

## Frequently Asked Questions – Border closure

(last updated 7 April 2020)

Entry to Western Australia after 11:59pm on 5 April 2020 will be determined in accordance with the **Quarantine (Closing the Border) Directions**. Only those who are exempt travellers will be permitted to enter, and anyone who enters Western Australia that is not an exempt traveller will be directed to leave. The information provided on WA.gov.au or the 13 COVID hotline, including any Frequently Asked Questions is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any individual unless expressly stated to do so. It does not constitute legal advice or permission of any kind to enter Western Australia. Individuals should consider seeking their own independent legal or other advice and the State is not liable for any loss or damage arising from reliance on the information.

### Questions and answers

The answers to these FAQs are drawn from the [Quarantine \(Closing the Border\) Directions \(Directions\)](#). That document is a legal document and it applies according to its terms. Any person who seeks to enter Western Australia **must** read that document and comply with its terms as well as any processes put in place for determining entry to Western Australia.



#### Can I come into Western Australia?



From 11.59pm on 5 April 2020, a person **must not** enter Western Australia unless they are an exempt traveller.

The Directions set out the categories of exempt travellers (see "**who is an exempt traveller**" below) with some subject to terms and conditions, including in some instances, a requirement to undertake a 14-day self-quarantine period.

Even if you are an exempt traveller you **must not** enter Western Australia if you:

- Have symptoms of COVID-19 (a fever of 38 degrees or above and/or symptoms of acute respiratory infection including, without limitation, shortness of breath, a cough or a sore throat).
- Have received oral or written notice from a responsible officer that you are a "close contact" (more than 15 minutes to face-to-face contact in any setting, or more than 2 hours in the same room as a person who has received a positive test or otherwise been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the 24-hour period before that person had an onset of symptoms).
- Have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting the test result.
- Have received a positive test for COVID-19 and have not yet received a certificate from a medical practitioner or responsible officer certifying that you have recovered from COVID-19.



#### Who is an exempt traveller?



The categories of "exempt traveller" are set out in detail in the Directions.

It is important that any person who is seeking to enter Western Australia on the basis that they are an exempt traveller reads and understands the categories of exempt traveller that are set out in the Directions.

In summary exempt travellers include, but are not limited to:

- Any person performing a function under a law of the Commonwealth;
- People involved in freight, transport and logistics including truck drivers who as part of their normal duties deliver goods to Western Australia and maritime and airline crews;
- Health care workers who enter at the request of the WA Government
- People with specialist skills not available in WA, required for industry or business continuity or involved in time-sensitive critical maintenance or repair of critical infrastructure; or specialist skills in agriculture, food production or primary industry who need to be present in Western Australia;
- FIFO workers and their families, subject to requirements to quarantine for 14 days at an approved location at their employer's expense;
- Emergency service workers;
- Compassionate grounds – including, but not limited to, urgent and essential medical treatment, visiting a relative who has suffered a serious medical episode, or whose death is imminent, and to attend a funeral and others (see example below);
- Members of the House of Representatives and Senators of the Commonwealth Parliament and members of their staff;
- Carers and relatives who need to care for a dependent person in Western Australia;
- Dependent persons who need to enter Western Australia to be cared for by a carer or relative because they can no longer be cared for interstate;
- People whose residential facility such as a boarding school has closed, who need to return to Western Australia to stay with family or a carer;
- People who need to enter Western Australia to comply with a court order;
- People approved by the State Emergency Coordinator on compassionate grounds.

### Examples:

Some examples of when a person might seek such an approval are set out in the Directions and may include compassionate grounds, including people who would face exceptional hardship if they are not permitted to enter Western Australia. This could include a person who is living interstate that lost their job and has no means of support, such that they need to return to Western Australia to be supported by their family.



#### Who does the border closure apply to?



The border closure applies to everyone, regardless of their place of residence or whether or not they are an exempt traveller.



#### Can people still leave Western Australia?



Yes. The Directions do not prevent a person from leaving Western Australia, they only control when a person may enter Western Australia.



#### How do I request approval or confirmation that I am an exempt traveller?



A person will be an exempt traveller if they fit within the category outlined in the Directions.

Seeking confirmation that you are an exempt traveller before you travel will make it easier to enter WA.

Request for Approval as an Exempt Traveller forms are available on [WA.gov.au](https://www.wa.gov.au)

Once you have completed the form, you will need to submit it along with any supporting documentation to [WAEntryRequest@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:WAEntryRequest@police.wa.gov.au).



#### How long will it take for police to deal with my written request for entry as an exempt traveller?



The time taken to approve or reject your application will depend on the circumstances of your particular case and whether WA Police require further information from your or other sources.

You should ensure that all supporting documentation is provided at the time that you submit your WA Entry Request to avoid unnecessary delays.

Please note that each application received by WA Police has to be considered and approved on a case by case basis, so there may be a number of days between submitting your request and receiving a final response.



#### What happens if I am an exempt traveller but I am unwell?



A person who is an exempt traveller but is unwell will NOT be able to enter Western Australia.

