



Maritime Crew Changes in Australia (excluding Cruise Ships)

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

The health, welfare and safety of Australians, both at home and overseas, is the highest priority of the Australian Government.

The following restrictions are in place at the Australian border:

- Non-Australian citizens and non-Australian residents are not permitted to enter Australia, via aircraft or sea vessel, unless an exemption applies.
- All Australian citizens and permanent residents are prohibited from departing Australia unless an exemption applies.
- All passengers arriving in Australia will be subject to the Australian Government's mandatory quarantine period of 14-days at their first Australian destination unless an exemption applies.

The following arrangements are in place for maritime crew:

- Maritime crew may enter Australia with the appropriate visa, and depart Australia.
- Maritime crew are not subject to the mandatory 14-day quarantine however, they will be required to comply with self-isolation requirements set out in this advice.
- Maritime crew may be subject to additional state and territory quarantine and controls.

The below Frequently Asked Questions are intended to help the holders of Maritime Crew (Subclass 988) visas (MCVs) undertaking crew changes in Australia. This is general advice and individuals should assess the information against their own personal circumstances.

Crew entering Australia by air

Do I need to apply to the Australian Border Force (ABF) Commissioner for an exemption from the travel restriction?

If you hold a Maritime Crew visa, you **do not** need to apply for an exemption from the ABF Commissioner provided you are travelling to Australia to join your vessel.

If you are a New Zealand citizen, eligible to be granted a Special Category (Subclass 444) visa on arrival in Australia, you do not require an exemption from the ABF Commissioner prior to travel to Australia.

Do I need to carry any additional documentation when travelling to Australia to prove that I am exempt from Australia's COVID-19 travel restrictions?

Those travelling to Australia for commercial maritime purposes are exempt from Australia's COVID-19 travel restrictions and do not need to seek an individual exemption from the Australian Border Force Commissioner.

When travelling to Australia for commercial maritime work, you should be ready to present your Seafarer's Identity Document, confirmation of your employment on a specific vessel and the dates that vessel will be in Australia, as evidence that your travel is for commercial maritime work purposes. This is in addition to your usual travel documents.

Do I need to complete a COVID-19 test before travelling to Australia?

You should not travel to Australia unless you are fit and well, and free of any COVID-19 symptoms.

As at 16 July 2020, you do not need to have a COVID-19 test as part of your visa application process or before travelling to Australia. However, individual State or Territory governments may impose their own health requirements that you will need to comply with on your arrival in Australia.

Pre-travel COVID-19 testing may be imposed without prior notice and so you should check relevant websites regularly when preparing to travel.

Please monitor individual State and Territory government health sites for details and updates on additional measures:

- Australia wide: <https://www.australia.gov.au/>
- NSW: <https://preview.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>
- ACT: <https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/novelcoronavirus-covid-19>
- VIC: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- TAS: <https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au>
- SA: <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au>
- WA: https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus
- NT: <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/>
- QLD: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronaviruscovid-19>

Do I need to go into quarantine or isolation when I arrive in Australia?

You must follow the quarantine and isolation requirements of the Australian state or territory that you arrive in, even if you have an exemption from travel restrictions issued by the Australian Border Force Commissioner. Be aware that travel to multiple states or territories may invoke quarantine periods in each region.

Your employer may also require evidence of completing a quarantine period in Australia before joining your vessel.

For information, please follow the links in the State and Territory Government Information section

<https://www.australia.gov.au/>

I am arriving in to Australia by international aircraft to join a vessel, what process is in place?

When you arrive by air into Australia to join your vessel, there are specific processes in place that you will be asked to follow. You must firstly follow any instruction given to them by biosecurity officers, state or territory health authorities, or Australian Border Force officers, at the time of disembarkation. You must also check any domestic quarantine and isolation requirements and exemptions with the relevant State or Territory Health Authority if transiting domestically. Be aware that travel to multiple states or territories may invoke quarantine periods in each region.

- On arrival at an Australian airport, crew must declare to an ABF officer they are joining a vessel or offshore installation. They will then be directed to a biosecurity officer.
- Crew may take a domestic flight/s to their final destination to meet their vessel but must self-isolate at their accommodation if they have a layover at any time.
- Crew must proceed directly to the vessel and self-isolate in their accommodation.
- Crew experiencing any signs of illness must not join the vessel and should seek medical assistance.
- Once on the vessel, crew may leave the vessel to undertake vessel functions and must wear PPE while performing these functions.

When I arrive in Australia via aircraft to join a vessel, what precautions do I need to take when with other people on, or around the vessel?

Once you have joined your vessel, you are required to use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when around others, including port workers and other crews who will be leaving the vessel for shore leave or sign-off).

