Information for marine pilots

Extra immigration and reporting requirements and isolation recommendations apply to travellers who have been in, or transited through, a restricted location in Australia or any country other than Australia.

For more information, see the COVID-19 information for the maritime industry fact sheet.

This fact sheet will be reviewed as international travel restrictions change.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- fever or history of fever (for example, night sweats or chills)
- coughing
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- loss or altered sense of smell/taste.

Other reported symptoms include:

- runny or stuffy nose
- headache
- muscle or joint pains
- conjunctivitis
- nausea
- diarrhoea
- vomiting
- loss of appetite
- fatigue.

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through:

- respiratory droplets
- smaller particles (aerosols)
- direct physical contact with an infected individual
- contaminated objects and surfaces (indirectly).

The exact relative contributions of these routes remain unclear. However, those who have been in close contact with a COVID-19 case are at highest risk. It may also be possible for a vaccinated person to contract and/or transmit COVID-19.

Evidence suggests the virus may be spread from two to three days before symptoms develop in infected persons. This means it is possible to catch the virus from someone who seems well. It may also be possible for a vaccinated person to contract and/or transmit COVID-19. That's why it is important to always use COVIDSafe behaviours.

What is Australia doing?

Australia's borders are closed. Travel to Australia is only available if you are exempt, or you have been granted an individual exemption.

All travellers entering Australia must quarantine in the state or territory in which they disembark, unless exempt or they have been granted an exemption. The **COVID-19 information for the maritime industry fact sheet** outlines the quarantine requirements for maritime crew.

Australian citizens and permanent residents cannot travel overseas, except for eligible air travellers under the quarantine free travel arrangements between Australia and New Zealand.

Australia also has pre-departure testing and mask wearing requirements for international arrivals by air. Check the Department of Health's **Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for international travellers** for more details (www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-international-travellers).

What vessels have COVID-19 requirements?

- Vessels with crew who have left, or transited through, any restricted locations in Australia, or any country other than Australia. Even if the crew have been at sea for more than 14 days, these vessels will still have COVID-19 requirements.
- Vessels that have ill crew or passengers on board.
- Vessels that have suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 on board.

How do I find out if a vessel may be subject to COVID-19 requirements?

The vessel is legally required to provide this information in the pre-arrival report through the Maritime Arrivals Reporting System (MARS). If you are boarding a vessel which has not yet completed the pre-arrival report, you should contact the vessel agent to find out this information.

You are strongly advised to follow infection prevention protocols at all times, regardless of:

- the vessel status
- your vaccination status
- the vaccination status of those you interact with.

How can I reduce my risk?

The Australian Government Department of Health strongly encourages all marine pilots to be fully vaccinated. Maritime staff should participate in regular COVID-19 testing and screening programs, where offered by their state or territory.

You should continue to follow infection prevention work instructions, including the use of PPE when recommended by your employer.

Use PPE appropriately so it's effective. Employers should provide regular training and guidance material in the correct way to put on, remove and dispose of all PPE.

Use the following COVIDSafe precautions for **all** vessels arriving in Australia. These precautions remain applicable even if the vessel has been at sea for more than 14 days and/or you or the crew has been vaccinated:

- You should also follow any state or territory requirements and directions when boarding a vessel.
- You should avoid any unnecessary face-to-face contact with crew. Where possible, use radio, phone, or email communication.
- Where possible, limit contact with persons on board the vessel to essential crew only.
- You should wear appropriate PPE while on board any vessel. Wear PPE even if the vessel has been at sea for more than 14 days. This is due to the length of time marine pilots can be on board and the extended close contact they may have with crew.
- You should make sure you have enough masks for the time you are on board. The number of masks will depend on whether you will be in close contact with essential crew for short or long periods.
- Replace masks each time they become damp or soiled.
- Avoid touching your face (mouth, eyes, and nose).
- Always practise good hand hygiene. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser:
  - before and after eating
  - after having contact with a vessel or its environment
  - after attending the toilet.
- Always practise good sneeze/cough hygiene. This involves coughing or sneezing into your elbow or a clean tissue, then disposing of the tissue and washing your hands or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Where possible, stay 1.5 metres or more away from crew unless wearing appropriate PPE recommended by your workplace's guidance. If close contact with crew is required, it should be for the shortest time possible.
- Take your own refreshments on board, if required. Do not accept food, drink, or PPE from the crew.
- Clean and disinfect work surfaces on board.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment taken on board after leaving the vessel, including phones, laptops, and hard hats.
- If you become aware of any ill person on board, you should:
  - contact the local port authority
  - contact the public health authority
  - ask the vessel master to report the illness in their pre-arrival report.
- The ill crew member or passenger should isolate on the vessel in a single cabin until given further direction. A biosecurity officer or human biosecurity officer is responsible for giving further direction. The ill crew member or passenger should remain isolated unless they require emergency medical attention.
- Avoid all contact with vessel crew who are unwell. The risk of passing on the virus is higher if a person is unwell. If unwell crew are essential to the vessel, there must be an agreement on how you can avoid close contact before you board.
- All crew should remain on-board the berthed vessel while in Australia. Crew are allowed to conduct essential vessel functions while at the port. Crew are strongly advised to wear PPE while doing this.
- Crew are strongly advised to also wear PPE in public spaces on-board the vessel while non-crew members are on-board. Crew not performing essential work are strongly advised to quarantine when non-crew members are on-board and restrict non-essential interactions with non-crew.

New COVID-19 variants

New variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have emerged in some countries and appear to spread more easily than other variants. Marine pilots should continue with the COVIDSafe precautions for all vessels as stated above. The Australian Government and state and territory authorities may implement more precautions in the future, as more is learned about these variants.

Am I subject to enhanced health screening and quarantine requirements if I pilot a vessel?

By following these guidelines, you are generally exempt from Australia's quarantine requirements on arrival into Australian ports, dependent on state or territory processes. However, some states and territories may require health screening, including regular surveillance testing, for staff at international ports. This will ensure the early detection of infections, especially as people working at international ports are at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19.

If you have been in contact with ill persons while on board the vessel, make yourself known to the biosecurity officer on arrival. The biosecurity officer will give you further direction if required. If you have disembarked a vessel that is not intending to berth in Australian territory, contact the relevant state or territory health department for advice.

If you do not follow the advice in this fact sheet, you will be required to quarantine for 14 days from when you disembark from the vessel.

What should I do if I develop symptoms after disembarking the vessel?

If you become ill, tell your doctor or clinic when making an appointment that you work at an international port and on international vessels. The clinic will give you information on how to safely seek medical care.

You should also:

- isolate at home or in your accommodation and avoid contact with others
- get assessed by a doctor or at a COVID-19 clinic or respiratory clinic and get tested for COVID-19
- wash your hands frequently using soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- use good cough and sneeze hygiene – cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and wash your hands afterwards
- inform your supervisor of your symptoms.

Will I be contacted if I have been exposed to someone with COVID-19?

When someone is diagnosed with COVID-19 in Australia, health authorities conduct contact tracing.

Health staff will notify you if you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19. Health staff will give you information and advice relevant to your exposure.

Other information

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

Where can I get more information about COVID-19?

For travel restrictions:

- Visit https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/.

For human biosecurity:

- Contact the Australian National Maritime Centre on **+61 8 8201 6185** (operating hours 6:30am-6:30pm Australian Central Standard Time).

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.

For news and information about COVID-19 vaccines:

- Go to www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines.

For information about state and territory requirements and exemptions:

- Contact the relevant state or territory public health agency. Details are available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts.