

18 March 2020

Dear Valued Stakeholder

COVID-19: Department of Transport Regulation and Impact on Port Operations

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) wishes to inform you that the Minister of Transport, Honourable Fikile Mbalula, under sections 80(1) (g) of the National Ports Act, 2005 (Act No. 12 of 2005) has signed into effect new port-related Regulations to aid in the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

Crew Changes

The Regulations state that as of 18 March, no crew changes are permitted in the Ports of Saldanha and Mossel Bay until further notice. TNPA, however confirms that it has taken an executive decision to prohibit crew changes across all eight commercial ports in South Africa, namely Durban, Richards Bay, Cape Town, Mossel Bay, Saldanha, Port Elizabeth, Ngqura and East London.

Passenger Travel

The Ministerial Regulations advise South African citizens and permanent residents to refrain from use of sea travel until further notice.

The Regulations prohibit passenger embarkation and disembarkation at all sea ports except under certain circumstances. South Africa's six cruise ports, Durban, Richards Bay, Cape Town, Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, Ngqura and East London, will now only be permitted to allow disembarkation of a returning South African citizen and/or a permanent resident, or embarkation of a departing foreign national.

In addition, the national Department of Health earlier this week advised TNPA that "all sea cruises undertaken by cruise liner vessels into and out of any seaport within South Africa must be terminated until further notice." TNPA is working with affected cruise line companies and shipping agents to execute on this instruction as seamlessly as possible, noting that the 2019/20 cruise season was scheduled to end on 22 April 2020.

Emergency medical evacuation shall be managed utilising the existing Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre protocols.

No Ports Closed

TNPA wishes to clarify that no South African sea-port has been closed in its entirety and commercial cargo operations will continue at all ports. Media articles and other external communiques citing the total closure of any sea-port were a misinterpretation of President Cyril Ramaphosa's 15 March 2020 remarks.

The Ministerial Regulations set out further protocols for provision of improved access and hygiene, sterilization control on ships, sea ports and in licensed sea port operations, including that all persons entering the ports shall be screened for COVID-19.

TNPA and terminal operators must provide adequate facilities for hand washing and sanitization equipment at all entrances and exits.

TNPA is also required to implement a reporting, tracking, tracing and monitoring system for COVID-19 at its commercial ports.

Finally, the Ministerial Regulations state that no gathering of more than 100 people may be held in any sea port precinct until further notice.

These extraordinary measures are taken in recognition that it is important to ensure the health of employees and port users is not placed at risk.

All stakeholders are assured of our urgent attention to doing everything possible to safeguard our ports of entry.

Yours sincerely



Sabelo Mdlalose
Acting Chief Harbour Master
Transnet National Ports Authority

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