

# A message from the

## Department for Energy and Mining



Tuesday 28 July 2020 17:00 pm

The South Australian Government has further strengthened border arrangements with Victoria in response to an escalation of community transmission of COVID-19 in that State. The changes contained in the updated [Cross Border Travel Direction Number 10](#) that take effect from midnight tonight are designed to significantly reduce travel between South Australia and Victoria as well as modify the arrangements for New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. These directions still provide exemptions for Essential Travellers to facilitate businesses where all practicable mitigation strategies are in place and where the overall infection risk is low.

The Department for Energy and Mining acknowledges the significant reductions in movements that have already been made across the sector, and the material impact this has on businesses, individuals and families. Direction 10 emphasises that worker movements between the South Australia and Victoria should at this time be at the absolute minimum commercial level, with all practical avenues for eliminating the need to travel between the States having been exhausted. These arrangements mirror the circumstances the energy and mining sectors faced in April when the first travel arrangements were put in place, but this time the strengthened arrangements are constrained to jurisdictions with a higher risk profile.

### Key Direction Changes for Energy and Mining

The key changes in the updated direction are:

Confirmation that all inbound workers from Victoria – whether reporting for work or returning from work - must complete 14 days quarantine and undergo compulsory testing. This reflects measures already in place for our State's key operations.

Further tightening of the scope of available exemptions to focus on roles in essential service industries only for inbound Victorian workers and South Australians returning from work in Victoria.

In the case of returning workers, authorisation to re-enter South Australia will only be given to:

Specialist workers in essential sectors (including mining, oil, gas and energy)

- Where the operation has infection prevention control protocols that have been reviewed by SA Health, and
- Where the service is time-critical, and
- The appropriate skills are not available in South Australia or another jurisdiction with which South Australia does not have active border controls, and
- The provision of the service requires that the person be physically present in South Australia.

Workers who are returning to South Australia from Victoria to continue working - rather than because they are on a break between swing shifts - must now complete the 14 days of quarantine before they can undertake work.

The Department for Energy and Mining acknowledges the latter change is likely to significantly impact METS businesses and will prompt commercial decisions about whether, and how, opportunities in Victoria can be fulfilled in the near term. The updated Direction does not prevent workers returning to jobs interstate within 14 days.

Victorian workers providing commercial transport and freight services are required to self-quarantine when not at work or travelling to or from work. On request, they must produce to an authorised officer evidence of a COVID-19 test, or a COVID-19 test result undertaken within the preceding seven days.

For those who are permitted to return, SAPOL has clarified that suitable premises for self-quarantine can include locations with other persons who are not also quarantining, but the inbound worker must be able to be effectively segregated from those



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people. As this condition can be difficult to implement in family and other settings, employers must help educate workers on the risks to their families and the sector for failing to comply with quarantine measures. To ensure strict adherence with these requirements, quarantine arrangements for inbound workers will be subject to additional compliance checks by SAPOL.

Overall, companies are strongly encouraged to implement measures that will immediately eliminate or dramatically reduce the already limited number of workers moving to and from Victoria.

### **NSW and ACT traveller arrangements**

Workers from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory are treated as follows:

Fly In-Fly Out/Drive In-Drive Out workers reporting to remote and isolated locations in South Australia will be approved to enter the State. However, they must either show evidence of a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test within the preceding seven days, or submit to testing on day one and day 12. This provides for flexibility in the approach to testing, including pre-arrival testing. For those companies engaged with SA Pathology for testing on arrival at the airport, DEM has confirmed with SAPOL those arrangements will satisfy the requirement. Testing arrangements should be detailed in the company letter supporting the travel application.

Workers providing commercial transport and freight services must produce on request to an authorised officer evidence of a COVID-19 test, or a COVID-19 test result undertaken within the preceding seven days.

Workers entering under the 'specialist workers in essential sectors' exemption described in the previous section must:

- Self-quarantine when not at work or travelling to or from work
- Maintain contact records
- Wear surgical masks when interacting with the public.

### **Applications for travel exemptions**

Applications for essential traveller exemptions submitted to SAPOL will be scrutinised by a dedicated team. Companies should immediately update the evidence provided to employees in support of their online travel applications to include the following required information:

- Employee details
  - Name
  - Date of Birth
- Travel details
- Reason for travel
- Time criticality and the reason why physical presence is required
- Why the service is not available in South Australia
- Dates
- Locations
- Routes
- Testing arrangements
- Evidence that SA Health reviewed site COVID-19 control protocols

### **Support for relocation**

In support of workers and their families, the Department for Energy and Mining has confirmed an opportunity exists for essential services employees to apply to temporarily relocate their immediate families to join them in South Australia to avoid the need ongoing return trips to Victoria or New South Wales between swing shifts. Any approvals will be subject to strict quarantine requirements.



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## Maintenance shutdowns

As flagged in the 1 May 2020 [update](#), both the Department for Energy and Mining 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 Victorian situation, and the potential for escalation in New South Wales, companies are encouraged to move early to de-risk arrangements and in the near term avoid reliance on inbound workers, particularly from Victoria. In the current environment, it is unlikely approval will be given for large-scale worker movement from Victoria into South Australia. Indispensable personnel can apply for travel approval. The Department for Energy and Mining 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.

## Clarification regarding transiting Tasmanian travellers

SAPOL and SA Health have confirmed that anyone transiting at airports in Victoria is considered 'Victorian travellers' for Direction 10. Direct flights between South Australia and Tasmania resume from 1 August, which should enable and simplify travel between these two states.

The restrictions imposed from midnight tonight highlight the ongoing potential for further tightening of conditions relating to the Victorian border. All operations in key industries are strongly encouraged to plan accordingly.

The energy and mining sectors' ongoing contribution to the conditions that have allowed these key industries to continue to operate, albeit under strict arrangements, is critical to maintaining economic activity and South Australia's continued prosperity.

Any queries or other COVID-19 management issues for the sector should be directed to [DEM Industry Enquiries](#)

Thank you for again for the proactive approach your industries have taken to managing COVID-19 risk.

Stay well

Paul Heithersay

Chief Executive

Department for Energy and Mining

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