Please also:

- Practice good personal hygiene and clean/sanitise surfaces and common areas.
- Use separate facilities to other crewmembers (where possible)
- Maintain appropriate social-distancing and avoid public transport

What if my itinerary includes a domestic leg?

Where a vessel is undertaking domestic legs, the 14 day self-isolation requirements recommences for the vessel and all crew on board where a crewmember joins prior to completion of their 14-day self-isolation period.

Vessel masters must update Human Health reporting in the Maritime Arrivals Reporting System.

I need to complete a quarantine period before joining my vessel, which visa should I apply for?

You will need to hold a valid visa that allows you to enter and remain in Australia for the full duration of your stay. If you hold a Maritime Crew visa (MCV) and a Transit visa, you have **5 days** after arrival in Australia to sign on to your vessel. If you expect to remain in Australia for longer than 5 days before signing on to your vessel, then a Transit visa will not meet your needs. You will need a visa that allows you to stay lawfully in Australia longer than 5 days. For example, a Visitor visa may be an appropriate option for you.

For information on which visa may be most relevant to your circumstances, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

Any visa you apply for should be applied for well in advance of your travel to Australia, or you may not be granted it in time.

If you already hold another visa, in addition to your MCV, you should check the visa conditions and how long that visa lets you stay in Australia at:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online>

Do I need to hold a visa with work rights while I meet my quarantine requirements in Australia?

No. You do not need to apply for a visa with work rights to cover the transit period. Crew who are meeting their quarantine requirements, and are solely waiting to sign-on to their vessel, are not considered to be working.

Can I get an exemption from the state or territory government quarantine requirements?

It depends. Please check the links to the State and Territory Government information at the bottom of this document.

Visas

Can I fly to Australia holding only a Maritime Crew visa (MCV)?

No. Holding an MCV does not allow you to arrive in Australia by air. If you hold an MCV and are seeking to travel to Australia by air to join your vessel you must:

- hold another valid visa that permits arrival by air into Australia, such as a Visitor visa; and
- the visa must remain valid until signing on to the vessel.

For information on which visa may be most relevant to your circumstances, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

What if I don't have all the information to fill in the visa application form?

You must complete your application as fully and accurately as possible. If you fail to do so, your application may be delayed, where further information is requested, or refused where the application is assessed on the basis of the information that you initially provided.

Where you are asked for travel details as part of your application but flights have yet to be confirmed, you should enter your expected travel details for both your travel into, and out of, Australia to the best of your knowledge.

You will need to provide a statement from the vessel's shipping or handling agent. That statement must include:

- your name
- the name of the person you are replacing where known
- the name of the company employing you
- the name of the ship you will join
- the date you expecting to arrive in Australia
- the port and date you expect to join the ship
- the scheduled dates and ports that ship will be in Australia and when it will depart, and
- if the person writing the statement is not the ship's owner, a copy of the request for crew from the ship's agent in Australia.

If I arrive in Australia with a Maritime Crew visa (MCV) and a Transit visa, how long do I have to sign-on to my vessel?

If you have arrived in Australia holding an MCV and a Transit visa, you have five days to sign-on to your vessel otherwise your MCV will cease.

Please check if a quarantine period is required in Australia prior to sign-on. You may require a different visa to a Transit visa if you cannot sign-on within five days.

If I arrive in Australia with a Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) and another visa, how long do I have to sign-on to my vessel?

If you have arrived in Australia holding an MCV and another visa that is not a Transit visa, you have as long as the period of stay allowed by the other visa to join the vessel. If you do not join your vessel within this time, your MCV will cease when the other visa expires.

Before travelling to Australia, you should check the conditions of your visa, including whether it will remain valid for any quarantine period you may need to complete when you arrive, before joining your vessel.

You can check your visa conditions and how long your visa lets you stay in Australia at:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online>

What if I need more time in Australia before joining my vessel?

Where your current visa does not provide sufficient time to complete a quarantine in Australia, you should apply for a further visa that will meet your needs. For example, a Visitor visa may be an appropriate option. For information on which visa may be most relevant to your circumstances, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

You should apply for your visa well in advance of your planned travel to Australia, or your visa may not be decided in time. You cannot apply for an MCV while in Australia.

Is the s408 an appropriate visa for Maritime crew who need to stay in Australia for longer than 5 days due to mandatory quarantine requirements as a result of COVID19?

No. The Temporary Activity (subclass 408) (Australian Government Endorsed Event) COVID-19 Pandemic Event visa is to support non-citizens who are not eligible to lodge a visa application while in Australia but who are unable to depart, or are required to remain in Australia to continue work in critical sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As maritime crew travelling to Australia by air are able to lodge applications for other visas prior to their departure and there are other options for crew arriving by sea, the subclass 408 visa is not an available visa option for maritime crew to comply with quarantine or self-isolation periods.

