

Persons should be advised to continue to follow existing employer infection prevention work instructions when in contact with anyone who is unwell, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when recommended by employer work instructions.

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

- Marine industry staff should be encouraged to 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; and
 - Cough and sneeze into the elbow or a clean tissue, dispose of the tissue and use alcohol based hand sanitiser
 - If unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).

- Marine industry staff should be encouraged to avoid touching the face (mouth, eyes, and nose) with unwashed or gloved hands.
- Marine industry staff temporarily boarding a vessel subject to additional COVID-19 isolation requirements should wear a surgical mask and change it when it becomes damp or soiled.
- Marine industry staff interacting wharf-side with crew from a vessel subject to additional COVID-19 isolation requirements should stay one metre or more away from crew unless wearing appropriate PPE (surgical mask).
- If PPE is used, it should be fitted and worn properly.

Are Australian marine industry staff (e.g. stevedores) subject to health screening and isolation requirements if they board a vessel with additional COVID-19 isolation requirements?

As a precautionary measure, appropriate PPE must be worn when interacting with people while on board a vessel with additional COVID-19 isolation requirements. By complying with this guidance, Australian marine industry staff are exempt from Australia's health screening and isolation requirements on arrival into Australian ports.

If staff have been in contact with people with symptoms of COVID-19 while on board the vessel, staff should make themselves known to the biosecurity officer when possible.

It is not necessary for marine industry staff to wear PPE if they are not boarding a vessel subject to additional COVID-19 isolation requirements, or not interacting with crew or passengers. Regular hand washing or use of alcohol based hand sanitiser is always recommended.

What should marine industry staff do if they develop symptoms after disembarking the vessel?

With appropriate precautions, it is extremely unlikely that any illness or symptoms marine industry staff develop will be related to this virus. If, however, marine industry staff become ill, they should inform their doctor or clinic when making an appointment that they have had some contact with people who may have had exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.

They should also:

- Wash their hands frequently, with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub
- Use good cough and sneeze hygiene – 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 closely monitoring the situation in collaboration with the World Health Organization and Australian states and territories.

Who should vessels contact if they need further advice?

For questions about the temporary ban on international cruise ships or travel restrictions:

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

For human biosecurity questions:

- 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 questions:

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.

The phone number of each state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts

If you have concerns about your health, speak to a doctor.