



Queensland Health

[Home](#) > [Health system and governance](#) > [Legislation](#) > [Chief Health Officer public health directions](#) > Hospital Visitors Direction (No. 20)

Hospital Visitors Direction (No. 20)

Summary

Effective from: 1:00am AEST 26 May 2021

Posted: 26 May 2021

Direction from Chief Health Officer in accordance with emergency powers arising from the declared public health emergency

Public Health Act 2005 (Qld)

Section 362B

On 29 January 2020, under the *Public Health Act 2005*, the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services made an order declaring a public health emergency in relation to coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The public health emergency area specified in the order is for 'all of Queensland'. Its duration has been extended by regulation to 29 June 2021 and may be further extended.

Further to this declaration, I, Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer, reasonably believe it is necessary to give the following directions pursuant to the powers under s 362B of the *Public Health Act 2005* to assist in containing, or to respond to, the spread of COVID-19 within the community.

Preamble

1. This Public Health Direction replaces the Public Health Direction referred to as the *Hospital Visitors Direction (No. 19)* made on 28 April 2021 and is the successor of that Direction.
2. This Public Health Direction is to be read in conjunction with other Public Health Directions issued under section 362B of the *Public Health Act 2005* that have not expired or been revoked.

Citation

3. This Public Health Direction may be referred to as the *Hospital Visitors Direction (No. 20)*.

Revocation

4. The *Hospital Visitors Direction (No. 19)* made on 28 April 2021 is revoked from 1.00am on 26 May 2021.

Commencement

5. This Direction applies from 1.00am on 26 May until the end of the declared public health emergency, unless it is revoked or replaced.

PART 1 — REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL HOSPITALS

6. This part applies to all **hospitals** in the State of Queensland.
7. A person, other than a **patient of the hospital**, must not enter, or remain at, a hospital in the State of Queensland if:
- the person has been diagnosed with COVID-19, unless the person is no longer subject to a direction to self-isolate under section 362B or section 362H of the *Public Health Act 2005*; or
 - during the 14 days immediately preceding the entry, the person who is an **international arrival** arrived in **Australia** from a place outside **Australia**; or
 - during the 14 days immediately preceding the entry, or since the start date identified for the COVID-19 hotspot, whichever is shorter, the person has been in a place which at the time of entry is a **COVID-19 hotspot** (<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/declared-hotspots-direction¹>); or

- the person has been to an **interstate exposure venue**, unless 14 days have passed since the person was at the **interstate exposure venue**;

Note: a person who has been to an interstate exposure venue must quarantine as required by the Interstate Exposure Venues Direction (No. 2) or successor.

- during the 14 days immediately preceding the entry, or since the start date identified for the **interstate area of concern**, the person has been in a place which at the time of entry is an **interstate area of concern** (<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/interstate-areas-of-concern²>).
- the person has been informed they are a **close contact** of a **diagnosed person**, unless their quarantine period has ended; or
- the person has a temperature equal to or higher than 37.5 degrees or **symptoms consistent with COVID-19**; or
- the person has been tested for COVID-19 and has not yet received the results of that test.

Exception for people entering from interstate area of concern

8. Despite paragraph 7(e), a person may enter and remain on the premises of a hospital, if the person obtains a negative COVID-19 test result in Queensland after returning from an **interstate area of concern**.

Exception for a person waiting for a COVID-19 test result

9. Despite paragraph 7(h), a person may enter a hospital if the person is awaiting the result of a COVID-19 test taken in accordance with a **surveillance testing obligation** under a Public Health Direction or Protocol approved by the Chief Health Officer.

*Note: A person awaiting COVID-19 tests results as part of a **surveillance testing obligation** must still comply with the requirements in paragraphs 7(a) to (g). For example, a person awaiting results of a routine COVID-19 test required under a protocol must not enter, or remain on, the premises of a hospital if they have **symptoms consistent with COVID-19**.*

Obligation on operators

10. The **operator of a hospital** in the State of Queensland must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a person does not enter or remain within a hospital if the person is prohibited from doing so under this Direction.

