



COVID-19 GUIDE FOR SMALL CRAFT AND YACHT ARRIVALS IN NZ

THIS GUIDANCE IS FOR ALL OWNERS, OPERATORS AND AGENTS OF SMALL CRAFT INTENDING TO ARRIVE IN NEW ZEALAND DURING COVID-19

Introduction

This information has been compiled for small craft and yacht owners and operators (and their agents) who are considering travelling to New Zealand while the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Maritime Border) Order (No 2) 2020 is in effect.

The purpose of the Maritime Border Order is to:

- Close the New Zealand maritime border, to all but a few vessels, and
- put in place strict isolation or quarantine requirements for those arriving at the maritime border

The Order strengthens maritime border controls to further mitigate the risks from COVID-19 entering New Zealand through the maritime border. This Order imposes strict restrictions on the entry of vessels into New Zealand and the movement and isolation of all crew and passengers on those vessels at all ports.

The New Zealand Custom Service (Customs), is working with other government agencies including Immigration New Zealand and the Ministry for Primary Industries (Biosecurity), to assist the Ministry of Health with the implementation of this Order.

This guide contains important information that small craft and yacht owners and operators (and their agents) need to be aware of before they depart for New Zealand. It also contains information about what to do while on route and upon arriving in New Zealand.

DISCLAIMER

This information is a general guide only. It should not be relied on if specific advice is needed in relation to your particular circumstances. You should either approach the specific New Zealand government agency concerned or seek independent legal advice.

If you, or your fellow travellers on board, or the craft you will be travelling on require permission to arrive and/or enter NZ you should ensure that you make your application and receive the decision before your departure for NZ. That ensures you won't need to change plans mid-journey if your application is declined.

RESTRICTIONS APPLY AT NEW ZEALAND'S MARITIME BORDER

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the New Zealand maritime border is closed with limited exemptions.

New Zealand vessels

New Zealand vessels are able to enter New Zealand provided the skipper is reasonably satisfied that every person on board is either a New Zealand citizen or meets New Zealand's visa requirements.

Foreign flagged vessels

Foreign flagged vessels are not permitted to arrive unless certain criteria are met and permission has been granted by New Zealand's Director-General of Health. Additionally, any non-New Zealand citizens on board must meet the necessary visa requirements. Permission must be sought from Immigration New Zealand for non-New Zealand citizens on board to enter New Zealand.

EXEMPTIONS FOR FOREIGN VESSELS TO ENTER NEW ZEALAND

The Ministry of Health has provided the following information:

Under the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Maritime Border) Order 2020, foreign vessels are not permitted to arrive in New Zealand unless they have an exemption. Vessels may be exempt if there is a compelling need for the vessel to arrive in New Zealand for:

- reprovisioning and/or refuelling OR
- the purpose of delivering the vessel to a business which includes for the purpose of repairing or refitting the vessel AND
- the Director-General has granted the vessel permission to arrive in New Zealand.

A vessel may also be exempt if the Director-General has granted permission for the vessel to arrive in New Zealand for humanitarian reasons or other compelling needs. Humanitarian reasons or other compelling needs would be unlikely to include situations relating solely to financial loss, or to vessels travelling primarily for pleasure or convenience such as tourists or 'wintering over'.

People in vessels travelling to New Zealand to 'winter over' (e.g. to avoid hurricane/cyclone season in the Pacific) may have other genuine humanitarian reasons or other compelling needs for coming, which would need to be demonstrated in order for these vessels to qualify for an exemption.

Exemptions should be sought before the vessel departs for New Zealand and must be obtained before the vessel arrives in New Zealand. Ideally vessels will not begin their travel to New Zealand before receiving a decision, so as to avoid the need to change plans mid-journey if they are declined. Applications take 15-20 days to process.

To apply for an exemption to enter New Zealand please complete the following documents and email them to <mailto:applyformaritimeexemption@health.govt.nz>.

