



Updated 12 May 2020 v3.0

SHIPPING CARGO CLEARANCE PROTOCOL

Legality and enforcement

This Protocol has been developed in accordance with the
Emergency Powers Act (Cap11),
Emergency Powers (Covid19) (no.2) Regulations 2020
Emergency Powers (Covid19) (Restriction of movement of foreign vessels) Order 2020

This Standard Operating Procedure shall be read in conjunction with related SIG internal SOPs prepared by Health, Immigration, Biosecurity, Fisheries, NEOC

Cargo vessels may be cleared inwards and outwards only at Honiara and Noro Port.

Foreign Cargo Vessel Quarantine Period:

Fourteen (14) clear days at sea or a combination at sea and at anchor in the Solomon Islands UNLESS

(a) If the last port of call is from a country designated in Tier 1 – Five (5) clear days OR

(b) If the last port of call is from a country designated in Tier 2 – Nine (9) clear days OR

(c) If the last port of call is from a country designated in Tier 3 – Fourteen (14) clear days

TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
5 DAYS	9 DAYS	14 DAYS
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	AUSTRALIA	CHINA
FIJI	NEW ZEALAND	HONG KONG (SAR)
NEW CALEDONIA	SOUTH KOREA	MACAU (SAR)
VANUATA		CHINESE TAIPEI
TONGA		JAPAN
NAURU		SINGAPORE
KIRIBATI		MALAYSIA
TUVALU		THAILAND
		INDONESIA
		PHILIPPINES
		ITALY
		UNITED KINGDOM
		USA
		SPAIN

Vessels arriving from any other destination will be subject to 14 days quarantine

Special Conditions for Reduced quarantine period requests:

Shipping Agents for Category 1, 2, or 3 vessels may apply to the Exemptions Committee for consideration for clearance less than the stipulated number of days under that tier. Such applications will only be considered based upon the urgency of need for those goods.

It is important that Shipping Agents understand that cargo will be deemed urgent in the opinion of the Committee, not in the opinion of the importer

In determining whether vessels are eligible for a reduced quarantine period the Exemptions Committee may take into consideration issues such as the immediate need for special category importations, such as for fuel, food, medical supplies, equipment, foreign aid, etc, as detailed on the cargo manifest. In addition, the Committee shall pay due consideration to changes in the regional Covid19 situation. Earlier clearance, if granted, is on a one-off basis and does not imply a right to subsequent entitlement of early clearance.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Any application for reduced quarantine must consist of -

1. Full reasons (business case) for request for early clearance
2. Details of Voyage route for past 21 days immediately before entry
3. List of all ports visited with dates and time in each port for past 21 days
4. List of Solomon Island ports and sufferance wharves that the vessel will visit after clearance upon entry, plus expected dates and times when the vessel expects to be located at those ports and sufferance wharves
5. Health clearance certification of each crew member at last port of call by competent medical authority
6. Names and full passport details of each person aboard the vessel
7. Travel and medical history of each person on board for the 21 day period immediately before arrival
8. Details of any crew who embarked and or disembarked during the 21 day period, and full reasons why they embarked / disembarked (for example, Were they sick? What sickness, symptoms)
9. Cargo manifest destined for unloading in the Solomon Islands

Any early clearance approval will be subject to an assessment by Health at the time of vessel boarding upon arrival and may result in refusal to clear if symptoms of Covid19 are detected

If a vessel arrives with a crew member showing Covid19 like symptoms, PRIOR to boarding, the Master must provide records of Health with details of the illness and any on-board actions and treatments undertaken.

IF the Shipping Agent is not seeking an earlier clearance to that stipulated in the appropriate Tier 1,2 or 3, then normal clearance measures will apply – that is to say, Shipping Agencies will not have to prepare a submission to the Committee.

PROCESS

Initial contact point

Enquiries, Applications and Correspondence should be provided to the Comptroller of Customs (jsutton@customs.gov.sb) by Shipping Agents, who will assess completeness of applications and then onforward to the Exemption Committee for assessment

DO NOT COPY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE WITH APPLICATIONS AND FOLLOW UP CORRESPONDENCE

Lodgement

The application to exempt a foreign vessel must be received by the Comptroller, if the vessel's last port of call is:

- For a tier 1 country – 5 days before entering the Solomon Islands
- For a tier 2 country – 9 days before entering the Solomon Islands
- For e tier 3 country – 14 days before entering the Solomon Islands
- Any other country – 14 days before entering the Solomon Islands

The application to exempt a **foreign fishing vessel** must be received by the Comptroller 14 days before the vessel enters Solomon Islands waters.

The Comptroller shall submit the application to the Committee as soon as practicable after receiving the application.

The Committee shall

- decide the number of days for which the vessel is exempted isolation
- determine if the exemption is to be conditioned to prevent transmission of Covid19
- act fairly and expeditiously as is reasonably practicable and in order to give proper consideration to the application
- determine the outcome of the application by exempting the foreign vessel or fishing vessel or refusing to exempt it.

If the Committee exempts a vessel, it shall specify the number of days the vessel shall be subject to quarantine

Any vessel subjected to special conditions of exemption shall have those reasons specified in the decision

A decision of the Committee shall be communicated in writing (including electronically) to the Comptroller who shall then notify the applicant and relevant stakeholder Agencies to implement the decision. It is the responsibility of the Shipping Agent to advise and deal with vessel operators.

Upon receiving the Committee's decision, the Comptroller shall give the vessel clearance to enter the Solomon Islands on a day that enables the vessel to meet the exempted quarantine period, or approved condition, or if the exemption application has been refused, on a date that is in accordance with the Tier 1, 2, 3 or other country 14 day provisions.

Committee Members

- Chair – Secretary to PM
- PS MoFT
- PS Health & Medical Services
- PS Commerce, Industry, Labour & Immigration
- Director Immigration
- PS Agriculture & Livestock Development
- Director Biosecurity
- PS Ministry of Infrastructure development
- PS Fisheries and Marine Resources
- Director Fisheries
- CEO SI Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Effect of decision

The Committee's decision is final and is not subject to appeal.

Dissemination of the committee decision by the Comptroller of Customs shall authorise the boarding of the vessel by Health as per the internal Health SOP protocol.

A decision by Health as to "Covid19 assessment All Clear" shall authorise Customs, Immigration and Biosecurity to board and clear, and then the vessel is to be brought immediately to berth for cargo discharge.

Denial by Health to clear the vessel shall result in the immediate quarantine of the vessel and crew until reassessed and released by Health.

Jim Sutton
Comptroller of Customs
12th May 2020