End of life visitors

11. Despite paragraphs 7(b) to 7(d), a person may enter, or remain at, a hospital if:
 - a. the person's presence at the hospital is for the purpose of an **end of life visit** for a patient of the hospital; and
 - b. the person has been granted an exemption by the Chief Health Officer, Deputy Chief Health Officer or delegate for an **end of life visit** under a Public Health Direction.

Note: For clarity, end of life visitors from an interstate area of concern who have obtained a negative COVID-19 test result under paragraph 8 do not require an exemption.

12. A person who enters a hospital under an exemption granted under paragraph 11(b) must comply with all conditions imposed by the Chief Health Officer, Deputy Chief Health Officer or delegate under the exemption.
13. If a person enters a facility under paragraph 11, the operator of the hospital must manage the person's visit in accordance with the conditions imposed by the Chief Health Officer, Deputy Chief Health Officer or delegate under the exemption.

Example: An operator may need to ensure the patient being visited is in a single room, the visitor wears appropriate personal protective equipment, is escorted to and from the room, and avoids common areas and contact with other patients, visitors and staff.

PART 2 — MANAGING VISITOR ACCESS TO NON-RESTRICTED HOSPITALS

Visiting patients

14. There is no limit under this Public Health Direction on the number of visitors at a **non-restricted hospital**.

Note - All visitors remain subject to each hospital's clinical guidelines for COVID-19. These clinical guidelines may be more restrictive than this direction, for example, in relation to the number and type of visitors. See paragraphs 15 and 16 for requirements for visitors to a restricted hospital.

PART 3 — MANAGING VISITOR ACCESS TO RESTRICTED HOSPITALS

Visiting patients in a restricted area

15. Subject to paragraph 16, a patient of a hospital in a **restricted area** may not have visitors.
16. The following patients of a **restricted hospital** may have visitors in accordance with the hospital's clinical guidelines for COVID-19 approved by the operator of the hospital:

- a. a patient of the hospital who is a child; or
- b. a patient of the hospital being provided end of life care; or

Note – Paragraphs 11 to 13 require particular persons to obtain an exemption before attending a hospital for an end of life visit.

- c. a patient of the hospital being provided pregnancy or maternity related care; or
- d. a patient of the hospital with a disability who requires support from a disability support worker or an informal carer; or

Example: A person may require support from a disability support worker or person who has provided long-term informal support, such as a family member or friend.

- e. other patients that the operator of the hospital believes is necessary to have visitors for emergency or other compassionate grounds.

PART 4 — EXEMPTIONS

17. The Chief Health Officer may, in writing, grant an exemption from this direction in respect of a specified area of a hospital if the Chief Health Officer is satisfied, having regard to the need to limit the spread of COVID-19, that an exemption is appropriate due to:

- a. the nature of the area; or
- b. the existing limits on the number of people that may be present in the area (whether because of the operation of a direction under the *Public Health Act 2005* or otherwise).

PART 5 — PENALTIES

A person to whom the direction applies commits an offence if the person fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with the direction.

Section 362D of the *Public Health Act 2005* provides:

Failure to comply with public health directions

A person to whom a public health direction applies must comply with the direction unless the person has a reasonable excuse.

Maximum penalty—100 penalty units or 6 months imprisonment.

Dr Jeannette Young
Chief Health Officer

26 May 2021

Published on the Queensland Health website at 1:00am AEST 26 May 2021

SCHEDULE 1 – DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Direction:

Australia means the Commonwealth of Australia and includes the external territories of Norfolk Island, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Coral Sea Islands and Heard and McDonald Islands but excludes the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Close contact has the same meaning as in the *Management of Close Contacts Direction (No. 2)* or its successor.

COVID-19 hotspot means a particular area of Australia decided by the Chief Health Officer and published on the Queensland Health website <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/declared-hotspots-direction>¹.

Diagnosed person has the same meaning as in the *Management of Close Contacts Direction (No. 2)* or its successor.

Emergency officer (public health) means an emergency officer appointed under the *Public Health Act 2005*.

