

Applying for SA Health Essential Traveller status

SA Health Essential Traveller online application form

If you wish to enter South Australia as an Essential Traveller, you may need approval from SA Health before submitting your [Cross Border Travel Registration](#) to SA Police. This includes Essential Travellers in categories for urgent medical, surgical or dental treatment; compassionate grounds; and health care workers who are required to undertake work on behalf of SA Health.

From 1 September 2020, you need to seek this approval using the online [SA Health Essential Traveller Application form](#). Your Cross Border Travel Registration cannot be processed for these categories until you have written approval from SA Health. A Health Exemptions Committee, led by the Deputy State Controller - Health, meets regularly to consider the applications.

If you are entering South Australia from a low community transmission zone are not required to seek approval from SA Health, however, you are required to complete the SA Police Cross Border Travel Registration form.

Who needs approval from SA Health before registering for cross border travel into SA?

If you wish to enter SA from Victoria you need approval from SA Health for these Essential Traveller categories:

- > Urgent medical, surgical or dental treatment
- > Compassionate grounds
 - Funerals
 - Terminal/critical/end-of-life visits
- > Health services

You will be required to undertake 14 days mandatory quarantine, including quarantining when not attending appointments, undergoing treatment or undertaking approved visits. Depending on your circumstances and risk level, this will be in either a designated medi-hotel at your own expense or at a nominated address.

These urgent categories are being prioritised. Non-urgent requests are currently not being prioritised, while SA Health improves turnaround times and clears the priority requests.

How do I get approval from SA Health?

- > If you require approval from SA Health to travel to SA, you will need to complete the online [SA Health Essential Traveller Application form](#).
- > This should be submitted with evidence to support your application *before* you apply for [Cross Border Travel Registration](#) from SA Police.
- > Urgent categories are experiencing delays that SA Health is working to improve.
- > Non-urgent approvals are currently experiencing delays of up to 14 days and currently not being prioritised while SA Health Exemptions improves turnaround times for all categories.

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- > SA Police advise you should aim to complete the Cross Border Travel Registration at least 14 days before you plan to travel to South Australia, regardless of where your travel begins.

What sort of evidence is needed for my application?

Written evidence to support your application can include:

- > a letter, email or scanned document from your treating doctor, workplace, funeral home, aged care facility or treating doctor for your immediate family member.
- > If you are applying for urgent entry to SA within 12-24 hours, you must provide written evidence with your application to support the urgent request for end-of-life and critical circumstances for immediate family members.

Check the [SA Police Essential Traveller Evidence](#) table for other examples.

Who makes the decision regarding SA Health Essential Traveller Applications?

- > Decisions are made by the SA Health Exemptions Panel and team on a case-by-case basis.
- > The Exemptions Panel includes senior health clinicians, officials and authorised officers and meets regularly to consider the applications.
- > In exceptional circumstances, appeals are considered by two senior health officials, independent of the Health Exemptions Panel.

What factors are taken into consideration when assessing an application?

The general factors taken into consideration when assessing a SA Health Essential Traveller Application are:

- > the public health risk of introducing the COVID-19 virus into South Australia. This is based on regular reviews of the number of active cases and level of community transmission in other jurisdictions.
- > evidence that a health condition requires urgent management and that there is no suitable alternate options that do not require interstate travel for medical treatment.
- > the ability to provide and implement a Risk Mitigation Plan.
- > the ability of the applicant to follow strict adherence to quarantine requirements (supervised or self-quarantine)
- > advice from industry experts regarding the need for travel into South Australia and whether alternate arrangements can be made from low community transmission zones.

Where will I need to quarantine if travelling from Victoria?

- > People travelling from Melbourne and other high risk areas who have SA Health approval to enter SA are required to quarantine in a medi-hotel at their own expense.
- > When your application is approved, SA Health will advise if you are required to quarantine in a medi-hotel as a condition of your exemption.

More information about medi-hotel quarantine fees is available on the travel restrictions page at www.covid-19.sa.gov.au

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How long will it take to get a response?

- > There are currently significant delays because of the high volume of requests for approval. Non-urgent applications for relocation, students and passing through categories should not expect a response for at least 14 days.
- > Urgent requests are being dealt with as soon as possible, but are also delayed and the time to seek further information from treating doctors is also adding to the delays. Include in your application the planned date of your appointment or surgery, or an indication of the urgency of a request under compassionate grounds, as well as your expected travel date and mode of travel.
- > SA Health is working to respond as quickly and compassionately as possible during this difficult time for you.

