

COVID-19: Mandatory quarantine – what do I need to know?

FACTSHEET

This factsheet is part of a series from Legal Aid NSW that aims to help answer your questions about COVID-19 and everyday law.

You may be worried or confused about how COVID-19 will affect you and your everyday life. Sometimes a crisis can make legal problems worse or new problems might develop. Legal Aid NSW understands that there will be a lot of questions about money worries, fines, police, housing, Centrelink, employment, guardianship and mental health. This series of factsheets will give you helpful information and contacts to assist you to manage all the changes that are happening in our community.

What are the new quarantine fees?

Under the *Public Health Act* the NSW Government has made it mandatory for international travellers to undergo quarantine for at least 14 days if they arrive in New South Wales by aircraft or from a port.

Mandatory quarantine means being housed in a government arranged hotel room for a 14-day period.

From Saturday 18 July 2020, the NSW Government is charging for their hotel quarantine accommodation.

The cost is called “quarantine fees”.

The fees are a fixed amount for the 14 days. You will not be charged more if you have to stay in quarantine longer than 14 days.

- \$3,000 for one adult traveller
- \$1,000 for additional adults
- \$500 for additional children

For example

- a family of 2 adults and 2 children, over the age of 3, in one room would pay \$5,000
- a family of 2 adults and 4 children over the age of 3 would pay \$6,000

The quarantine fees are charged in Australian dollars. The fees include the cost of meals and hotel accommodation. The NSW Government will continue to pay all other quarantine costs.

Fees for shorter quarantine periods

If you stay in quarantine less than 48 hours you will not be charged the fixed fee.

If you stay longer than 48 hours but less than 14 days, you will be charged a portion of the fixed fee based on how many days you were in quarantine.

A shorter stay may happen if you:

- are transiting through Australia
- you need to be treated in hospital.

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Who will be charged?

The NSW Government is charging quarantine fees to all international travellers arriving in Sydney who:

- have been in a country other than Australia within 14 days immediately prior to arrival in Sydney Airport (including Australian citizens and Australian permanent residents);
- **from Friday 29 January 2021** - arrive from New Zealand. Arrivals from New Zealand before this date do not have to pay quarantine fees;
- have been directed into quarantine under a public health order.

At the end of the quarantine, you will receive an invoice to pay the NSW Government within 30 days.

Who doesn't have to pay quarantine fees?

The fees will not apply to:

- travellers who purchased their flights before 11:59pm 12 July 2020 AEST
- travellers who arrived in Australia before 12:01am on 18 July 2020 AEST
- travellers flying from New Zealand who arrive between 16 October 2020 to Thursday 28 January 2021, as long as you haven't been in a New Zealand hotspot in the previous 14 days
- children under the age of three
- unaccompanied minors (<18 years old) who are picked up by a parent or guardian at the airport and remain in isolation for the quarantine period in accordance with the [NSW Health Self-Isolation guidelines](#)
- travellers in transit in NSW for less than 48 hours
- members of the flight crew of an aircraft.

If you get a quarantine fee invoice and think you should be exempt, contact Revenue NSW immediately.

How do the fees work?

When checking in to a quarantine hotel after arrival you will be given a notice informing you of the requirement to pay quarantine fees.

At the end of the mandatory quarantine period, you will receive an invoice from Revenue NSW asking you to pay within 30 days of quarantine ending. The invoice will be sent to you by email or post. If you entered quarantine as part of a group, the primary contact person (identified at check-in) will receive the bill with the names of the other occupants of the group listed in the invoice.

For more information on the mandatory quarantine rules and penalties for breaching these rules see our factsheet '[Public Health Orders –what you need to know](#)'.

Who is collecting the new quarantine fees?

Revenue NSW is responsible for managing and collecting the quarantine fees. All payments and exemption requests go to Revenue NSW.

How can I follow the new laws?