I already hold a Maritime Crew visa (MCV) and a Transit visa, am I allowed to apply for a Visitor visa as well?

Yes. However, if you are granted a Visitor visa, it will replace your Transit Visa. Your MCV will stay in place.

Will applying for, or holding another visa affect my Maritime Crew visa (MCV)?

No. You can hold an MCV at the same time as holding another temporary visa. However, if you are in Australia and have not signed on to your vessel before the other visa ceases, your MCV will cease too.

What are my options if I cannot lodge an application for an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) to travel to Australia?

Currently, applications for ETAs cannot be lodged online. You can still lodge applications for a range of other visas online, such as a Visitor visa or an eVisitor visa. For information on which visa may be most relevant to your circumstances, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

What can I do if I have been asked to provide the Department of Home Affairs with biometrics but the local collection centres are closed?

The officer processing your application has the discretion to waive the biometrics requirement where Visa Application Centres and Biometric Collection Centres have been closed. In these circumstances, you should attach a statement in ImmiAccount to your pending application, advising that you are unable to provide biometrics due to the closure of the collection centre and to request a waiver of this requirement.

ImmiAccount can be found here:

<https://online.immi.gov.au/lusc/login>

What if the information I used to apply for a visa changes? Do I have to update my application and if so how do I do this?

If your circumstances change after you have lodged your application but before it has been decided, you should submit a *Change in Circumstances* form through the ImmiAccount your application was lodged.

If your circumstances change after the visa is granted, you may need to apply for another visa, if you no longer meet the ongoing requirements of the visa you were granted.

A change in flight details does **not** require a new application to be lodged where a Transit or a Visitor visa has already been granted.

Further information can be found at:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/change-in-situation>

What happens if my travel plans change while I'm in Australia and my visa is about to run out?

You must hold a valid visa to remain lawful in Australia. You should apply for another visa while in Australia before your current visa expires.

For information on which visa may be most relevant to your circumstances, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

You can only apply for another MCV after you have departed Australia. You cannot apply for an MCV while in Australia.

Crew entering Australia by sea

I am arriving in Australia on an international marine voyage. Am I required to complete quarantine?

It depends. If 14 days have passed since your last international port of call, you are not required to complete quarantine onshore. If your vessel arrives within 14 days from your last international port of call, you will need to follow these restrictions:

- Remain on-board while the vessel is berthed in Australia.
- Only disembark to conduct essential vessel functions and wear PPE while performing these functions.
- Restrict your interaction with non-crew members to those that are critical to the safe operation and loading/unloading of the vessel.
- You must also use PPE in public spaces on board the vessel while non-crew members are on-board.

These restrictions apply until 14 days has elapsed since the vessel departed the last foreign port before Australia, and where there are no reports of crew being or having been unwell, or there is a suspected case of COVID-19 on-board.

Where can I find further information on the COVID-19 quarantine requirements imposed by the Australian Government?

Information relating to quarantine requirements can be found on the ABF website.

<https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/coming-australia>

For general information concerning COVID-19 please refer to the Department of Health website

<https://www.health-topics/nove-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Can I leave the vessel within the 14 day quarantine period for any reason?

You can leave the vessel within the 14 day period in the following circumstances:

- To depart Australia, however you must proceed directly to the airport and depart; or you must self-isolate at your accommodation until the time you proceed to the airport.
- To join another vessel but you must self-isolate at your accommodation for the remainder of the 14 day self-isolation period or until signing on to the next vessel.

Please also check any domestic isolation requirements and exemptions with the relevant state or territory health authority if transiting domestically through Australia.

The period you spend at sea prior to your arrival in Australia counts towards the 14 day period of self-isolation. For example, if your vessel has travelled for ten days since last being in a foreign port, your period of self-isolation would be four days.

Australian crew and Australian permanent residents can travel to their home and complete self-isolation.

Do I need to hold a visa with work rights while I met my quarantine requirements in Australia?

No. Crew members in Australia to sign on to a vessel, and are solely meeting the quarantine requirements, are not considered to be working by the Department of Home Affairs. You do not need to apply for a visa with work rights to cover the transit period.

I already hold an Maritime Crew visa (MCV) and Transit visa, am I allowed to apply for a Visitor visa as well?

Yes. However, if you are granted a Visitor visa while already holding a Transit Visa, your Transit visa will cease and will be replaced with the Visitor visa. Your MCV will stay in place.

Will applying for another visa affect my Maritime Crew visa (MCV)?

No. You can hold an MCV at the same time as holding another temporary visa.

Crew departing Australia by air

I am leaving my vessel in Australia, what visa do I need?

