



COVID-19 Information – International Aircraft and Crew

Release: October 2021

Version: V2.0

Aerial Firefighting has the potential to be impacted by the nation's response to COVID-19. NAFC seeks to provide information and assistance to its members, their agencies and the aircraft operators to enable efficient and timely provision of aviation resources for emergency response. This document only deals with COVID exemptions for individuals, and not, e.g., arranging transit of aircraft to Australia. The aim of this document is to offer some guidance into the various steps required.

The information contained in this document is intended to serve as a guide only. NAFC reminds operators that planning for and arranging for travel into Australia or between States and Territories is the responsibility of operators. While NAFC can provide letters of support if required (please see NAFC COVID-19 Information Document - *Obtaining support letters for NAFC fleet contracts*), the Federal/state and territory governments govern their own rules and exemptions regarding arrival caps and conditions for permission for entry etc., and any difficulties operators may encounter are fundamentally a matter for operators to resolve with the given Federal/state and territory government.

For enquiries relating to COVID-19 please email: covid@nafc.org.au

If you have previously received an exemption or authorisation, do not assume it is still valid for upcoming or future travel. Given that regulations are constantly changing, please contact the relevant Federal/state and territory authorities to ensure that you will still be able to travel as desired.

Australia has strict border measures in place to protect the health of the Australian community. At any given time, there may be limited flights available to and from Australia, inbound international flight restrictions may have imposed caps on the number of available airline seats (driven by the number of available quarantine spaces in designated facilities), and passengers may be prioritised over others based on the nature of their travel need.

There have been cases where people have had their flight cancelled due to changing priorities and/or lack of available quarantine spaces.

Cheaper airfares come with conditions that allow airlines to cancel or reschedule your fare. More expensive fares, including business class are less likely to be cancelled.



International Travel to Australia

In order to secure the correct and full complement of documents required for individuals to enter Australia, there are 3 main bodies of work that need to be completed, each with their own detailed requirements:

1. **Travel exemption from the Australian Border Force to enter Australia.**
2. **Current visa.**
 - a. It is recommended that travellers lodge for their travel exemption request and visa application at the same time.
3. **Exemption from each relevant State and Territory Health Dept to cross their borders.**
 - a. If seeking exemption from the quarantine requirements, this will include seeking approval of the relevant State/Territory health department for alternative 'quarantine isolation in the workplace' or similar arrangements.
4. **A letter from the Dept. of Home Affairs (Emergency Management Australia) to Foreign Governments** (if required to facilitate approval for any transit and/or overnight stops whilst en route to Australia).

While COVID travel restrictions remain in place, individuals cannot come to Australia unless:

- they have established with Australian Border Force that they are in an exempt category, OR, they have been granted an individual travel exemption to the current travel restrictions
- AND have a current visa
- AND have obtained relevant state and/or territory health exemptions to cross domestic borders.

Ensure that that all approvals are received prior to your arrival into Australia.

Travel documents for individuals must be completed for each individual traveller. Documents from one step will often need to be presented in subsequent steps.

Supporting documentation for application made to Federal/State or Territory government agencies should highlight essential personnel are required for Aerial Firefighting/Firefighting/Emergency Services. It has been found that in seeking travel exemption requests it is usually most productive to highlight specialist firefighting skills used in delivery of emergency services, rather than standard Aircrew exemptions.



1 and 2. Australian Border Force Travel Exemptions and visas

All international travel restriction exemption requests must be submitted through the Borderforce portal.

The Australian Border Force travel exemption process will require:

1. A valid passport
2. A valid Visa (visa types will vary) or if recently applied provide the visa transaction reference number (TRN) e.g. EGOJZxxxxx
3. Completion of the online travel exemption request form via the portal:

<https://travel-exemptions.homeaffairs.gov.au/tep>

Both process 2 and 3 require a lot of supporting paperwork and are time consuming for the overseas and local operators. Be prepared and ensure enough time is available to complete the process.

For information regarding travel exemptions – <https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/travel-restrictions-0>

Enquiry form for businesses in critical sectors

Businesses can seek further information regarding the critical skills exemption process or progress of a travel exemption request – <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/enquiry-form-businesses-in-critical-sectors>



3. Requesting State and Territory Health Department Exemptions

Operators should liaise with the relevant Member in order to facilitate any necessary requests for exemptions allowing travel, or any necessary requests for exemption from quarantine requirements, from the State or Territory Health Dept.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for travellers can be found on the Department of Health's website at: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-travellers>

Note that even with the Federal individual travel exemption described above granted, you will still need to meet the relevant State or Territory's requirements regarding travel.



4. Requesting Emergency Management Australia (EMA) Letter

A letter from the Director General of Emergency Management Australia to a Foreign Governments may be required to facilitate approval for any overnight stops by aircraft and crew whilst enroute to Australia. Please contact NAFC if you require NAFC's assistance with facilitating contact with EMA.