



YACHTS AND PLEASURE CRAFT

- [Overview](#) (*#content-index-0*)
 - [Arrival](#) (*#content-index-1*)
 - [Sailing in Australian waters](#) (*#content-index-2*)
 - [Leaving Australia](#) (*#content-index-3*)
 - [Reporting suspicious activities](#) (*#content-index-4*)
-

Overview

The information contained on this page applies to the non-commercial use of pleasure craft, motor sailers and motor cruisers and provides an outline of the procedures and legal requirements which apply to the Master of these vessels arriving in and departing from Australia.

If you are in charge of any of the above mentioned craft, you are considered the Master of the craft, even if you are not its owner and the owner is on board.

Whether you are a returning resident, migrating to Australia or a visitor, you need to comply with entry requirements. You can help speed this up if you follow these simple steps:

1. Make sure each person on board has a valid visa and passport.
2. You are required by law to notify the Department before you arrive. [Let us know you are coming](#) (*/entering-and-leaving-australia/entering-and-leaving-by-sea/let-us-know-youre-coming*)
3. Clearly display the International Pratique Q-flag and travel directly to an appointed boarding station.
4. Complete the [Small Arrival Report form](#) (*/form-listing/forms/b333.pdf*) and [Incoming Passenger Card](#) (*/entering-and-leaving-australia/crossing-the-border/at-the-border/incoming-passenger-card-(ipc)*).

Australia has strict laws to protect its citizens and natural environment. Penalties may be imposed if you breach those laws by illegally importing:

- Drugs;

[Ask a question](#)

- Animal or plant material;
- Firearms, weapons or ammunition;
- Protected wildlife and products made from them;
- Some food items; and
- Some medicinal products including Performance Enhancing Drugs.

Read this information carefully.

Arrival

When you arrive in Australia, you must first call at a [port of entry](#) ([/entering-and-leaving-australia/entering-and-leaving-by-sea/ports-of-entry](#)) where the Australian Border Force and Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (Biosecurity) checks can be completed.

When entering Australian waters you must clearly display the International Pratique Q-flag (yellow). You must also travel directly to an appointed boarding station.

Berthing

Australian Border Force and Department of Agriculture and Water Resources clearance must be completed before you go ashore.

- Stay on board. No persons other than a Biosecurity or Border Force officer is allowed to board your craft, nor can any person, animal or article leave the craft until you have been given full clearance.
- Depending on your arrival time, you may be required to remain on board overnight before being cleared the following day.
- Don't throw any waste or foodstuffs overboard while you're in Australian waters or while you are moored. Use designated biosecurity disposal points.
- Keep all food and animals secure until your vessel has been inspected by Biosecurity officers;
- Don't trade foodstuffs with other overseas vessels.
- Keep your vessel free of insects.

It is an offence to go ashore without prior clearance. Contact with other vessels in port prior to clearance is also prohibited.

Documents required on arrival

- All people on board will be required to produce [travel documents](#) ([/entering-and-leaving-australia/crossing-the-border/at-the-border/travel-documents](#)) such as, a valid passport, visa and completed Incoming Passenger Card

- The Master will be required to complete a [Small Craft Arrival Report \(/form-listing/forms/b333.pdf\)](/form-listing/forms/b333.pdf).

Charges

The ABF does not levy any charge for clearance. However the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources operates on a full cost recovery basis.

Biosecurity

You must declare all personal food, plant and animal items on your Incoming Passenger Card. A Biosecurity officer will inspect your galley stores and other biosecurity items to ensure that they do not include prohibited goods or items infested with insects or disease. These could harm Australia's unique environment or introduce plant, animal or human, pests or diseases. Treatable goods will be treated and returned to you. Prohibited goods will be either confiscated, bonded on the vessel for the duration of your stay, or re-exported at the owner's expense.

Vessels with an animal subject to biosecurity must remain at a mid-water mooring and keep the animal secure for the duration of your stay in Australia.

If you declare prohibited items, you may be given the option of re-exporting them. If you do not declare items of biosecurity concern, a substantial on-the-spot fine could be imposed or you could be prosecuted.

For further details on biosecurity issues visit the [Department of Agriculture and Water Resources \(http://www.agriculture.gov.au/\)](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/) Website.