If you hold a MCV when signing off your vessel at an Australia port, you have five days to depart Australia or sign-on to another non-military ship. If you do not depart or sign-on within the sign-off period, your MCV will cease automatically and you will become an unlawful non-citizen.

If you are not able to depart Australia within five days, you will need to either:

- hold another visa that allows you to remain lawfully in Australia until such time you can depart, or
- apply for an extension of this time, or
- apply for another visa that allows you to remain lawfully in Australia until such time you can depart.

How can I have the sign off period of my Maritime Crew visa extended?

An extension of your MCV sign-off period can be requested via email and should be lodged along with **Form B521 Seaports – Notification of Sign-off**. This is completed by the Master and/or Agent of the vessel, and is sent through to the Australian Border Force (ABF) at the Port of Arrival.

If the Master and/or Agent requires contact details they can contact the relevant District Office. District Office details are found on the ABF website at

<https://www.abf.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/entering-and-leaving-by-sea/ports-of-entry>.

An ABF officer has the authorisation to extend your onshore period of stay up to 30 days *from the date of your most recent arrival* in Australia. If approved, the ABF officer will inform the Master and/or Agent of the vessel that the extension has been granted, including the new end date to the sign off period.

What can I do if I still need longer in Australia?

Should you require more than 30 days to depart, you will need to apply for any other visa that allows you to remain in Australia. You must complete the application **before your Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) extended period of stay expires**.

If you apply for another visa while you are in Australia, you will, in most cases, be given a Bridging visa that allows you to remain lawfully in Australia until your application is decided, or you depart Australia.

Crew who have signed off a vessel, and are solely waiting to depart Australia, are not considered to be working by the Department of Home Affairs. You do not need to apply for a visa with work rights to cover the transit period.

For information on which visa may best suit you, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

If you hold another visa, in addition to your MCV, you should check the visa conditions and how long that visa lets you stay in Australia online at:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online>

If only hold an MCV and you do not depart or sign-on within the sign-off period, your MCV will cease automatically and you will become an unlawful non-citizen.

If you hold another hold another visa, in addition to your MCV, you should check the conditions of that visa to see how long that visa may let you stay in Australia.

You can check your visa conditions online at:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online>

Do I need to hold a visa with work rights while I meet my quarantine requirements in Australia?

No. You do not need to apply for a visa with work rights to cover the transit period. Crew who are meeting their quarantine requirements, and are solely waiting to sign-on to their vessel, are not considered to be working.

What can I do if my travel plans change after I sign-off my vessel?

You need to hold a valid visa for the whole time that you are in Australia. If a change in plans mean that you will not be able to leave Australia until after your current visa expires, you should apply for another visa. For example, an onshore Visitor visa may be an appropriate option to keep you lawful while you wait to leave Australia.

You have more options if you apply before your current visa expires. For information on which visa may be most relevant to your circumstances, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

If you apply for another visa while you are in Australia, you will, most likely, be given a Bridging visa that allows you to remain lawfully in Australia until your application is decided, or you depart Australia.

What do I do if I have the right visa but I need help until I can leave Australia?

If you are experiencing difficulties while awaiting to depart Australia that is not visa related, you should contact your country's Embassy or High Commission to see what support that they may be able to provide.

For the contact details of Embassies and High Commissions in Australia, see:

<https://protocol.dfat.gov.au/Public/MissionsInAustralia>

Visa Expiry

I am still on my vessel and my Maritime Crew visa (MCV) has expired while I have been at sea, how can I apply for a new MCV?

If your current visa has expired, you will need to be granted another visa before you will be able to enter Australia.

You, or someone you authorise, can lodge an application for an MCV online, before your vessel enters Australia. An MCV cannot be lodged for people already in Australia. For information on how to apply, see:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/maritime-crew-988>

There may be other visa options available to you depending your own individual circumstances. For information on which visa may be most relevant to your circumstances, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

What happens if my travel plans change while I'm in Australia and my visa is about to run out?

You must hold a valid visa to remain lawful in Australia. You should apply for another visa while in Australia before your current visa expires.

For information on which visa may be most relevant to your circumstances, see

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

You can only apply for another MCV after you have departed Australia.

You cannot apply for an MCV while in Australia.

For further information from Australia states and territories

Please monitor individual state and territory government health sites for details and updates on additional measures:

- NSW: <https://preview.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>
- ACT: <https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/novelcoronavirus-covid-19>
- VIC: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- TAS: <https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au>
- SA: <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au>
- WA: https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus
- NT: <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/>
- QLD: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronaviruscovid-19>

Local Port Authorities

The requirements outlined in this document are required to facilitate border clearance of vessels and their crew. Local port authorities may have additional requirements over and above those outlined.

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