

Northern Territory Remote Stores Freight Assistance Guide

Purpose of This Guide

This guide helps remote community store owners and managers understand:

- What freight assistance is
- When freight assistance may be available
- How to identify eligible freight costs
- How to prepare and submit a request
- What evidence and reporting are usually required

The aim is to ensure affordable, reliable access to essential goods, particularly during periods of isolation, weather disruption, or supply chain stress.

What Is Freight Assistance?

Freight assistance is financial support to offset the high cost of transporting essential goods to remote and very remote locations. It is designed to reduce the impact of distance and isolation, stabilize food prices, and ensure continuity of supply during the wet season or emergencies. Assistance can apply to road, sea, or air transport, depending on accessibility and circumstances.

Who Is This Guide For?

- Remote community store owners
- Store managers
- Store governance bodies (e.g. Aboriginal corporations)

It is not intended for wholesalers or freight companies unless acting on behalf of a store.

Goods That Are Commonly Eligible

The freight assistance is limited to essential goods only.

Food

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Meat, dairy, bread
- Frozen and chilled foods
- Staple dry goods (rice, flour, tinned foods)
- Infant products (formula, nappies)
- Basic toiletries and hygiene items
- Cleaning and sanitation products
- First aid and basic health items

Alcohol, tobacco and discretionary items are excluded.

Types of Freight That May Be Covered

- Primary freight: transport from major supply centres or regional hubs to the remote community
- Seasonal freight: additional costs during wet season isolation, road closures or other access restrictions
- Alternative freight methods: when roads are closed, and air or barge freight is required to avoid stockouts.

Emergency airfreight may be considered when the community is isolated, essential items are unavailable locally, and there is a risk to health or safety.

When to Consider Seeking Freight Assistance

- Freight costs significantly increase due to wet season conditions
- Wet season road closures restrict normal deliveries
- There is a risk of essential food shortages
- Alternative freight (e.g. air) is required
- Prices risk becoming unaffordable for the community

Early communication is critical — do not wait until shelves are empty.

Typical Eligibility Requirements

- The store services a remote or very remote community
- Goods are essential
- Freight costs are reasonable and necessary
- The store is operating lawfully and is a declared community store
- Store engages with the Critical Goods Survey
- The store is a Declared Community Store and engages with the Remote Food Program

See NT Resupply Manual for further information on eligibility criteria.

Information You Will Usually Need to Provide

Store Details

- Store name and location
- Community served
- Contact details

Freight Information

- Freight company name
- Mode of transport (road / air / sea)
- Origin and destination
- Invoice or quote
- Freight dates

Goods Information

- Description of goods
- Confirmation they are essential items
- Volume or weight

Supporting Context

- Reason for assistance (e.g. road closure, wet season isolation)
- Expected impact without assistance
- Any urgent food security risks

How Applications Are Usually Assessed

- Urgency and community impact
- Essential nature of the goods
- Necessity of the freight method
- Freight assistance eligibility criteria

We may seek clarification or additional documents, including confirmation of road access conditions and stock levels for essentials.

After Assistance Is Approved

- Keep accurate freight records
- Participate in follow-up reporting
- Pass savings on to consumers where required
- Notify agencies of delivery outcomes or issues

Failure to maintain records can affect future eligibility.

Tips for Store Managers

- Keep freight invoices well organised
- Plan wet season stockpiling early
- Communicate early if isolation or shortages are likely
- Maintain clear pricing and food security policies
- Build relationships with freight providers and agencies

Where to Get Help

If you are unsure when freight assistance applies, what documentation is needed, or whether a situation qualifies as urgent, contact the NT Government Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations early. Early engagement improves outcomes for both stores and communities.

Quick Reference – Application Checklist

Have you prepared:

- ☐ Store details and contact person
- ☐ Freight invoices/quotes and delivery dates
- ☐ List of essential goods and quantities
- ☐ Reason for assistance and current access status
- ☐ Evidence of urgency (e.g. stock on hand, community risk)

OUR CONTACTS

DTBAR Emergency Management Unit (Essential/Critical Goods Issues)
08 8999 5013 / 0436 814 674 | EmergencyManagement.DTBar@nt.gov.au

Territory Business Advisors
1800 193 111 | businessinfo@nt.gov.au

Territory Business Centre
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