

South Africa's ports remain open, but at reduced levels

What goes for all ports goes for the South African ports as well. Curbing logjams and ensuring the timely extraction of essential goods at the country's ports is critical to keeping the supply chain system going and mitigating costs for importers.

With just over 24 hours to go before South Africa's nationwide lockdown kicks in, importers of goods have expressed concern about the impact of reduced capacity at the country's ports. A vital cog in South Africa's logistics and supply chain system, the ports remain open, but at reduced levels.

Medical and food supplies will be prioritised during the 21-day lockdown that starts at midnight on Thursday, March 26 2020.

Transnet Port Terminals has communicated changes to industry bodies, some of whom have expressed concern about infrastructure management of the revised system with the number of berths, piers and staff levels being cut.

The country's main ports will continue to operate but berths at Durban and Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and the deep water Port of Ngqura in the Eastern Cape have been reduced while Richards Bay and East London are being closed during the Covid-19 lockdown.

In line with a declaration of a force majeure, Transnet as custodian of the country's ports and terminals has suspended the usual berthing windows at ports. This means that all essential cargo as defined by the government in the wake of the Coronavirus will be prioritised while non-essential shipments including general freight and mineral containers are being discouraged during this period.

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