Note: Emergency officers appointed under the Public Health Act 2005 include public health officers and police.

End of life visit means a hospital visit by a person for the purposes of end-of-life support for a patient of the hospital.

Hospital means:

- a. a hospital, as defined in schedule 2 to the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*; or
- b. a private health facility, as defined in section 8 of the *Private Health Facilities Act 1999*; or
- c. a multi-purpose service, as defined in section 104 of the *Subsidy Principles 2014* made under section 96-1 of the *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth).

International arrival means a person who arrives in Queensland on a flight that is not a **quarantine-free flight** or who, in the 14 days immediately before their arrival to Queensland -

- a. has been in a place outside **Australia**, other than a **safe travel zone country**; or
- b. arrived in **Australia** by sea; or
- c. arrived in **Australia** by air on a flight that is not a **quarantine-free flight**, regardless of whether the flight originated from a **safe travel zone country**; or
- d. has been in a place declared a **safe travel zone country hotspot**.

Interstate area of concern means a particular area of Australia decided by the Chief Health Officer and published on the Queensland Government website <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/interstate-areas-of-concern>².

Interstate exposure venue has the same meaning as in the *Interstate Exposure Venues Direction (No. 2)* or its successor.

Non-restricted hospital means a hospital, other than a restricted hospital.

Operator of a hospital means a person who owns, controls or operates the hospital.

Example: The Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer or Executive Director of a hospital.

Patient of the hospital means a person who requests or is being provided with health, medical or pharmaceutical services by the hospital.

Quarantine-free flight means a flight that only carries passengers who have declared that in the 14 days prior to the flight's departure they have only been in a **safe travel zone country** and have not been in a **safe travel zone country hotspot**.

Note: Information about quarantine free flights is available from the Australian Department of Home Affairs: <https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/new-zealand-safe-travel-zone>

Restricted area means a particular area of Queensland decided by the Chief Health Officer and published on the Queensland Government website <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/queensland-covid-19-restricted-areas>.³

Restricted hospital means a hospital located in a restricted area.

Safe travel zone country has the same meaning as in the *Quarantine for International Arrivals Direction (No. 9)*, or its successor.

Safe travel zone country hotspot has the same meaning as in the *Quarantine for International Arrivals Direction (No. 9)*, or its successor.

Student means a student under the supervision of an employee or contractor of the hospital.

Surveillance testing obligation means a requirement under a Public Health Direction or Protocol approved by the Chief Health Officer for a person to be routinely tested for COVID-19, who does not have **symptoms consistent with COVID-19** and is not required to self-isolate while awaiting a test result unless there is another lawful reason for them to isolate.

Symptoms consistent with COVID-19 means fever or history of fever, symptoms of acute respiratory infection (cough, shortness of breath, sore throat), loss of smell, loss of taste, runny nose, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting or fatigue.

Understanding this Direction

Information to help you understand what this Direction means for visiting people in hospital during the coronavirus pandemic.

[Find out more](#)⁴

Links

1. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/declared-hotspots-direction>
2. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/interstate-areas-of-concern>
3. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/queensland-covid-19-restricted-areas>
4. <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions/hospital-visitors>

[Copyright \(https://www.health.qld.gov.au/global/copyright-statement\)](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/global/copyright-statement)

[Disclaimer \(https://www.health.qld.gov.au/global/disclaimer\)](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/global/disclaimer)

[Privacy \(https://www.health.qld.gov.au/global/privacy\)](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/global/privacy)

[Right to information \(https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/access-info\)](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/access-info)

[Accessibility \(https://www.qld.gov.au/help/accessibility/\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/help/accessibility/)

[Jobs in Queensland Government \(https://smartjobs.qld.gov.au/jobtools/jncustomsearch.jobsearch?in_organid=14904\)](https://smartjobs.qld.gov.au/jobtools/jncustomsearch.jobsearch?in_organid=14904)

[Other languages \(https://www.qld.gov.au/languages/\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/languages/)

© The State of Queensland (Queensland Health) 1996-2021

[Queensland Government \(https://www.qld.gov.au/\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/)