Tips to help you understand the NSW-VIC border closure

(This information is correct as at 28 July 2020)

The NSW Government has issued Health Orders to restrict entry into NSW of persons who have been in Victoria. A NSW Border Permit program is being run by Service NSW, as part of the conditions in place to enter NSW. It's a good idea to find out how you will be affected by the border closure before crossing the border. This closure may remain in place for some time, and conditions may change, so keep checking for the latest information.

If you are unsure about what permit you need to apply for, or your individual situation, contact the **Border Closure Hotline on 13 77 88** with any queries or visit the Service NSW website.

If you are confused about what you can and can't do, **get legal advice**.

Call Hume Riverina Community Legal Service on 1800 918 377 or email cls@umfc.com.au to request an appointment for initial advice.

Do I live in the border zone?

Only if you usually live within the border zone (also known as blue zone or border bubble). The border zone means the area shown as the border zone on the Public Health (COVID-19 Border Control) Map.

To view the border zone maps and check if your address is included in the border zone, go to https://disasterassistance.service.nsw.gov.au/bcpermit/borderCheck

I live in the border area. What do I need to cross the border?

If you live **within the border zone in NSW**, you need a border zone resident permit to return home after visiting Victoria. You do not need to self-isolate when you return, if you:

- Stayed within the border zone during your visit to Victoria, and
- Only visited the Victorian border zone for a permitted purpose. These include:
  - → work, if you cannot work from home
  - → attend school or your educational institution, if you cannot learn from home
  - → to obtain medical care or supplies, or health care
  - → doing an essential care service. This means providing or receiving care or assistance to a vulnerable person, including personal care, mental health or domestic violence services, and services to victims of crime.

If you live **within the border zone in NSW** and **visit a community outside the border zone in Victoria**, you will need to self-isolate for 14 days when you return home.

If you live **outside the border zone in NSW**, you will need a NSW resident permit to return from Victoria. You will be required to self-isolate on return to NSW.

If you live **within the border zone in Victoria you will need a border zone resident permit to enter NSW.** You can only enter NSW if you:

- Stayed within the border zone in Victoria during the last 14 days
- Only visit NSW border zone for a permitted purpose

If you live **outside the border zone in Victoria**, you will need a relevant permit under a strict range of categories. **Without a permit you will not be able to enter NSW.**

If you are unsure, contact the **Border Closure Hotline on 13 77 88** with any queries or visit the Service NSW website.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

If I don't feel safe at home and need to leave and cross the border, do I need a permit to cross at a checkpoint?

NO. You can enter NSW without a permit if you are **avoiding injury, harm or an immediate emergency situation**.

However, if you enter Victoria to avoid injury or harm, you will need a border zone or NSW resident permit to return to NSW.

How can I report a family violence incident to police if it happened on the other side of the border?

Contact the nearest police station and ask them if you need to physically attend to make a statement about the incident to police.

Can I go to court for my court date in NSW or Victoria?

YES. If you live in Victoria, you are allowed to enter NSW to visit court and meet other legal obligations. You will need the correct permit from Service NSW. You must only visit NSW to attend court or meet your legal obligations. You must not do anything else e.g. shopping, visit friends or family.

If you live in NSW and have to go to court in Victoria, you will need a border zone or NSW resident permit to get back home, depending on where you live.

Can I visit friends and family for support if they live on the opposite side of the border?

For NSW residents - visiting friends and family is **not a permitted purpose** for crossing the border into Victoria. So if you visit friends and family who **live anywhere in Victoria** will need to self-isolate for 14 days when you return to NSW even if you hold a border zone permit and you stay within the border zone.

Victorians cannot visit family and friends in NSW even if you are travelling between border zones.

Can I get a permit to enter NSW on compassionate grounds?

YES. Permits are generally only available for Victorians in extreme cases, such as visiting a family member who is terminally ill, or you are a carer of an immediate family in significant need. You will need to provide evidence about the situation, and you may have to self-isolate for 14 days when you get to NSW.

Apply to NSW Health for a compassionate grounds exemption. If successful, you will be provided with a code to apply for a "compassionate grounds" permit through Service NSW. For more information visit the NSW Health website.

I live in NSW but am getting family violence support and case management in Victoria. Can I still go to my appointment?

YES. However, you will need a border zone or NSW resident permit to re-enter NSW. If you live outside the border zone, or travelled outside the border zone, you will need to self-isolate for 14 days when you return to NSW.

