Updated restrictions

In line with advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer, the Victorian Government has announced that metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will return to Stage 3 Stay at Home restrictions from 11.59pm on Wednesday 8 July 2020.

This decision was made in response to a significant increase in community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in these areas.

These restrictions will not affect freight services or workers who live in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire.

As an essential service, freight services can continue to operate normally throughout Victoria for business purposes.

This will ensure that essential supplies get to where they need to go during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

NSW border closure

The New South Wales Government has closed its border with Victoria from 12:01am Wednesday 8 July 2020. Freight is considered a critical service under the NSW issued Public Health (COVID-19 Border Control) Order, see http://tiny.cc/q7jisz

Entry permits are required and can be applied for via https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-covid-19-nsw-border-entry-permit, but do not require self-isolation if your employer has a COVID-19 safety plan.

COVID-19 safety plans and guidelines to assist the industry are available here http://tiny.cc/y6jisz

Freight Victoria is continuing to work closely with Transport for NSW which is working with NSW Police and NSW Health to streamline movements for freight over the border.

Road users are encouraged to plan ahead as detours are in place along some routes and delays may occur.

Keep up to date at VicTraffic https://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au and NSW Live Traffic https://www.livetraffic.com/

Of the 55 border crossings, six have been prioritised as main crossings: Wodonga Place, South Albury; Hume Highway, South Albury; Cobb Highway, Moama; Newell Highway, Tocumwal; Sturt Highway, Buronga; Princes Highway, Tambillica. Further information can be found here http://tiny.cc/84jisz

Queensland border closure

The Queensland Government has updated its coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions. This will mean that people who have been in Victoria within the last 14 days must not enter Queensland and will be turned away at the border without a valid pass.

Freight drivers from Victoria must complete a Queensland Border Declaration Pass prior to entry– border passes are valid for 7 days. There are additional requirements for freight drivers from Victoria.

They must:

- keep a record of people they come into close contact with while in Queensland.
- maintain a 1.5 metre distance from others.
- remain self-quarantined in their vehicle or accommodation as much as possible.

Queensland Border Declaration Passes are available at https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions/border-restrictions

South Australia border closure

A person travelling from Victoria cannot enter South Australia, unless they are considered an essential traveller https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/latest-news/updated-border-restrictions-in-place such as a commercial transport or freight driver.

Commercial transport and freight drivers must apply for Cross Border Travel Registration and essential traveller status in order to enter South Australia. Drivers and operators will be required to:

- wear a face mask – cloth mask or surgical face mask - covering the mouth and nose, when in public.
- self-quarantine when not performing those duties for which they have been permitted to enter South Australia or are travelling to/from the place they perform those duties.
- keep a record of people they come into close contact with while in South Australia over a period of 14 days from when they arrive (or, until the period they leave South Australia if their stay is less than 14 days). These records must be retained for 28 days after the 14 days of record keeping.

Self-quarantining can include a driver sleeping in their truck's cabin.

These restrictions also apply to any commercial transport or freight crews entering South Australia.

Applications for Cross Border Travel Registration and essential traveller status can be made via South Australia Police found here https://www.police.sa.gov.au/online-services/cross-border-travel-application.

People travelling from Victoria into South Australia are prohibited from entering South Australia except on certain roads. For more information, visit https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/latest-news/updated-border-restrictions-in-place

Clarifying procedures for maritime crew

On 1 April, Australian Border Force expanded a 14-day on-board quarantine rule to include crews on vessels from any port outside Australia. The Victorian Government has provided further detail on quarantine of crews on vessels and the movement of non-cruise maritime crew.

The changes affect:

- Maritime crew who live in Victoria or elsewhere in Australia arriving into Victoria on vessels from international waters
- Maritime crew arriving into Victoria from overseas on an international flight planning to board a maritime vessel in Victoria
- Maritime crew who are leaving the vessel in Victoria to board an international flight
- Maritime crew arriving on an international vessel and planning to leave Victoria on another vessel that is departing for an international port
- Maritime crew on a vessel that has left an Australian port, travelled into international waters, and then arrived back into a Victorian port (for example, a surveying vessel)
- Maritime crew arriving into Victoria on vessels that have only been in Australian waters
- Maritime crew requiring medical attention (for non-coronavirus or other listed human disease-related illness) who would not otherwise be disembarking in Victoria
- Shore-based professionals performing work on a vessel in Victorian ports
- International crew performing shore-based activities

Further detail on the changes is contained in the Coronavirus (COVID19) - Information for maritime industry in Victoria fact sheet found here https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid19-information-maritime-industry-victoria

Port operators are also welcome to submit enquires via a dedicated email address DHHSCOVID.Ports@dhhs.vic.gov.au

No change to curfews

Heavy vehicles delivering essential items to retail premises will remain exempt from truck curfews until 21 September 2020.

