

A message from the

Department for Energy and Mining



Friday 28 August 2020 17:20 pm

The South Australian Government continues to tailor cross-border arrangements to ensure the rules remain responsive to reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission while maintaining essential industries and their contribution to the economy.

[Cross Border Travel Direction Number 13](#) came into force from 12.01 am Friday 28 August and includes the following key changes:

- allowing travellers from low community transmission zones to transit through Sydney or Canberra Airport without triggering self-quarantine on arrival in South Australia, and
- allowing members of communities in Victoria adjacent the South Australian border to once again enter South Australia for education, employment, supplies etc.

Exemption arrangements relevant to the resources and energy sectors have not materially changed, and continue to facilitate commercial operations across South Australia.

Applications for travel exemptions

To avoid delays in processing, employers should ensure that all online applications to SAPOL for essential traveller exemptions are accompanied by updated letters of support that include the following information:

Employee details

- Name
- Date of birth

Travel details

- Reason for travel
- Time criticality and reason why physical presence is required
- Why the service is not available in South Australia
- Dates
- Home and work locations
- Transit routes and mode

Evidence

- Statement that the company has an SA-Health approved COVID-19 risk mitigation plan
- Attach a copy of the email from SA Health (circa April 2020) regarding your risk mitigation plan

No other information should be required to support exemption applications.

Arrivals to South Australia from Queensland

DEM is aware that recent arrivals from Queensland at Adelaide Airport have been handed letters from South Australia's Chief Public Health Officer regarding COVID-19 clusters in the Greater Brisbane and Ipswich areas.



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There has been some confusion about the interaction of the advice in the letter with the requirements of the Cross Border Travel Direction.

DEM can confirm that the letter contains advice, not legal direction, and reflects heightened concern about recent community transmission in some areas in Queensland. Companies and individuals are advised to review the current elevated risk locations listed on the [QLD contact tracing website](#) and take action – including avoiding travel and isolating where relevant.

Applications for approval of an Essential Sector COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Plan

For any company that did not submit plans to Angela Lee at SA Health in March and April this year, and who now need to seek exemption for employee travel, SA Health has released two documents to streamline the process:

1. [A Risk Mitigation Plan template](#) that asks for further details, including about the person or persons who are wanting to travel to South Australia as essential sector workers; and
2. [Guidance for completing a Risk Mitigation Plan](#) to assist in finalising the plan.

These documents and any other relevant supporting information should be sent to Health.COVID19RiskMitigation@sa.gov.au for assessment.

Given the volume of risk mitigation plans that are being submitted to SA Health for consideration, it is important all information is provided well in advance of the need for travel.

Maintenance shutdowns

DEM and the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) are conscious of the need for key sites to conduct maintenance shut-downs in the latter half of this year. In light of the current cross-border direction and the potential for escalation in response to any escalation of infection in other states, companies are encouraged to act early to de-risk arrangements and avoid reliance on inbound workers, particularly from Victoria.

In the current environment, it is unlikely that approval will be given for large-scale worker movement from Victoria into South Australia. It is possible for indispensable personnel to apply for travel approval as an essential traveller. DEM acknowledges the importance of successful and timely shutdowns to the ongoing productivity of the sector and recommends any specific requirements or issues for upcoming shutdowns be brought to the attention of the government as early as possible.

Details for any shutdowns that cannot readily be managed through the routine online exemption application process should be directed to [DEM Industry Enquiries](#) as early as possible to initiate discussions in support of your forward plans.

Relocation of family members to decrease FIFO movement

Where COVID-19 risk from a relocation can be adequately managed, relocation of family members of fly-in, fly-out workers travelling to South Australia from interstate presents several potential advantages:

- reduced ongoing COVID-19 transmission risk through elimination of FIFO travel
- improved worker and family mental health through the re-connection of families
- reduced risk and cost to business through the reduction in worker quarantine
- economic benefit through increased SA population, including improving the likelihood of the worker and family remaining in SA longer term.

DEM has worked with SAPOL and SA Health to pursue the opportunity for FIFO family relocations in support of individuals and companies across our resources and energy sector and has confirmed that applications will be considered. Decisions on family relocation will take into account matters including COVID-19 risk relating to the origin and destination of the applicant, necessary quarantine arrangements and – where relevant - availability of government-directed hotel quarantine. Where it is required, the government-directed quarantine will be at the cost of the applicant.



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Applications for relocation require submission of the following documents on behalf of the family member(s) to HealthExemptions.Covid19@eso.sa.gov.au

1. An explanatory letter setting out
 - Applicant name(s) and date(s) of birth
 - Home and current address
 - Name and employer of FIFO worker
 - Relationship to the FIFO worker
 - Proposed dates of travel
 - Travel mode and route
 - Proposed address in SA
 - Proposed duration of stay
 - Proposed COVID-19 risk mitigations for the relocation (for example: proposed travel, testing and quarantine mitigations)
2. Copy of the travel exemption for the FIFO worker

Employers should consider coordinating applications on behalf of FIFO worker family members to ensure that movement plans are consistent with company risk mitigation approaches.

As the national infection situation is dynamic, an exemption refusal may be revisited (on re-application) at a later time.

Amid the challenges facing the energy and mining sectors, I'm extremely pleased to note the positive contribution from the resources sector to the June quarter private new capital expenditure data released this week by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The \$497 million invested in actual new private capital expenditure in South Australia in the June quarter was an increase from \$349 million in the March quarter and contributed to an overall 4.8 per cent increase in total capital investment.

Please continue to provide any issues or suggestions to DEM.industryenquiries@sa.gov.au.

Stay well

Paul Heithersay
Chief Executive
Department for Energy and Mining

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