Human health

See [threats to public health \(https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/meeting-our-requirements/health/threats-to-public-health\)](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/meeting-our-requirements/health/threats-to-public-health) for more information.

Drugs

You must report any drugs on board your craft to the Department on arrival and departure. This includes medications containing narcotics, hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates and tranquillisers in your medical kit. If you use any of these drugs while in Australia you must record this in the craft's logbook. A doctor's prescription may validate certain registered drugs.

WARNING: Penalties for drug offences in Australia are severe and could result in imprisonment.

Firearms and other weapons

All firearms/weapons on your craft must be reported to the ABF. Refer to the list of [Prohibited Items. \(/importing-exporting-and-manufacturing/prohibited-goods/list-of-items\)](/importing-exporting-and-manufacturing/prohibited-goods/list-of-items)

Certain firearms/weapons may be detained in safe storage for transshipment to your intended port of departure (at the Department's expense).

In cases where a firearm/weapon has been detained the Master will be required to contact the Department at least one week prior to departure so that the weapon can be returned.

Duty free allowance

More information is available on our [duty free \(https://www.abf.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/duty-free\)](https://www.abf.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/duty-free) page.

Currency

There is no limit on the amount of Australian or foreign cash that may be brought into or taken out of Australia, but vessels carrying AUD10000 or more, or the equivalent in foreign currency, must declare this on arrival and departure.

Currency includes notes and coins but does not include traveller's cheques. Reporting is required by law and failure to do so is an offence.

Temporary import of goods

Commercial goods brought into Australia with the intention of being sold are subject to the normal rates of duty and tax where applicable.

Goods, commercial or personal, that are brought into Australia to remain temporarily may be admitted duty and tax-free, subject to certain conditions.

Carnets may be obtained for temporary [duty free \(/entering-and-leaving-australia/duty-free\)](https://www.abf.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/duty-free) entry of goods such as commercial samples, jewellery, goods for international exhibitions, equipment for sporting events, professional television and film equipment.

Sailing in Australian waters

When you arrive in Australia, there are a number of clearance options depending on when you intend to leave. If you intend to leave within twelve months, you may be granted a Control Permit, asked to provide a security for temporary importation or to formally import the craft.

All options provide access to Australian waters and lands.

Control Permits

A Control Permit will be issued to the Master of the craft if we are satisfied the craft is transiting Australia for non-commercial purposes. Control Permits may be issued for a period of 12 months, or the length of the Master's visa, whichever is less. Extension of the permit may be granted on application, provided that you meet eligibility requirements and have an appropriate visa.

A person eligible to apply for a Control Permit must be a tourist or a temporary resident of Australia. Australian citizens are not eligible for a Control Permit unless they have overseas residency. Satisfactory evidence of overseas residency is required.

For a Control Permit to be issued, the craft must meet the following criteria:

- the craft must have arrived from overseas and will be scheduled to depart for overseas
- the craft must have arrived under its own power and not as cargo

- the craft must be transiting Australia for non-commercial purposes i.e. is not engaged in the commercial carriage of cargo or passengers
- the craft may be privately or corporately owned (however, a Control Permit is not granted where a craft is owned by a corporation and more than 50% of the owners of the corporation are Australian residents)
- the craft must not be employed for any activities of a commercial nature (e.g. charter, hire or lease)
- the craft, or parts of the craft, are not to be offered for sale, sold or otherwise disposed of.

However, the craft may remain in Australia for repair or refit.

Control Permits are not issued if the vessel is owned or operated by an Australian resident unless exceptional circumstances apply.

If circumstances of the craft's presence in Australia change, you are required to advise DIBP. Failure to do so can result in a Control Permit being revoked and the vessel being deemed imported at which time payment of duty and tax will be required.

What if the Master wants to fly home and come back later?

This is possible but you must advise us and make arrangements for appropriate control over the vessel.

Further information can be obtained from our office at your intended [port of arrival \(/entering-and-leaving-australia/entering-and-leaving-by-sea/ports-of-entry\)](#).

Temporary importation of vessels

If your visa allows you to reside in Australia for a limited period you may be required to temporarily import a craft into Australia. Temporary importation without paying customs duty and tax is subject to:

- The vessel being exported within 12 months of arrival; and
- A security in cash or an appropriate bank guarantee being provided equal to the duty and tax that would otherwise be payable.