Even if you are an exempt traveller, you **must not** enter Western Australia if you:

- Have symptoms of COVID-19 (a fever of 38 degree or above and/or symptoms of acute respiratory infection including, without limitation, shortness of breath, a cough or a sore throat); or
- Have received oral or written notice from a responsible officer that you are a "close contact" (more than 15 minutes to face-to-face contact in any setting, or more than 2 hours in the same room as a person who has received a positive test or otherwise been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the 24-hour period before that person had an onset of symptoms); or
- Have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting the test result; or
- Have received a positive test for COVID-19 and have not yet received a certificate from a medical practitioner or responsible officer certifying that you have recovered from COVID-19.



#### Can I get pre-approval?



Yes. People wishing to travel to Western Australia are encouraged to seek a pre-approval to ensure that they know before embarking on their travel that their entry to Western Australia will be allowed.

A [Request for Approval as an Exempt Traveller form](#) should be completed prior to travel and submit it by emailing the form to [WAEntryRequest@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:WAEntryRequest@police.wa.gov.au).

If you arrive in Western Australia and you are not an exempt traveller, you may commit an offence and you will be told to leave Western Australia immediately, and at your own expense (except in some very limited circumstances that are set out in the Directions, for example if you are an unaccompanied minor. If you cannot leave immediately, you will be required to enter into quarantine until arrangements are confirmed.



**If I am granted an exemption, do I need to carry the approved exemption with me?**



Once you have been given pre-approval, you should carry the confirmation with you when boarding any aircraft, bus, train or other vessel that is travelling to Western Australia, and upon entry in Western Australia.



**I have completed the WA Entry Request form but have not received confirmation that it has been approved. My flight/bus/train is booked for today, what should I do?**



It would be advisable to carry your exemption form and proof of its submission when travelling. You may be asked to produce this documentation at a check point or by WA Police patrolling the area.

If your exemption category requires further documentation or proof, you must produce this on request.



**Can I still enter WA for a holiday?**



No. Holidays are not an exempt category.



**Will I be able to enter on compassionate grounds?**



The Directions provide for entry on a compassionate basis in two different ways.

1. there are some specific categories of exempt traveller that broadly incorporate people travelling for certain compassionate reasons. These are set out in the Directions. In summary, they include but are not limited to:
  - A person who enters Western Australia in connection with the receipt of urgent and essential medical treatment, provided that the person remains in Western Australia for only so long as is reasonably required to receive that treatment.
  - A person who enters Western Australia to visit a relative who has had a serious medical episode or whose death is imminent, or to attend a funeral, provided that the person remains in Western Australia for only so long as is reasonably required to visit the relative or attend the funeral.
  - Dependant persons who need to enter Western Australia to reside with a carer or relative because they are unable to be cared for interstate.
  - A person who enters to obtain essential goods or services necessary for the preservation of life.
  - A person who enters Western Australia to stay with a family or carer, following the closure of their person's usual residential facility (e.g. a boarding school or college) in another State or territory.

**Note:** Entry to Western Australia in the above compassionate circumstances **will** still be subject to the person complying with a direction to undertake a period of quarantine at a place determined by an authorised officer or to comply with any other terms and conditions as may be imposed.

2. the State Emergency Coordinator or an authorised officer may also approve exemptions for **compassionate circumstances not specified above**. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis and evidence may be required, such as a medical certificate.

In most instances, such approval may be granted subject to a requirement that the person undertake a period of 14 days quarantine at a place determined by the authorised officer. Some examples are set out in the Directions.



**If I'm a Western Australian in quarantine after arriving at an eastern states city, from overseas, will I be allowed back to Western Australia after the hard border closure?**



On compassionate grounds, Western Australians in this situation will be able to enter, but must undertake a further 14 days of self-isolation at home.

In this circumstance the Western Australian will need to return to WA within 24 hours of completing their period of quarantine in another State or Territory.

People who are in quarantine in another State or Territory and seeking to return to Western Australia should consider completing the WA Entry Request form and set out their specific circumstances.



**Does the FIFO exception work both ways – people that work in Queensland that live here and the other way around? What is the definition of a FIFO worker?**



No, the exception only applies to FIFO workers entering Western Australia.

FIFO workers and their families entering WA granted an exemption under this category are required to complete a mandatory 14-day period of quarantine at an agreed location, at the expense of the FIFO worker's employer. They must comply with any other terms and conditions outlined by the employer.

FIFO workers should speak to their employer in the first instance to get further information about any arrangements that have been approved by the State Emergency Coordinator.



**What if I am a WA resident but work FIFO in another State?**



You are free to leave WA but will need to apply for an exemption to return to WA and will be required to go into 14 days quarantine each time you return to WA.



**Who is included in the list of 'specialist skills not available in Western Australia'?**



Specialist skills not available in Western Australia include people who are:

- Required for industry or business continuity and maintenance of competitive operation where the service is time-critical.
- Responsible for critical maintenance or repair of infrastructure critical to a region of, or to Western Australia.
- Employed or engaged in agriculture, food production or primary industry that requires the person to be physically present in Western Australia.



