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Changes to cross-border agricultural worker permits

25 September 2020

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Border crossings will be easier for agriculture workers

From Friday 25 September it will be simpler for a wider range of agricultural workers to gain a permit to cross the NSW-VIC border.

The simplified approval system will make it easier for farmers who need to hire employees across the two states for the harvest, including seasonal workers.

Once an agricultural worker has their permit, they will be able to travel across the border to work. However, they will need to carry with them:

- The new Agricultural Workers Permit
- Proof of ID (e.g. driver's licence or passport)
- A valid [agriculture COVID Safety Plan](#)
- Documentary evidence that they meet the permit criteria, signed by the head of their organisation or, if self-employed, the person for whom the activity is being performed.

As part of their COVID Safety plan, travelling workers will need to keep records of their movements and contacts, and details of accommodation. They will also be required to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as appropriate.

Permit process

Agriculture workers previously applied for a Critical Service Workers Permit but will now apply for a new agriculture workers permit.

This new permit means that NSW residents carrying out agricultural work can travel into Victoria without having to return via Sydney Airport, however some self-isolation criteria apply. Those from Victoria will need to self-isolate for the first 14 days after entry into NSW, except when working.

Current permits will be eligible until they expire, when a new one will need to be applied for.

[Apply for a cross-border agricultural worker permit](#)

The NSW Government remains focused on protecting the community and supporting businesses during the pandemic. If you need more information go to [nsw.gov.au](#) or contact Service NSW on 13 77 88.

Infographic



Border Permit FAQs

Below are some of the frequently asked questions on NSW-VIC border permits. Visit [nsw.gov.au](https://www.nsw.gov.au) for a full list of [FAQs](#) on border restrictions

What is the Agricultural Worker Permit?

The NSW Agricultural Worker Permit allows eligible Agricultural Workers to travel between NSW and Victoria under strict conditions. Permits are valid for 14 days.

Who does it apply to?

An agricultural worker means a person who performs an agricultural industry activity and includes a seasonal worker performing an agricultural industry activity.

This includes forestry, farming activities related to agriculture, intensive agriculture production, horticulture, veterinary services, operation of animal saleyards, agriculture related transport, fibre manufacturing and food safety and verification services.

A detailed list of inclusions will be available on the NSW Government website www.nsw.gov.au

Are any areas excluded?

If you have been in a COVID-19 restricted area or area of concern in the last 14 days, you are not eligible for a NSW Agricultural Worker Permit.

Do I have to travel via Sydney Airport?

No, the NSW Agricultural Worker Permit allows people to drive directly from their location to their place of work.

Will there be a specific COVID-19 Safety Plan for the industry?

Yes. The plan will be available on the NSW Government website from Friday, 25 September.

This new plan will have special requirements in relation to staff wellbeing, social distancing, accommodation, hygiene and record keeping.

What are the COVIDSafe requirements of the permit?

There is a specific COVID-19 Safety Plan required for the NSW Agricultural Worker Permit.

The Safety Plan has specific requirements in relation to the wellbeing of staff, physical distancing and self-isolation, hygiene and cleaning, accommodation, travel, record keeping, and protocols should a worker develop COVID-19 symptoms.

Permit holders are generally required to self-isolate while not at work for 14 days after arrival in NSW.

The plan will be available on the NSW Government website from Friday, 25 September 2020.

How do I apply for a permit?

You can apply for a NSW Agricultural Worker Permit from the NSW Government website www.nsw.gov.au from Friday, 25 September.

The Head of the Organisation is still required to register for unique number for each worker. This unique number is required in order for the worker to apply for their permit.

What happens to my existing permit?

Your existing critical agriculture worker related permit will remain valid and from 25 September take on the new conditions until it's expiry. Upon expiry, you will then need to apply for the new permit.

The list of eligible agricultural activities has been expanded

New permit: Agricultural Worker Permit

Agricultural industry activity means:

- forestry activity,
- farming activities and other activities related to agriculture including, for example, horticulture, viticulture, irrigation and aquaculture,
- intensive agricultural production, including the operation of greenhouses and animal production,
- fibre manufacturing,
- producing, transporting or distributing agricultural or veterinary chemicals or vaccines,
- operating an animal sale yard, knackery or an animal transportation service, including livestock and pets,
- producing, packaging, transporting or selling animal feed or feeding livestock or pets,
- operating a veterinary clinic or providing related services,
- teaching, or operating a scientific facility, that requires the keeping or use of animals,
- laboratory or diagnostic services relating to an activity mentioned in another paragraph of this definition,
- the supply, management or transport of water to support agricultural production,
- an activity relating to the supply chain for export of agricultural products, livestock, food or beverages,
- food and beverage manufacturing and production, including associated services and the production of packaging for food and beverages,
- a service or function that supports an activity mentioned above including, for example:
 - providing on-farm consultancies, livestock agency services, agronomy services, shearing contracting and trade services, and
 - providing food safety and verification services, laboratory services, access to markets for agricultural products, biosecurity and animal welfare services and national disaster response recovery and relief services.

Agricultural worker means a person who performs an agricultural industry activity and includes a seasonal worker.

Channel	Suggested copy
Facebook/LinkedIn	From 25 September it's easier for agricultural workers to gain a permit to travel across the NSW-VIC border to work, helping our ag sector operate across the two states. For more information or to apply for an agricultural worker permit visit nsw.gov.au #covidsafeNSW
Twitter	It's easier for agricultural workers to travel across the NSW-VIC border for work. For more information or to apply for an agricultural worker permit visit nsw.gov.au #covidsafeNSW
Instagram	From 25 September it's easier for agricultural workers to gain a permit to travel across the NSW-VIC border to work. Visit nsw.gov.au for more information #covidsafeNSW









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