MANAGING FAMILY TIME

Do I need to alter the current Parenting Order I have if I live on the opposite side of the border to the other parent?

If you can't follow the Parenting Order because of the border restrictions, **get legal advice**.

I live in NSW. My kids live with their other parent in Victoria. Can I still see my kids under the current arrangement that's in place?

If you enter Victoria to pick up the kids, and bring the children back to stay with you in NSW, you can apply for a "child access" permit to spend time with the kids in NSW. Your kids will also be able to get this permit. You and your children **DO NOT need to self-isolate, as long as you have a COVID-19 Safety Plan.**

However, if you drop the kids back into Victoria, and return home to NSW, **it is unclear** whether you can re-enter NSW under the child access permit. You should apply for a NSW resident permit in case the child access permit is not accepted at the checkpoint. **When asked at the checkpoint for your permit, we recommend you show the child access permit first.** If you enter NSW under your NSW Resident permit, you will have to self-isolate for 14 days.

What if I live within the border zone in NSW, and my kids live in the border zone in Victoria?

Child access is **not covered** under the border zone permit. You will need to apply for a separate permit.

If you are unsure about what you and your kids are allowed to do, **get legal advice**.

Call Hume Riverina Community Legal Service on 1800 918 377 or email cls@umfc.com.au to request an appointment for initial advice.

Do my kids need to self-isolate for 14 days if they return to Victoria after staying with a parent in NSW?

NO. There are currently no restrictions for Victorians returning from NSW.

Do my kids who live in Victoria have to self-isolate with me when they visit me in NSW?

If your kids enter NSW with a "child access" permit, they will not need to self-isolate if there is a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place and this is followed.

If you are unsure about what you and your kids are allowed to do, **get legal advice**.

Call Hume Riverina Community Legal Service on 1800 918 377 or email cls@umfc.com.au to request an appointment for initial advice.

Can a parent living in Melbourne visit their kids in Albury?

NO. People living in Victorian designated hotspots (currently Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire) cannot enter NSW, even for child access purposes.

Can I attend a mediation at a relationship centre in Victoria?

YES. You can go into Victoria from NSW, but returning to NSW you would need a Border or NSW Resident permit. However, you will need to self-isolate for 14 days when you return to NSW regardless of the permit. **Attending mediation in Victoria is NOT a "permitted purpose" under the border zone permit.**

Can I go from Victoria to the Children Contact Centre in NSW?

YES. If you are going to the Children's Contact Service to see your kids. You must have a child access permit, and a COVID safety plan in place.

If there is any doubt whether you can or can't travel, you may need to renegotiate the parenting arrangement (if possible) under the permit conditions. **Get legal advice about your arrangements**.

WORKING ON THE BORDER

What if I work in NSW but live in Victoria outside the border zone, and am not employed in a critical service?

To check your work status, visit the Service NSW Eligibility page. **Your employment may mean you are not eligible for a permit despite this being your current job.**

The Fair Work Ombudsman encourages employers and employees to negotiate suitable outcomes. If you can't work because of the government restrictions, such as crossing a state borders, you should speak with your employer to discuss your leave or flexible working options. Visit the Fair Work Ombudsman website for more information.

I have a border zone permit. I work on the opposite side of the border to where I live. Can I leave work at lunchtime to buy lunch or go shopping?

NO. You must stick to the purpose of your permit. Going shopping or having lunch outside your work location is not a permitted purpose.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

I live in NSW and have a medical appointment in Victoria. Do I need to self-isolate when I return home?

NO. **If you hold a border zone permit**, and you get medical treatment in a border zone in Victoria you do not need to self-isolate when you return to NSW.

If you cannot get a border zone permit, and it's not a medical emergency, you can apply for a permit to return to NSW after you have accessed medical or hospital services. You must travel by the most direct route between your home and the medical service. You are only eligible for the permit if the service is not available in Victoria or cannot be accessed remotely. **A medical practitioner must certify the medical or hospital services were necessary to treat or maintain your health.**

You may **not enter NSW** with this permit if you have been in a Victorian designated hotspot in the previous 14 days.

Do I need a permit to get into NSW if there is a medical emergency?

NO. You can enter NSW without a permit for emergency medical, hospital, dental or veterinary care. You must travel the most direct route between your home and the place where the service is provided.