Return of security

If a cash security has been given and a cash refund is sought you must give us advance notice at the proposed port of departure before you leave.

Formal Importation

If you are an Australia citizen, permanent resident of Australia or migrating to Australia on a craft purchased outside Australia, importation of the craft is required. Customs duty and tax are payable on any craft imported into Australia upon its arrival.

Leaving Australia

Passenger Movement Charge

You may be required to pay a [Passenger Movement Charge \(/entering-and-leaving-australia/crossing-the-border/passenger-movement/passenger-movement-charge-\(pmc\)\)](#) on departure. This charge is AUD60. Children under 12 years of age are exempt.

Clearance

ABF clearance is required before you depart. This is available at any appointed port ([/entering-and-leaving-australia/entering-and-leaving-by-sea/ports-of-entry](#)). You should contact us in advance to avoid unnecessary delay. **It is an offence to depart without clearance.**

Requirements for departure

- Passports for all persons on board
- When a small craft departs Australia for a place overseas, the vessel is exported and an export declaration is required. You should lodge the export declaration, and present the export declaration number (EDN) to the ABF, before requesting ABF clearance.

Registering craft - the Registrar of Ships

Masters of foreign craft not registered under the law of a foreign country must make a declaration about the nationality of their craft when leaving Australia.

All Australian craft or vessels, irrespective of size or type whether owned by an Australian citizen or by an Australian company, must be registered before leaving Australia. State registration does not meet this requirement.

Unregistered craft will not receive Australian diplomatic protection while overseas.

You can do this by contacting the Registrar of Ships at Australian Maritime Safety Authority (<http://www.amsa.gov.au/>).

Ship's gear

Australian residents who are taking articles out of Australia which they already own, including yachting equipment, may require proof of prior ownership on return to avoid paying duty.

These goods should be listed for the Department of Home Affairs at your port of departure.

Embarking animals

Most countries require animals on board to have health certificates from their countries of origin.

Australian residents are advised not to take their pets overseas because of biosecurity and other matters they may encounter visiting certain countries and on return to Australia. However, if you wish to take an animal on your trip you should consult with the Government/s of your intended for their biosecurity requirements.

Heritage items

It is illegal to take out of Australia, without a permit, items identified as being of great importance to Australia's national heritage ([/importing-exporting-and-manufacturing/prohibited-goods/list-of-items](#)). These items can include a vast array of objects from works of art and archaeological finds, to objects associated with our history or technological development.

Wildlife

Exportation of endangered and threatened (animal and plant) wildlife and Australian native wildlife is strictly regulated and in some cases is illegal. Information and permits is available in the list of [prohibited goods](#). (*[/importing-exporting-and-manufacturing/prohibited-goods/list-of-items](#)*)

All permits must be obtained before you leave Australia. Severe penalties apply for offences against the *Wildlife Protection Act*.

Travel to Christmas, Cocos (Keeling) and Norfolk Islands

For immigration purposes yachts travelling to or from Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands and the mainland of Australia are deemed to have not left Australia if their trip is within 30 days of departure from the mainland Australia or these islands. Persons on board these yachts must ensure that their visa covers the entire period of their stay including travel time between the mainland of Australia and these islands.

Department of Home Affairs and Department of Agriculture clearances are required on both arrival and departure.

Persons travelling to Norfolk Island are immigration cleared both on arrival and departure on the mainland Australia and Norfolk Island. Therefore, they must have a multiple entry visa for return to the mainland Australia. Department of Home Affairs and Department of Agriculture clearances are required on departure from and arrival to the mainland Australia.

Travel Advice

For travel advice on the overseas locations you may be visiting see [Smartraveller.gov.au](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au) (*<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>*).

For general advice on what you need to know see [travelling by boat](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/before-you-go/getting-around/boat-travel) (*<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/before-you-go/getting-around/boat-travel/>*).

Reporting suspicious activities

[Report any suspicious activities](#) (*[/about-us/what-we-do/borderwatch](#)*) you encounter during the course of your voyage or while in Australian waters to the Department.

Last updated:
28 April 2023