

Exemption applications for the Queensland agriculture sector

Frequently asked questions

The Queensland Government has implemented border controls to help protect Queenslanders and our economy from COVID-19. Under the direction, the Queensland border is closed to anyone who has been in a COVID-19 hotspot in the last 14 days, except returning Queensland residents and others meeting strict criteria, subject to relevant quarantine requirements.

Is agriculture still considered an essential service?

The Queensland Government is committed to protecting the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders from COVID-19. Agriculture and commercial fishing are included in the list of essential activities and the Chief Health Officer has included an exemption in the Border Restrictions Direction to allow the continued delivery of essential agribusiness and farm activities.

Exemptions also apply for the transportation of freight to, from or through Queensland under a commercial freight operation; and specialist agribusiness, commercial fishing and food manufacturing workers can enter Queensland from a hotspot if they are providing a service that is critical to Queensland (for example, critical agricultural operations necessary to maintain food supply). 'Business as usual' activities, where there is no evidence that the business has attempted to identify other ways of sourcing the service or essential activity, are not considered specialist workers. Specialist worker exemptions will only be granted in limited circumstances.

Can I still bring seasonal workers into Queensland from a hot spot?

A seasonal worker can move to Queensland to make it their new place of residence and complete 14 days of quarantine at their own expense, like other people who may be moving to Queensland to start new jobs. They must also have a place of residence for when they leave quarantine and be able to provide evidence of where this place is. If they are moving to Queensland for work, you will have to provide a letter of employment confirming this.

I am a Queensland resident and have a property in New South Wales – can I travel back and forth to undertake essential services and farm activities?

On 22 August 2020, the Chief Health Officer approved a border exemption for Queensland residents needing to re-enter Queensland after travelling to New South Wales to perform low risk essential agribusiness services for the agriculture supply chain or farming activities, provide timely veterinary services or to provide care for livestock.

The Chief Health Officer has extended the class exemption for a further one-month period from 21 September 2020.

When returning to Queensland, farmers and agribusiness workers will need to complete a written Queensland Border Declaration Pass.

They must carry the following documents, and present them if requested by an Emergency Officer (public health):

- a copy of the current agribusiness and farm worker class exemption letter signed by the Chief Health Officer
- evidence of their identity, that confirms their place of residence, for example, a driver's licence
- evidence of their employment, contract, property ownership, lease or agistment arrangements.

Queensland residents:

- must travel directly to and from the relevant farm or premises
- must only exit their mode of transport to access rest stop facilities, refuelling, and activities directly related to their agribusiness activity or to meet required regulation activities such as workplace health and safety or fatigue management
- may stay at overnight accommodation when necessary in order to fulfil fatigue management requirements
- must remain isolated, to the extent reasonably practicable, from the general public at the agribusiness or farm until the person returns to Queensland
- must only remain in New South Wales for the time necessary to perform the essential agribusiness or farming activities.

Agribusinesses should also have a plan to manage the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among their employees and the community, and are encouraged to have worker-specific quarantine plans detailing how workers will isolate at the agribusiness or property while in New South Wales.

I live in New South Wales and have properties in Queensland – can I enter Queensland to manage my property and care for livestock?

On 22 August 2020, the Chief Health Officer approved a border exemption for New South Wales residents needing to enter Queensland to perform low risk, essential agribusiness services for the agriculture supply chain or farming activities, provide timely veterinary services or to provide care for livestock.

The Chief Health Officer has extended the class exemption for a further one-month period from 21 September 2020.

When entering Queensland, farmers and agribusiness workers will need to complete a written Queensland Border Declaration Pass.

They must carry the following documents, and present them if requested by an Emergency Officer (public health):

- a copy of the current agribusiness and farm worker class exemption letter signed by the Chief Health Officer
- evidence of their identity, that confirms their place of residence, for example, a driver's licence
- evidence of their employment, contract, property ownership, lease or agistment arrangements.