The exemption was first introduced on 22 March and was extended following a review.

Curfews will not be enforced for truck drivers engaged in the delivery of food items or personal hygiene products to retail premises.

The exemption applies until 21 September 2020, when it will again be reviewed.

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is continuing to monitor and enforce compliance in curfew areas, with officers using their discretion in relation to heavy vehicles parked near distribution centres and supermarkets. Enforcement will continue to apply in those instances where there is a safety risk.

First container study in more than a decade

The Port of Melbourne is to undertake its first study into the origin and destination of Victorian containers in more than a decade. The study will be used to support policy and investment decisions as Victoria prepares for a near-tripling of freight volumes by 2051.

The study will examine the port's container flow, trends and changes since the last study in 2009, and the impact of growth in container volumes.

Data from the last study was used to assess the freight benefits of key projects including the West Gate Tunnel project and the planned intermodal freight precinct at Truganina.

Access to air freight slots from Melbourne limited

To overcome instances where the Commonwealth's subsidised air freight scheme is oversubscribed for flights out of Melbourne, freight forwarders are increasingly taking advantage of slots available in Adelaide and Sydney.

The $110 million International Freight Assistance Mechanism (IFAM) is a temporary measure to help restore global supply chains impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19) containment measures around the world.

IFAM ensures essential imports such as medicines and medical supplies can be transported to Australia and provides the opportunity on the outbound legs for producers of high-value agricultural and fisheries products.

IFAM is currently available on services from Melbourne to Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, Auckland and Abu Dhabi.

Asset write-off scheme extended

The Commonwealth will extend the $150,000 instant asset write-off to the end of the calendar year.

It follows the announcement in March increasing the threshold from $30,000 to $150,000.

The scheme applies to both new and second-hand assets and was originally slated to end on 30 June 2020.

Mode Shift Incentive Scheme extended

The Victorian government will extend the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme (MSIS) until 30 June 2021.

The MSIS is a program that encourages the greater use of rail to move containerised freight.

Its aim is to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness in the freight sector and reduce congestion on roads in and around freight and port precincts.

Current participants in the scheme are Linx Portlink (Shepparton corridor), Wimmera Container Line (Horsham corridor), Westvic Container Export (Warrnambool corridor) and Seaway Intermodal (Mildura corridor).

Freeze on heavy vehicle charges comes into effect

The 12-month freeze on heavy vehicle registration charges comes into effect on 1 July.

Registration charges for heavy vehicles will not increase by 2.5 per cent as proposed last November.

Registration charges are calculated to recover the heavy vehicle share of annual road construction and maintenance expenditure.

Border restrictions remain in place

There are range of border restrictions in place in different states and territories. Visit the links below in advance of interstate travel.
Australian Capital Territory - https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/news-articles/health-advice-on-covid-19-hot-spots-in-melbourne
New South Wales - https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/travel-and-transport-advice
Northern Territory - https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/quarantine
Queensland - https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/border-closing
South Australia - https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/restrictions-and-responsibilities/travel-restrictions
Tasmania - https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/travellers-and-visitors/coming-to-tasmania
Victoria - https://transport.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-disease-covid-19#freight

Doing your part to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Your workforce must apply the same practices all Victorians are expected to adhere to including physical distancing and best-practice hygiene. These measures are essential to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and save lives.

Further information on coronavirus in the workplace is available at https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/exposure-coronavirus-workplaces

Further information

For information on the return to Stage 3 stay at home restrictions for metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell shire, visit https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19

Freight Victoria in the Department of Transport is the central point of contact for Victorian Government industry information to help fast-track responses to your questions and address issues as they arise.

Should you have further enquiries, please direct them to freightvictoria@transport.vic.gov.au

This update will be sent to you weekly or as required.