

**Sent:** 14 February 2020 09:37

**Subject:** SOUTH AFRICA IN PACE WITH GLOBAL EFFORTS TO PREVENT SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

It has been reported by local shipping journalist Terry Hutson in *Africa Ports & Ships*, in an article credited to the South African Maritime Safety Authority, that South Africa currently has two restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus:

1. Vessels whose previous port of call was China; and
2. Crew changes etc for Chinese seafarers or those who embarked in China.

According to the article in *Africa Ports & Ships*, on 30 January 2020 the South African National Department of Health issued a document named: “*Standard Operating Procedures for Preparedness, Detection and Response to a Coronavirus (2019-NCOV) Outbreak in South Africa.*” The Health Department’s document states that while as at 29 January 2020 there had been no reported cases of the coronavirus in South Africa, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) would closely monitor the situation “and will test patients that satisfy the criteria for suspected cases, bearing in mind that it is influenza season in the northern hemisphere and the expected respiratory tract infections are common.”

It is further reported in the article, on restrictions and containment management of risk at the country’s ports of entry, including shipping ports, that the Health Department says the Port Health Service “is the first line of defence to protect citizens of South Africa and visitors against the health risks associated with border movement of people, conveyances, baggage, cargo shipments and other imported consignments. “It is thus vital for all points of entry to be on the alert and (be) prepared to respond to possible importation of a communicable disease, whether intentional or unintentional.”

To this end, the document offers a set of ‘standard operating procedures’ (that) “detail measures that must be implemented by port health officials in preventing and responding to a suspected case of EVD.”

Screening measures include:

- Port Health officials must monitor all arriving conveyances from the affected countries and increase surveillance measures.
- Upon arrival of the conveyance, Port Health officials must collect and verify the health documentation and interview the crew members/operators to determine if there is any sick passenger on board.
- In addition to the routine interview of crew members/operators, Port Health officials must ask crew members questions specific to signs and symptoms of 2019-nCov.
- If the Port Health official is certain that there are no sick passengers on board and all health requirements have been met, the passengers may be allowed to disembark.

- All arriving passengers must be channelled through thermal processes.
- Travelers found to have elevated temperature must be escorted to the Port Health clinic where available, for further examination and must be interviewed to determine their travel history.
- Where a Port Health clinic is not available, Port Health must interview the traveller with elevated temperature to determine their travel history, record the details of the traveller and if required, transfer the traveller to the nearest health facility.
- Travellers presenting with any of these symptoms; fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, sore throat, and weakness, diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pain and have travelled to the affected countries must be isolated and arrangements made for transportation of the traveller to the nearest designated health facility.

In the case of known and reported cases by vessels themselves, the procedure involves the following:

- From an incoming vessel, a patient or other passengers (must) inform Captains/ and the crew must move the suspected patient to an isolated area, and the Captain must report illness to the harbour authorities.
- The Captain or vessel agent must inform the Port Health Officers.
- The Port Health officers must contact emergency Medical Services and the designated hospital for patient referral, as well as notify the provincial and/or district CDC.
- The Port Health officer must facilitate assessment of a passenger(s) and contact the vessel prior to their departure from the harbour.
- The CDC coordinator must monitor contacts utilising information provided by Port Health.
- If close contacts develop signs and symptoms, they must be referred to designated health facility.
- Where cleaning and/or disinfection is required, the Port Health office must inform cleaning/handling company and monitor the process.

Kind regards,

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