New South Wales residents:

- must travel directly to and from the relevant farm or premises
- must only exit their mode of transport to access rest stop facilities, refuelling, and activities directly related to their agribusiness activity or to meet required regulation activities such as workplace health and safety or fatigue management
- may stay at overnight accommodation when necessary in order to fulfil fatigue management requirements

- must remain isolated, to the extent reasonably practicable, from the general public at the agribusiness or farm until the person departs Queensland or for 14 days, whichever period is shorter
- must only remain in Queensland for the time necessary to perform the essential agribusiness or farming activities.

Agribusinesses should also have a plan to manage the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among their employees and the community, and are encouraged to have worker-specific quarantine plans detailing how workers will isolate at the agribusiness or property while in Queensland.

I am an agribusiness supply chain contractor (e.g. agronomist, shearer, harvester) who has clients on both sides of the Queensland – New South Wales border. Can I move across the border to deliver services to my clients?

On 22 August 2020, the Chief Health Officer approved a border exemption for people who are:

1. Queensland residents who need to re-enter Queensland after travelling to New South Wales to perform essential agribusiness services for the agriculture supply chain or farming activities
2. Queensland residents who need to re-enter Queensland after entering New South Wales to access or provide timely veterinary services, or to provide care for livestock
3. New South Wales residents who need to enter Queensland to perform essential agribusiness services for the agriculture supply chain or farming activities
4. New South Wales residents who need to access Queensland to access or provide timely veterinary services, or to provide care for livestock.

The Chief Health Officer has extended the class exemption for a further one-month period from 21 September 2020.

When entering Queensland, agribusiness consultants and contractors will need to complete a written Queensland Border Declaration Pass.

They must carry the following documents, and present them if requested by an Emergency Officer (public health):

- a copy of the current agribusiness and farm worker class exemption letter signed by the Chief Health Officer
- evidence of their identity, that confirms their place of residence, for example, a driver's licence
- evidence of their employment, contract, property ownership, lease or agistment arrangements.

Agribusiness consultants and contractors who are Queensland residents:

- must travel directly to and from the relevant farm or premises
- must only exit their mode of transport to access rest stop facilities, refuelling, and activities directly related to their agribusiness activity or to meet required regulation activities such as workplace health and safety or fatigue management
- may stay at overnight accommodation when necessary in order to fulfil fatigue management requirements
- must remain isolated, to the extent reasonably practicable, from the general public at the agribusiness or farm until the person returns to Queensland.
- must only remain in New South Wales for the time necessary to perform the essential agribusiness or farming activities.

Agribusiness consultants and contractors who are New South Wales residents:

- must travel directly to and from the relevant farm or premises
- must only exit their mode of transport to access rest stop facilities, refuelling, and activities directly related to their agribusiness activity or to meet required regulation activities such as workplace health and safety or fatigue management
- may stay at overnight accommodation when necessary in order to fulfil fatigue management requirements
- must remain isolated, to the extent reasonably practicable, from the general public at the agribusiness or farm until the person departs Queensland or for 14 days, whichever period is shorter
- must only remain in Queensland for the time necessary to perform the essential agribusiness or farming activities.

Agribusinesses should also have a plan (e.g. workplace health management plan) to manage the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among their employees and the community, and are encouraged to have worker-specific quarantine plans detailing how workers will isolate when not performing the essential service across the border.

I've always got my specialist services from Victoria, can I continue to do this?

A specialist worker can only enter Queensland from a hotspot if they are providing a service that is critical to Queensland (for example, critical agricultural operations necessary to maintain food supply). The status of the person as a specialist worker must be approved by the Chief Health Officer. The Chief Health Officer has indicated that specialist worker exemptions to the Border Restriction Direction will be limited.

The fact that it may be more inconvenient or difficult to source the service from within Queensland or from a new supplier, is not sufficient justification for the application to be approved.

Exemption applications for 'business as usual' activities, where there is no information or evidence that the business has attempted to identify other ways of sourcing the service or essential activity, are not likely to be approved.

It is important that you plan to ensure you can source the skills and services that your business will require from within Queensland. This may require you to change the way you operate your business for the foreseeable future.

Can I enter Queensland to undertake agricultural services if I am from a state or territory that is not a declared hotspot?

