

Truck booking systems extended at Port of Durban

[Durban, South Africa, 8 September 2020] Transnet National Ports Authority at the Port of Durban says the introduction of an off-site truck staffing facility this month by a private bulk terminal in the Island View Precinct is showing a positive impact in alleviating truck congestion in the Bayhead Precinct and surrounding roads. This month Transnet also extended its own truck booking system to the Durban Multi-purpose Terminal (MPT), the third Transnet terminal to come on board after Durban Container Terminal Pier 2 and Pier.

The Durban MPT booking system enables transporters to book delivery slots 48 hours in advance or cancel a booking two hours prior to the time slot, while the private bulk terminal's truck staging facility at the Old Durban Airport south of Durban requires trucks to be pre-processed before calling at the port.

Truck appointment systems are being implemented to alleviate truck congestion in roads surrounding the port and are among the initiatives being spearheaded by the Port of Durban Decongestion Task Team.

GM: Port of Durban Moshe Motlohi said, "There have been positive results since the activation of the interim staging facility at the airport. For week ending 4 September we had no queues and access to the facility and hit rate for the booked slots have improved."

The bulk staging facility accommodates between 90 – 100 trucks at any given time and no bulk tipper truck will be permitted directly into the terminal or port precinct without a booking reference for each day and a sticker on the windscreen. Each customer will be allocated a number of trucks per day as per the terminal's operations and shipping plan.

Motlohi added, "This process will allow the terminal to call in trucks in manageable batches helping to alleviate the congestion on Bayhead Road. This initiative combined with the recently launched booking system, will help with volume smoothing into the port."

Early warnings

In recent weeks TNPA, through forums including the Port of Durban Decongestion Task Team and the port's daily virtual operations meeting with all stakeholders, has escalated calls for all businesses in the port to revise their protocols around giving early warnings of any business disruptions. This would ensure that others who might be affected by the after-effects of such disruptions can be alerted.

A joint planning meeting was also held with businesses in the Cutler Complex on Thursday, 20 August at which the management of the complex committed to getting their users to implement their own booking system. Motlohi said, "In the next three months, we hope to have 80% of the port having adopted a truck booking system."

Collaboration

Motlohi added, "There is a lot of work still to be done in this space but through our collaborative approach with stakeholders, I remain optimistic while working on the TNPA port's over-arching booking system. We hope that, ultimately, we will realise the benefit of having a broader booking system where trucks will be regulated in this fashion."

Motlohi thanked law enforcement agencies within the port, including eThekweni Metro, SAPS and private security, for their efforts. "They must be commended for their sterling job in ensuring that trucks destined for terminals affected by operational disruptions, remain compliant with traffic laws. Law and order are essential in the port."

Durban Container Terminal Pier 2 has also deployed more straddle carriers into operation to improve handling at the terminal and to help reduce vessel and truck terminal dwell times.

"The deployment of efficient and reliable fleet together with the mandatory appointment system will result in better port efficiencies," said Motlohi.

TNPA has also revealed that the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between TNPA and eThekweni Municipality was signed this month, paving the way for construction of a second port access road to Bayhead and Island View.

The Port of Durban Decongestion Task Team involves a broad range of private and public sector organisations involved in the port.

Since late 2019, the multi-disciplinary task team has been collaborating on efforts to alleviate congestion in the port's surrounding road networks, which negatively impact communities. Through nine targeted workstreams the task team has adopted an integrated approach to tackle the root causes of Bayhead traffic related congestion and to ensure improved coordination, planning, operations, cargo flows and capacity.

To view videos of task team chair Moshe Motlohi providing an update on developments as at the end of August 2020, visit <https://youtu.be/hKSPaZFTWJM> and <https://youtu.be/mohB3tvJbps>

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About Transnet National Ports Authority

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) is one of five operating divisions of Transnet SOC Ltd. The National Ports Authority is responsible for the safe, effective and efficient economic functioning of the national port system, which it manages in a landlord capacity. It provides port infrastructure and marine services at the eight commercial seaports in South Africa – Richards Bay, Durban, Saldanha, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Mossel Bay and Ngqura. It operates within a legislative and regulatory environment and is governed by the National Ports Act (Act No. 12 of 2005). For more information visit www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net.

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