Can I apply for both my Health approval and Cross Border Travel Registration with SA Police at the same time?

- > It is recommended that you wait for the outcome of your SA Health Application before submitting your Cross Border Travel Registration to SA Police.
- > Without written approval from SA Health to support your application in these Essential Traveller categories, your cross border registration may be declined.
- > If you have received approval from SA Health, you can make your Cross Border Travel application immediately and include the written approval from SA Health.

I need to enter SA urgently. How can I get a quick response?

- > Priority is given to compassionate and urgent medical, surgical and dental categories.
- > Supporting evidence must be submitted with the application, along with information like the date of travel, where you are entering SA from and why the application needs to be considered urgently.

Should I go to the SA border if I haven't received my written approval from SA Health before I need to travel?

- > You may be denied entry to SA if you do not have the approval and supporting documentation for the categories that require SA Health approval.
- > It is recommended you get that approval before you travel.

I have been waiting for more than five days for a response to my application to SA Health. What should I do?

- > SA Health is currently processing a high number of requests and is working to reduce the waiting time for a decision.
- > If you have had NO contact at all from SA Health Exemptions after five working days, contact the COVID Information Line on 1800 253 787.
- > Non-urgent categories are not currently being prioritised while SA Health improves turnaround times.

What if my application is denied?

- > The Health Exemptions Panel considers applications on a case-by-case basis, and in exceptional circumstances, appeals may be considered.

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- > You can dispute a decision by responding to Health Exemptions with any additional information to support your request for a review of the decision.
- > The appeal process will be arbitrated by two senior health officials, independent of the Health Exemptions Committee. You will be notified of the outcome in writing.
- > If you wish to further dispute the outcome, please contact the [SA Ombudsman](#).

Information for specific groups wishing to enter SA from Victoria

The border closure that affects all travel between SA and Victoria means only Essential Travellers can enter SA from Victoria and all applications are being carefully considered to ensure the risk to South Australians from COVID-19 is well-managed.

The situation in Victoria is being closely monitored and all decisions are based on a public health assessment at the time. Please check the SA Health website for the most up-to-date public health advice.

Medical Exemptions

- > Requests for medical, dental or health treatment in South Australia made by residents of Victoria are considered on a case-by-case basis, with the Health Exemption Panel making a clinical assessment based on the information provided in the request.
- > Further information may be sought including direct discussion with the referring and/or treating clinician (with permission of the applicant).
- > This can add extra time to the assessment. The urgency of the treatment/procedure and ability for the procedure to be delayed or potentially provided within the home jurisdiction may be explored, including whether care can be safely delivered by telehealth.
- > The ability to mitigate risk of COVID-19 transmission will be assessed in consultation with the proposed health care service/hospital.
- > Depending on the current COVID-19 epidemiology in Victoria, requests for medical exemptions will not be approved unless considered urgent and an alternative arrangement cannot be made.

Compassionate applications for end-of-life related travel

- > Exemptions for end-of-life visits may be granted on compassionate grounds for people from Victoria if the predicted life expectancy of the family member is less than two weeks.
- > Evidence of clinical urgency is required from a registered medical practitioner.
- > There must be agreement by the facility (hospital, hospice or aged care facility) to permit the visit including written agreement by the facility of their ability to put in place risk mitigation procedures.

Compassionate applications to attend a funeral

- > Applications for travel for funerals on compassionate grounds will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will only be approved in very exceptional circumstances (e.g., death of spouse, parent or child).
- > If approval is granted, the funeral must be delayed as a full 14 day quarantine period is required on arrival prior to attending the funeral.

Requests to travel to provide general support to immediate family members

- > Exemptions will generally not be granted for people wishing to provide support to family members (e.g., older person shifting house, supporting family with new baby).

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- > However, the Health Exemptions Panel will seek to provide advice about other forms of support available in South Australia in such circumstances.

Non-urgent applications

Requests are currently not being prioritised for the following categories:

- > Requests to relocate to South Australia and returning residents
- > Secondary school students returning to boarding school and university students.

These are not essential traveller categories and are currently not permitted under the Cross Border Travel Direction. Exemptions outside of the essential traveller categories are only being considered in exceptional circumstances.

SA COVID-19 Information line 1800 253 787
sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019
covid-19.sa.gov.au
Department for Health and Wellbeing
SA Health, Government of South Australia
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