Yes, anyone can enter Queensland from within Australia and outside a hotspot. Everyone entering Queensland from another State or Territory must:

- provide a [Queensland Border Declaration Pass](#) that includes specific declarations
- provide photo ID and any other evidence required
- commit to get [tested](#) for COVID-19 if you develop [symptoms](#) within 14 days of entering Queensland.

Can I transport livestock or agricultural produce across the border into Queensland?

Yes. Workers providing transport, freight and logistics can enter Queensland. This includes freight transported via both road and rail. The transport of freight includes the commercial transport of livestock or other live animals such as beehives.

The [Queensland freight protocol](#) came into effect on Wednesday 23 September 2020. The protocol applies to freight and logistic operators who have been in a [COVID-19 hotspot](#) 14 days prior to arriving in Queensland.

Freight and logistics operators must:

- have a valid Queensland [Border Declaration Pass \(Freight and Logistics\)](#)
- be able to access a copy of their employer's or operator's current COVID Safe workplan on entry to Queensland, where one is required and available
- remain isolated from the general public in their vehicle or accommodation until they depart Queensland, or for 14 days, whichever period is shorter
- collect and maintain written records of close contacts while they are in Queensland for 14 days after they arrive in Queensland, or until they depart Queensland if the period is less than 14 days (Queensland residents are required to maintain these records until 14 days has passed since they were last in a COVID-19 hotspot).

Non-Queensland residents should only remain in Queensland for the time necessary to complete the freight and logistics activity.

Can I apply for an exemption for a specialist worker to enter Queensland?

A business or company can apply for an exemption for a specialist worker to enter Queensland. The application must provide evidence that:

- the services can't be obtained in Queensland
- the services must be provided without delay (or in a specified time critical period)
- the person needs to be physically present in Queensland

The company or service provider has a plan in place that follows the requirements specified by the Chief Health Officer to manage risks associated with COVID-19 (for example a workplace health management plan).

The application must also include as attachments:

- the employer's company or service provider's plan to manage preventing the transmission of COVID-19 amongst other employees and the community (for example, a workplace health management plan or workplace health and safety plan)
- a quarantine management plan specific to the specialist worker/s, describing how the worker/s will minimise contact with others while in Queensland.

The Chief Health Officer may give a person(s) an exemption from the Border Restrictions Direction:

- to enter Queensland if the Chief Health Officer considers the person(s) are essential for the proper functioning of the State and the person(s) must be physically present in Queensland
- to complete quarantine in a place outside of a government-nominated hotel

- from the requirement to quarantine if exceptional circumstances exist
- from a requirement in this Direction if other extreme exceptional circumstances exist.

A business or company requiring a specialist worker must apply for an exemption for each specialist worker and provide evidence that they meet all the requirements. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will provide advice to Queensland Health for exemption applications related to agribusiness, commercial fishing and food manufacturing, for final decision by the Chief Health Officer (or delegate).

The fact that it may be more inconvenient or difficult to source the service from within Queensland or from a new supplier, is not sufficient justification for the application to be approved.

Exemption applications for 'business as usual' activities, where there is no information or evidence that the business has attempted to identify other ways of sourcing the service or essential activity, are not likely to be approved.

A business or company can [apply for an exemption here](#).

How quickly will my application be assessed?

Applications will be processed and assessed as quickly as possible, but will take at least five working days.

If my specialist worker exemption has been approved, what do I need to do to be able to enter Queensland?

Any conditions, including for quarantine and workplace health and safety, will be specified in the exemption as approved by the Chief Health Officer. You will need to provide evidence that the Chief Health Officer has approved your status as a specialist worker, and meet all other requirements for entering Queensland, for example a completed Queensland Border Declaration Pass.

Specialist workers must provide the following evidence when entering Queensland:

- that they are specialist worker, in a form approved by the Chief Health Officer
- the name of their employer
- that they are specialist worker, in a form approved by the Chief Health Officer
- that they are entering Queensland to go directly to work
- the location of the worksite
- the location of where they will be accommodated in Queensland while performing the essential activity.

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Disclaimer: While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.