Do I need a permit to get into Victoria if there is a medical emergency?

NO. However, you will still need a border zone or NSW Resident permit to return home to NSW.

If you have a border zone permit, and received treatment in a Victorian border zone, **you WILL NOT need to self-isolate** when you return home to NSW.

If you received emergency medical treatment outside a border zone in Victoria, you will need a NSW resident permit to return home and **YOU WILL need to self-isolate for 14 days** when you return home.

I live in Victoria. Do I need a permit to go to a medical appointment in NSW?

If you cannot get a border zone permit, and it's not a medical emergency, you will need to apply for a permit to enter NSW for medical or hospital services. You must travel by the most direct route to the place to reach the medical service. **You are only eligible for the permit if the service is not available in Victoria or cannot be accessed remotely**.

You may **not enter NSW** with this permit if you have been in a Victorian designated hotspot in the previous 14 days.

Can I go to a café and have a coffee while I am in NSW, if I have entered from Victoria with a permit to attend a medical appointment?

NO. You must stick to the purpose of your visit when you enter NSW.

TRAVEL IN NSW

Can I travel to Wagga from Albury?

YES. Although the NSW Government is encouraging people not to do so unless necessary, **you will not be fined and do not need a permit**. If you have a medical appointment in Albury, you can still attend.

What if I travel from NSW to Wangaratta to go to Court? Do I have to self-isolate when I return?

YES. You will need to self-isolate for 14 days, regardless of where you live in NSW. **You will need to a NSW resident permit to return to NSW.**

What happens if I try to enter NSW without a permit, and I am not exempt?

The police may issue a fine of up to $11,000, or you may be put in jail, or both.

What if the police stop me while I am in NSW, and ask to see my permit?

If you have a permit that has enabled you to travel into NSW, you must produce a copy to police upon request, and photo id. **You must have the permit on you at all times.** You may also be asked to provide other evidence about your visit (such as a letter from your doctor, if you have travelled into NSW on the basis of a medical permit).

What if I provide incorrect information in my permit application?

The police can issue a fine of up to $22,000 or you may be put in jail, or both.

Police at a checkpoint fined me for breaching the Public Health Order and I want to challenge it. What should I do?

Contact the **Hume Riverina Community Legal Service** on **1800 918 377** or email cls@umfc.com.au for initial advice.

OTHER FAQs

What if I apply online for a permit and can't get one? What should I do?

Contact the **Border Closure Hotline on 13 77 88** or visit Service NSW website and make an enquiry at the bottom of the page.

I have been to Melbourne in the last 14 days. Can I go to NSW?

It depends on the conditions of your permit. Contact Service NSW if you are unsure.

I'm a day student going to school from Victoria to NSW, or coming back from school in Victoria to NSW. Can I get a permit?

YES. The day school student and visitor must travel by the most direct route between their place of residence and the school. Consult your permit for other conditions that apply.

Can I accompany someone into NSW?

YES. But only i**f you are their carer or they are your dependent and they are allowed** to enter NSW. You must have a permit to enter NSW and your name must be noted on their permit.

Do I need a permit to go to a NSW Court for a matter if I live in Victoria?

YES. You will need to apply for the relevant permit to attend court. Call your Local Court with any queries on **1300 679 272.** If you live in Victoria, you should contact the Court and ask if you are required to attend in person.

Finley Court - local-court-finley@justice.nsw.gov.au
Albury Court - local-court-albury@justice.nsw.gov.au
Corowa Court - local-court-corowa@justice.nsw.gov.au
Deniliquin Court - local-court-deniliquin@justice.nsw.gov.au

Where can I go in Victoria to get help applying and printing a permit?

The Wodonga Library – Facebook for information
Address: 194 High Street, Wodonga

Member for Benambra Bill Tilley –

Address: 91 Hume St Wodonga
Ph: (02) 6009 0808

Member for Indi Dr Helen Haines –

Address: 117 Murphy Street, Wangaratta
Ph: (03) 5721 7077

OR

Address: 79 High Street, Wodonga
Ph: (02) 6024 6284

Service NSW Mobile Centre – set up on the Lincoln Causeway linking Wodonga to Albury

DISCLAIMER:

This factsheet has been produced with the communities of southern Riverina of NSW and North east Victoria in mind. This is information only and should not be used as legal advice.

Please get legal advice about your individual situation.