



## Australian Government

### Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

## Exemption for heavy vehicle drivers to safely manage fatigue FROM CLOSURES OF NON-ESSENTIAL SERVICES

The following applies to businesses operating a truck driver lounge, truck driver room or similar facility at a roadside service centre or service stations:

- These facilities will be authorised to continue providing services to heavy vehicle drivers in need of food, showers, restrooms and a place to break from driving to manage their fatigue under the Heavy Vehicle National Law.
- This exemption is subject to the service station, service centre, road house or similar facility implementing the protocol below to provide appropriate social distancing and hygiene arrangements for these facilities.

### **Requirements for Exemption: specific for heavy vehicle drivers**

Drivers must observe the following:

- Washing or sanitising hands at all appropriate times, but especially before sitting and prior to leaving.
- Maintain appropriate social distancing while in the truck driver lounge.
- Truck drivers must not remain in the truck driver lounge/facilities for more than one hour and this includes showering and using the toilet facilities.
- If using the shower facilities, advise a truck driver lounge employee after showering to allow time for cleaning.
- Follow all COVID-19 related instructions from employees in the truck driver lounge.
- If displaying symptoms of illness such as a fever, cough or sore throat do not enter the truck driver lounge and instead seek medical assistance.

Advice from the Department of Health on avoiding infection, including guidance on hand hygiene, cough etiquette and social distancing is available here:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/what-you-need-to-know-about-coronavirus-covid-19#protect-yourself-and-others>

## **Requirements for Exemption: specific for truck driver lounge business operators**

Businesses must observe the following:

- Provide appropriate signage that clearly states:
  - The truck driver lounge is only open to truck drivers;
  - Social distancing and appropriate hygiene requirements must be followed.
- Provide guidance to all employees working in the truck driver lounge based on the Department of Health website.
- Ensure cleaning and sanitising of all surfaces, doors and high traffic areas, particularly those in areas open to the heavy vehicle drivers, in accordance with advice provided on the Department of Health website.
- Ensure soap or handwash is readily available in toilets and showers. After each use of a shower facility, clean and sanitise thoroughly. Ensure showers that have been cleaned are marked as ready to be used.
- Provide additional hand sanitising stations for both employees and heavy vehicle drivers to encourage use.
- Put in place procedures to closely monitor the health of all employees, with at least daily reporting or check-ins by supervisors.
- Tables, seating and truck driver numbers should be managed to provide appropriate social distancing according to the latest advice on the Department of Health website.
- Employees should minimise their interaction with the truck drivers in the truck driver lounge to those that are essential to provide them with the services.
- Remove all self-serve options unless pre-packaged.
- Continue to meet all other work, health and safety and other regulatory requirements.

Note: Businesses operating a truck driver lounge or similar and heavy vehicle drivers may be subject to additional measures required by State and Territory governments.

For general information concerning the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) please refer to the Department of Health website: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>)

## **Background Information**

On 24 March, the National Cabinet agreed a range of restrictions to non-essential services to apply from 11:59pm (local time) 25 March 2020. Amongst these restrictions were restaurants and cafes, with exceptions provided for takeaway services and home delivery, plus certain workplace canteens. These restrictions are intended to enhance social distancing measures, while not impeding the continued delivery of critical services. These arrangements are under constant review as the COVID-19 situation evolves, and can be revised based on updated health advice.

While recognising the need to limit non-essential interactions to contain the spread of COVID 19, it is also vital that governments support the continued movement of goods around Australia by road and rail. The Transport and Infrastructure Council met on 25 March 2020 and reaffirmed the importance of freight movements and the supply of good to individuals, businesses and service providers. The Council also recognised the importance of the members of the freight distribution train, and accordingly, the health and safety of the workforce.

Fatigue management requirements are stipulated under the Heavy Vehicle National Law, including limits on work hours and minimum rest requirements for drivers of heavy vehicles. Driver fatigue is also impacted by environmental factors (such as exposure to heat and cold), the quality of rest breaks taken, and the nutritional quality of food eaten at rest breaks.

For road freight to move safely, truck driver health and fatigue needs to be managed with regular and good quality breaks. Roadside service stations, road houses and similar facilities provide for truck drivers to eat, shower, use restrooms, refuel and rest comfortably before resuming their work.

To allow these facilities to continue supplying these services to heavy vehicle drivers, National Cabinet has agreed to provide an exemption from the general closure of non-essential services.

**The Australian Government and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator appreciates your ongoing support and cooperation during this time.**

1 April 2020