- Application form for exemption for vessels to enter New Zealand for delivery to a business ([DOCX 274 KB](#)) ([PDF 133 KB](#))
- Application form for exemption for vessels to enter New Zealand for humanitarian reasons or other compelling needs ([DOCX 272 KB](#)) ([PDF 131 KB](#))
- Self-isolation checklist and plan that confirms the crew will self-isolate on the vessel for 14 days ([DOCX 280 KB](#)) ([PDF 149 KB](#))

[Visit the Ministry of Health's website](#) for more information about the process for exemption of vessels arriving in New Zealand.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS

Immigration New Zealand have advised the following information:

As well as applying for an exemption to the COVID-19 Maritime Border Order for their vessel through the Ministry of Health, **crew must also request an immigration border exception for themselves** (unless they are exempt).

Once granted an exception, they must then apply for and be granted a visa. Crew should request the exemption for the vessel from the Ministry of Health before making the request for an immigration border exception.

If the exception is granted, crew will only be invited to apply for a visa if the Director-General of Health has granted permission for the vessel to arrive.

[Visit Immigration NZ's website](#) for more information on the immigration border exception process.

SMALL CRAFT AND YACHTS PERMITTED TO COME TO NEW ZEALAND

Before you depart for New Zealand

For foreign vessels- you must have first received permission from New Zealand's Director-General of Health and foreign crew/passengers must have obtained approval from Immigration New Zealand. You should not depart for New Zealand until these approvals have been granted. If you depart for New Zealand without the necessary permission or approvals, you may put yourself and those on board in jeopardy.

It is an offence for a foreign vessel to arrive in New Zealand waters without permission. You may be liable to a fine and/or prosecution, and foreign crew on board could be denied entry into New Zealand. A vessel brought into New Zealand in these circumstances is liable for seizure under the

Customs and Excise Act 2018. Note that vessels imported into New Zealand are also subject to duty liability.

If you have permission to enter New Zealand, or are a New Zealand vessel returning home, communicate your plans to Customs with as much notice as possible – you can do this by emailing <mailto:yachts@customs.govt.nz>

Voyage and preparing for arrival

All people arriving in New Zealand by sea are required to **isolate on board for 14 days, which can include your journey time**. Plan your journey so that as much of your isolation period as possible is completed at sea. You cannot make up isolation time inside New Zealand territorial waters so take your time getting here.

There can be no contact with any other people during the 14-day isolation period. If contact with other people occurs then the clock is reset and the 14-day isolation period restarts. It is then counted from the time and date on which the contact with the other persons happened.

Activate your AIS transponder (or other observable satellite tracking system) prior to departure. Keep it on for the duration of the journey so your movements can be verified. Any deviation in your journey plan will make verification that you have met your isolation requirement more difficult and may require you to complete the 14-days isolation period in a managed isolation facility when you arrive in New Zealand.

Make sure your vessel is properly outfitted and provisioned before undertaking your voyage. In addition to planning your travel time to New Zealand, remember to plan for enough provisions, power, fuel and waste management for your isolation aboard your vessel, which may include time on arrival in New Zealand.

Certain food items such as fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and poultry are not allowed into New Zealand. Visit [MPI's website](#) for more information about what is required for biosecurity clearance.

New requirements for arriving in New Zealand

An Extended Notice of Arrival must also be submitted before you enter New Zealand's waters. This is a requirement under the Maritime Order and must be provided at least 7 days (168 hours) before you arrive.

The information you provide is used to help New Zealand government agencies prepare in advance to best manage your arrival requirements. [Download the form](#) and send it to apicustodian@customs.govt.nz

You must also provide the regular Advanced Notice of Arrival that is required to be provided to NZ Customs 48 hours in advance of your arrival. Once submitted you will receive an Arrival Guide outlining the arrivals process and what you need to do. [Download the form](#) and send it to yachts@customs.govt.nz

The second new requirement is the Master/Skipper Notice and Declaration for Maritime Quarantine/Isolation Requirements form that must be completed and submitted to Customs before arrival. [Visit the webpage](#) for more information. This must be submitted at the same time you submit your Advance Notice of Arrival (ANA) to Customs.

Ensure you complete all the necessary Customs, Ministry of Health and Ministry for Primary Industries (biosecurity clearance) entry and documentation requirements prior to your arrival in New Zealand.

Place of First Arrival

All small craft and yachts coming to New Zealand will be directed by Customs to a port where passengers and crew can be processed by border agencies and continue their isolation and COVID-19 testing requirements.