**I am an Australian citizen and have arrived from overseas, will I be allowed to enter WA?**



All Australian citizens will be allowed to enter WA on compassionate grounds. They will be required under Commonwealth restrictions to undertake a 14-day period of quarantine.

Non-WA residents will then be required to travel to their relevant State of residence while WA residents are then able to return home.



**If I am non-Australian citizen but I have relevant visas and Commonwealth exemptions, can I enter WA?**



Anyone who arrives in Western Australia from overseas, with relevant visas and exemptions would already be bound by the Commonwealth restrictions in place for Australian border controls. They will be required under these Commonwealth laws to undertake a 14-day period of quarantine.



**If I arrive on a domestic flight and I'm not an exempt traveller, will I have to pay for a flight home?**



If you arrive in Western Australia and you are not an exempt traveller, you may commit an offence and you will be told to leave Western Australia immediately, and at your own expense (except in some very limited circumstances that are set out in the Directions, for example if you are an unaccompanied minor).

If you cannot leave immediately, you will be required to enter into quarantine until arrangements are confirmed.



**If I am not an exempt traveller, where and when do I get turned away?**



Entry into Western Australia (WA) is now restricted. If you are not exempt you will not be permitted into the State and will be ordered to return to your point of departure.

If you are an exempt traveller but present with COVID-19 symptoms, have received oral or written notice from a responsible officer that the person is a close contact; are awaiting a test result after having been tested; or have received a positive test and have not received a certificate from a medical practitioner or a responsible officer certifying that you have recovered from COVID-19, you will not be permitted into the State and will be ordered to return to your point of departure.

Travellers arriving in WA by aircraft, will be stopped at the airport. Travellers arriving in WA by road, will be stopped at the border. Travellers arriving by sea, will be stopped at the port. If travellers do not enter WA by these means, travellers are required to make contact with an authorised officer.

If travellers are within the state and attempting to enter another sub-district (Prohibition on Regional Travel Directions) without the appropriate exemption, they will be ordered to return to their residential address and may be fined.



### **If I am an exempt traveller, will I have to quarantine or self-isolate?**



The following categories of exempt traveller are not required to comply with any directions or other terms and conditions, unless they are specifically imposed:

- Senior Government officials who are responsible for the safety of Australia or a State or territory and are required to be present in Western Australia to carry out those duties.
- Active military personnel required to be on duty in Western Australia.
- Members of the Commonwealth Parliament and members of their staff who are travelling with them.
- Persons carrying out a function under a law of the Commonwealth.
- Persons who have been requested to enter Western Australia to assist in the provision of health services in Western Australia (any request having been made by the Chief Health Officer of the Director General of the Department of Health).
- Any specialists required for industry or business continuity and the maintenance of competitive operation (where the service is time-critical), for critical maintenance or repair of Western Australia's critical infrastructure or people employed in agriculture, food production or primary industry that requires the person to be physically present in Western Australia.
- Emergency services workers.
- Judicial officers or members of staff of a court, tribunal or commission.

The following categories of an exempt traveller are required to comply with certain directions or other terms and conditions, as well as any other directions or terms and conditions that might be imposed:

- Persons engaged in the provision of transport freight and logistics – only permitted to remain in Western Australia for so long as is reasonably required to provide those services.
- Persons entering Western Australia in connection with the receipt of urgent and essential medical treatment – only permitted to remain in Western Australia for so long as is reasonably required to receive that treatment. Not expected to undertake quarantine or self-isolation.
- Persons entering Western Australia to visit a relative who has had a serious medical episode or whose death is imminent, or to attend a funeral – only permitted to remain in Western Australia for so long as is reasonably required to visit the relative or attend the funeral. Not expected to undertake quarantine or self-isolation.
- FIFO workers and their families – required to complete a mandatory 14-day period of quarantine at an agreed location, at the expense of the FIFO worker's employer.

The following categories of an exempt traveller will be required to complete 14 days of quarantine at a specified facility, unless another direction is made (for example, a direction to self-isolate at home). The person will also be required to comply with any other directions or terms and conditions that are imposed:

- Carers or relatives entering Western Australia to provide care to a dependent person.
- Dependant persons entering Western Australia to reside with a carer or relative because they are unable to be cared for interstate.
- Persons entering Western Australia to obtain essential goods or services necessary for the preservation of life.
- Persons entering Western Australia to comply with an order of an Australian court.
- Persons entering Western Australia to stay with a family or carer, following the closure of the person's usual residential facility (e.g. a boarding school or college) in another State or territory.
- Persons not falling within any of the specific categories but given an exemption to travel from the State Emergency Coordinator on compassionate grounds.

For further information regarding Coronavirus: COVID-19 please refer to [WA.gov.au](https://www.wa.gov.au)

Further details regarding Biosecurity Determination 2020 can be located at [www.wa.gov.au/aboriginalcommunities](https://www.wa.gov.au/aboriginalcommunities)

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Please contact **1800 020 080** if you have any further questions.

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.