

Fact Sheet

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Agriculture and Food as an essential service

How do I know if my business is 'essential'?

At present, businesses do not have to be declared essential in order to operate. Some types of businesses, such as restaurants, have had specific restrictions placed on their operations to slow the spread of COVID-19. Information about restrictions on businesses is available at: <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/business-and-employees/business-restrictions>.

Unless the type of business or industry has specific restrictions placed on its operations it may continue to operate and is encouraged to do so, as far as is practical in the current conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the public health response in Tasmania means that it is not just business as usual for all Tasmanians.

Farmers and agribusiness need to monitor any health or emergency directions and adhere to social distancing, workplace hygiene and other requirements.

In conducting business operations, the advice of the Department of Health and the Tasmanian Government must be followed.

For example:

- maintaining a minimum distance of 1.5m between people
- providing hand hygiene products and suitable rubbish bins
- washing hands regularly for at least 20 seconds
- frequently cleaning up and disposing of waste
- considering if livestock sale yards and wool auctions can be held online or remotely.

Farmers and agribusiness are also strongly encouraged to have a plan and contingencies in place for how they would continue with their business if there was, for example, a COVID-19 positive detection in their workplace, or if there were to be 'lockdown' restrictions in their region.

What about travel restrictions? Can I or my employee be exempt from the mandatory 14-day quarantine restrictions?

Tasmania has declared a State of Emergency, which is aimed at protecting the Tasmanian community. This includes our rural and regional communities. Directions issued under the *Emergency Management Act 2006* by the State Controller (Tasmanian Commissioner of Police) in relation to persons arriving in Tasmania have been in place for some time.

Restrictions in place may impact businesses including agricultural business operations. However, travellers may apply for exemptions under eight Essential Traveller categories, one of which is 'specialist skills critical to maintaining key industries or businesses' (see Essential Traveller criteria 4.a. at <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/travellers-and-visitors> for more information.)

The **Application Form – Essential Traveller** needs to be completed. More information on how to apply for 'Essential Traveller' status is available at <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/travellers-and-visitors/coming-to-tasmania> and at: www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/coronavirus

Decisions on Essential Traveller applications are made in line with Orders and Directions under the *Public Health Act* and the *Emergency Control Act*. The major consideration is the public health risk to Tasmanians of someone moving around the community who has not been through a 14-day quarantine period. The quarantine period means the risk for any Tasmanians they encounter is significantly reduced.

For further information:

The situation regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus) continues to evolve. The most current information and links are on the Tasmanian Government websites www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au and www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/coronavirus

Advice is available from Worksafe Tasmania on preparing a pandemic plan and other workplace safety information <https://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/Health-and-Safety/safety-alerts/coronavirus>

The National Farmers Federation COVID-19 Workplace Guide <https://farmhub.org.au/covid-19-nff-workplace-guide/> also provides some good points of reference to refer your employers, transport and accommodation providers.

If you have any health concerns phone the **Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738**

For any general questions about COVID -19 information for farmers and agriculture phone the **FarmPoint Hotline on 1300 292 292** or email: farmpoint@dpiwwe.tas.gov.au

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