

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

Following several articles in the press, the Mauritius Ports Authority would like to apprise the port & shipping community and the general public of the following:

1. Subsequent to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of sanitary protocols have been implemented by the health authorities for compliance by all port users at Port Louis Harbour so as to prevent the spread of the disease in the country.
2. **On 22 December 2020**, all shipping agents were informed by the local health authorities that with the emergence of the new COVID-19 variants in the United Kingdom and South Africa, ships will not be allowed to enter or transit in the Mauritian port waters in case any crew member has travelled to and from these two countries over the last fifteen (15) days prior to calling at Port Louis.
3. The MSC Vanessa was expected at Port Louis on 10 February 2021 from South Africa before proceeding to India. Given there were two security guards, who had signed on board the MSC Vanessa in Durban, the Mauritian health authorities have informed the local representative of the shipping line, namely the Mediterranean Shipping Company (Mauritius) Ltd and the authorities concerned that the ship would only be allowed to berth at Port Louis after 12 February 2021, subject to a negative result of the PCR COVID-19 test of all crew members on board the vessel.
4. The MSC Vanessa opted not to wait until 12 February 2021 and cancelled its call at Port Louis. Customers were accordingly informed by the local representative of the shipping line that because of operational constraints, the cargo destined for Mauritius will be transhipped to India for onward shipment to Port Louis. It should therefore be pointed out that the MSC Vanessa decided to skip Port Louis out of its own volition and not because of the new port sanitary restrictions as imputed in some quarters.
5. On the other hand, following numerous complaints from consignees to the effect that goods destined for Mauritius were unduly delayed, discussions were held with the Mediterranean Shipping Company (Mauritius) Ltd and it has been confirmed by the latter that the current vessel transit times are similar to those prevailing prior to 2020.
6. Consequently, the Mediterranean Shipping Company (Mauritius) Ltd has reported that following the introduction of a new liner service from India to West Africa, namely the India Africa Express Service since 5 February 2021, the duration of the sailing time to Port Louis has improved as outlined below:

Services	Direct from	Transit time
India Africa	Mundra – India to Port Louis	7 days
Ingwe Northbound	Durban – South Africa to Port Louis	10 days
Ingwe Southbound	Shekou – China to Port Louis	20 days
Australia	Le Havre – France to Port Louis	26 days

22 February 2021

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ONE CASE OF CHEST INFECTION AT THE MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY

Subsequent to the information relayed in the press as regards a case of chest infection diagnosed on one of its staff, the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) wishes to convey the following to the general public:

1. Regrettably, one employee who was working on the MPA tugs was diagnosed with a chest infection (communicable disease). He was admitted at the Poudre d'Or Hospital on 9 January 2021 and is still undergoing treatment there. The employee last attended duty on 3 January 2021.
2. The MPA is adhering to the health protocols of the Ministry of Health & Wellness for chest infection and as per the said protocols, only those employees, who had been exposed with the infected employee over a long period of time, have to undergo the proper medical test and follow-up at the Chest Clinic of the Ministry of Health & Wellness.
3. A list of 10 employees who had been in close contact with the infected employee had been identified and they had been immediately referred to the Chest Clinic. Subsequently, six employees among the 10 employees are under prophylaxis medication and are being followed up by the Chest Clinic.
4. The Ministry has advised that these six employees are in a non-active state of chest infection and are thus noncontagious.
5. The MPA is closely monitoring the situation with the health authorities.

5 February 2021