

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 people to undergo quarantine for at least 14 days if they arrive in New South Wales by aircraft or from a port.

This mandatory quarantine applies to all overseas travellers, NSW residents returning from Victoria and those transitioning through NSW who have been in Victoria within 14 days before arriving in NSW.

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

- From 12.01am Saturday 18 July 2020, the NSW Government is charging international travellers who arrive in Sydney for their hotel quarantine accommodation.
- From 12.01am Friday 11 September 2020 the NSW Government is charging people arriving by aircraft from Victoria for their hotel quarantine accommodation.

The cost of this accommodation is called “quarantine fees”.

The fees are:

- \$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 and are a fixed rate. The fees include the cost of meals and hotel accommodation.

The NSW Government will continue to pay for the costs of security, transport and logistics.

Who will be charged, and when do the fees commence?

The NSW Government is charging all NSW residents and non-NSW residents returning from Victoria, and all international travellers including Australian citizens and Australian permanent residents for their hotel quarantine accommodation.

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Commencement dates for quarantine fees are set out below:

Traveller	Charged from	Exclusions or conditions
International travellers arriving in NSW	12:01am Saturday 18 July	Some exclusions apply – see below “Exclusions” section
NSW residents returning from Victoria	12:01am Friday 11 September 2020	A fee waiver applies if NSW residents return before Friday 11 September 2020 or entered mandatory quarantine before 12 August 2020.
Domestic travellers (non-NSW residents) from Victoria with a valid permit	12:01am Friday 7 August 2020	A fee waiver applies if domestic traveller purchased their airfare before 5pm on 5 August 2020 or landed prior to 12:01am on 7 August. Domestic travellers must still comply with their permit conditions
A Victorian education visitor with a permit	12:01am Friday 7 August 2020	Must only arrive by plane and must complete 14 days of mandatory quarantine
Travellers in transit in NSW for more than 48 hours	12:01am Saturday 18 July	Must go into quarantine for the quarantine period before continuing journey to another state or territory. After this isolation period travellers can transit domestically and travel home.

For more information on NSW-Victorian border permits see our factsheet [‘NSW and Victoria border closure – what do I need to know?’](#)

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

Exclusions:

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

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- 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. Although note that a pro rata fee will be charged for stays greater than 48 hours.
- members of the flight crew of an aircraft
- a person from Victoria with a current entry permit under the Public Health (COVID-19 Border Control) Order 2020.

How are the fees being implemented?

When a traveller arrives in NSW by plane or boat they will be automatically directed into a government-arranged quarantine hotel room. There is no option to choose your own hotel. When checking in to the hotel travellers will be given a notice informing them of the requirement to pay quarantine fees.

At the end of the mandatory quarantine period, travellers will receive an invoice from Revenue NSW asking them 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.

Why is the government now charging international travellers and people coming from Victoria?

According to the NSW Government website, this change in quarantine fees will reduce the financial burden of COVID-19 on NSW taxpayers. To date the NSW Government has spent over \$65 million on quarantine accommodation to house international travellers returning to Australia.

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 or in Victoria 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
- 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.

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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 manage your quarantine fees.

You can:

1. Pay the amount in full – via BPAY, Australia Post, Visa or Mastercard. Telephone payments may 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 what the best option is for you.

What if I booked my flight before the time limits, do I still have to pay?

A fee waiver exists for international travellers and NSW residents returning from Victoria, however a strict time period applies.

International travellers

Overseas travellers who purchased their flight **before 11:59am on 12 July 2020 or arrived in Australia before 12:01am on 18 July 2020** will not be required to pay quarantine fees, however they will still need to quarantine in government-arranged hotels.

NSW residents returning from Victoria

NSW residents who return from Victoria **before 12:01am Friday 11 September 2020 or entered hotel quarantine before Wednesday 12 August 2020** will not be required to pay quarantine fees, however they will still need to quarantine in government-arranged hotels.

Conditions:

Travellers will not be able to choose their own hotel accommodation.

On arrival at the quarantine hotel, these travellers will be required to provide proof of their booking date to NSW Government. They will not be charged if they can supply evidence that their original flight was purchased before the deadline.

The following information will be required:

- Purchase receipt for flights
- Flight confirmation from airline or travel agent

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- These documents must list all members of the group that travelled to Australia and are quarantined
- A contact phone number, details of the location of hotel quarantine
- For international travellers: copies of passports for all travellers showing the name and date of birth
- For interstate travellers: copy of driver's licence or birth certificate for each member of the group.

Travellers can provide Revenue NSW this information before departure from the quarantine hotel, and if approved will not receive an invoice.

If you have already received an invoice, this information can be sent to Revenue NSW after your quarantine. Email your documents to quarantinefee@revenue.nsw.gov.au to process a fee exemption.

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 process a fee reduction.

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)
- Make a community service order

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

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Quarantine arrangement in other Australian states and territories

Queensland and Northern Territory have introduced fees for quarantine. 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.

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.

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