Step 1: Comply with mandatory quarantine requirements

If you have arrived in NSW by plane or boat and you have been overseas (other than New Zealand between 16 October 2020 and 28 January 2021) in the last 14 days:

- You must enter quarantine for 14 days, even if you are feeling well
- The government will organise your accommodation. This could be a hotel or hospital if you are sick
- You will not be allowed to leave quarantine until the 14 days have passed
- If the end point of your trip is in another state or territory, you will have to do the quarantine in NSW before you can continue your trip.

Step 2: Manage your quarantine invoice

If you are required to enter hotel quarantine you will have 30 days to pay the invoice after you leave quarantine. You have several options to pay your quarantine fees.

You can:

1. Pay the amount in full – via BPAY, Australia Post, Visa or Mastercard. Telephone payments can also be made with Visa or Mastercard.
2. Ask Revenue NSW for a 14-day extension.
3. Set up a payment plan with Revenue NSW – weekly or fortnightly payments. You can apply [online](#).
4. Apply for a fee waiver, before or after your quarantine – if the fees do not apply to you and you provide supporting documents.
5. Contact Revenue NSW for other options – where significant hardship circumstances arise. You will need to supply supporting documents.

You can also get legal advice, so you know the best option for your circumstances.

What if I can't pay the quarantine fees by the due date?

If you can't pay your quarantine fees within 30 days you have the option to:

- Make instalment payments over time. These can be small payments each fortnight if you are in financial hardship or on a Centrelink benefit.
- Request a fee reduction if you are experiencing significant hardship.

A **fee reduction** may be considered where there is significant hardship. The significant hardship may be brought on by financial, medical or domestic problems. For example: reduced income due to injury, loss of employment or any other reasonable cause – including the quarantine period itself.

You will need to provide supporting documentation of your financial and personal circumstances to Revenue NSW. Contact quarantinefee@revenue.nsw.gov.au to ask about a fee reduction.

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If you have difficulty paying the fees, you should contact Revenue NSW as soon as possible. You will need your invoice number when you contact Revenue NSW. You may receive penalties if you do not pay your fees on time.

What will happen if I don't pay my quarantine fees?

If you don't pay or make arrangements to pay your fees, Revenue NSW have enforcement powers to:

- Take money from your bank account or wages
- Get the Sheriff to seize and sell things you own
- Register an interest on any property you own (charge on land)

Each time Revenue NSW takes enforcement action they add fees to your quarantine invoice. So don't ignore the invoice, get help quickly if you can't pay it.

If you have received a quarantine invoice, contact LawAccess NSW on 1300 888 529 for free legal help.

Quarantine arrangements in other Australian states and territories

Other States and Territories have introduced fees for quarantine accommodation. You should visit the COVID-19 website for each individual state and territory for the latest information.

- [Australian Capital Territory: COVID-19](#)
- [Northern Territory: COVID-19](#)
- [Queensland: COVID-19](#)
- [South Australia: COVID-19](#)
- [Tasmania: COVID-19](#)
- [Victoria: COVID-19](#)
- [Western Australia: COVID-19](#)

Where can I find more information about quarantine fees?

For further information on the quarantine arrangements visit the [NSW government FAQ page](#) or visit the Revenue NSW webpage on [quarantine fees](#). If you have a question about the quarantine fees you can also contact Revenue NSW directly on **1300 433 476** (8:30am to 5:00pm Monday – Friday).

How can I get help?

For free legal help call **LawAccess NSW on 1300 888 529** or [call your local Legal Aid NSW office](#).

If you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask for LawAccess NSW. If you find it hard to hear or speak, call the National Relay Service on 133 677 and ask for LawAccess NSW or visit www.relayservice.gov.au.

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For free, independent and confidential advice from a financial counsellor contact the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007. A financial counsellor can help you manage your debts or negotiate with creditors.

There is also a series of [factsheets about COVID-19 and the law](#) available on the Legal Aid NSW website to assist you to manage all the changes that are happening in our community.

This factsheet is intended as a general guide to the law. Do not rely on this information as legal advice. We recommend you talk to a lawyer about your situation. This information is correct at the time of writing, however, it may change.

CVCIV12 | 28 January 2021 | © Legal Aid NSW