For small craft and yachts less than 30 metres, Customs and Ministry for Primary Industries (Biosecurity) clearance, isolation and public health clearance will generally take place at Opuia in the Bay of Islands. For pleasure craft 30 metres and over, the place of first arrival will be confirmed by Customs when you submit your Extended Notice of Arrival.

Arrivals into New Zealand at other ports, harbours, marinas or landings are not generally permitted unless directed by Customs. Please ensure your water and black water holding tanks meet New Zealand regulations and are discharged prior to entering the port you have been directed to.

When you submit your Advanced Notice of Arrival you will be provided with an Arrival Pack which will include more detailed instructions for the place of first arrival and the specific requirements that will apply. You will be required to follow this and any instructions from Customs.

Isolation and quarantine requirements once you have arrived

On your arrival your vessel will be met by border agencies who will conduct entry clearances and a health assessment will be carried out to determine if you can isolate on your vessel. You will be tested for COVID-19 on your day of arrival or as soon as possible afterwards. You must wear appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). If you do not have PPE, it will be provided to you.

All vessel crew/passengers are required to isolate for 14 days. This can include your journey time where this can be verified by Customs. You are not permitted to make up isolation time within New Zealand waters (for example by sailing or anchoring coastwise). The verification process will include checking for a persistent AIS track from the point of departure, no contact with other places, and communication about intentions and any updates to the journey.

If you arrive in New Zealand on day 12, having isolated on board with no contact with other people on route (subject to verification), you may be able to complete the remaining required isolation time on board the vessel.

If you arrive prior to 12 days, everyone on board will be required to go into a managed isolation facility for the remainder of the isolation time. You will not be able to isolate on board. This is covered in more detail in the following section.

Once you, any crew and passengers on board have completed the 14-day isolation requirement and returned a negative COVID-19 test result you will be able to disembark your vessel and/or continue your journey to your destination port. It may take up to five days to receive your results and you will need to isolate on board until the test results are returned.

If you are isolating on board for a period, you will be subject to strict isolation requirements including remaining on board your vessel at all times. You must not come into contact with anyone else (except for example staff from New Zealand government agencies). This includes people on vessels isolating near you, or come ashore (unless required to do so such as for COVID-19 testing or a medical examination), until everyone on the vessel has served out the 14-day isolation period and returned a negative COVID-19 test result.

If you need to go to a managed isolation facility

If you arrive in New Zealand having not isolated for at least 12 days or you cannot isolate safely or appropriately on board your vessel you will be required to go into a managed isolation facility. Any bio fouled hulls or vessels requiring fumigation will require crew to go into managed isolation regardless of time left on isolation, as your vessel will become uninhabitable and you will still need to have a COVID-19 test and wait for the result.

If you are required to go to a managed isolation facility you will be responsible for berthing and possibly managed isolation costs. You will be directed to a berth to allow for all people on board to disembark and await the arrival of managed isolation facility transport officials who will instruct you on your movement to the vehicle taking you to managed isolation.

When you are taken to the drop off point you will be handed over to the driver. At this point you must follow all instructions of the driver to ensure you are able to load any luggage and board the vehicle safely. In particular please follow the driver's instructions relating to loading and handling your luggage, entering and leaving the vehicle, where you are to sit to ensure correct physical distancing and wearing the appropriate protective equipment such as masks and gloves.

If you are required to go to managed isolation you will be given a Welcome Pack when you arrive at the facility. [Visit MIQ's website](#) for more information.

CHECKLIST – BEFORE YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST PORT

- If you are a foreign small craft or yacht, do you have an exemption from the Ministry of Health for the vessel to come to New Zealand?
- If you are foreign crew or passenger on a foreign vessel or a New Zealand flagged vessel, have you obtained permission from Immigration New Zealand to enter New Zealand?
- Have you communicated your intentions to yachts@customs.govt.nz?
- Have you activated your AIS transponder?

CHECKLIST – WHILE ON ROUTE TO NEW ZEALAND

- Is your AIS transponder on?
- Have you communicated any journey and ETA updates to yachts@customs.govt.nz?
- Have you submitted the Extended Notice of Arrival?
- Have you submitted the Advance Notice of Arrival?
- Have you submitted the Master/Skipper Notice and Declaration for Maritime Quarantine/Isolation Requirements?