

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Durban Container Terminal prepares for citrus season

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Durban Container Terminal (DCT) Pier 2 is prioritising terminal fluidity with a rail link solution to reduce truck congestion on roads around the port ahead of the upcoming citrus season.

Transnet's DCT management said in a statement that the terminal was providing a rail link solution for customers' import containers to a back-of-port facility seven kilometres from the terminal, as a means of reducing the number of trucks calling at the terminal.

Durban Terminals managing executive Earle Peters said it was important to focus on how the port handled both its waterside and landside traffic, which had led to its "fruitful collaboration with both shipping lines and truckers".

Peters added that customers had been collecting their containers at the back-of-port facility with minimal waiting times and flowing roads in the vicinity since the beginning of January. The back-of-port initiative aims to clear terminal stacks more quickly to improve vessel turnaround time due to the improved capacity on the landside.

Fewer trucks had been queuing for collections at the terminal, while preparations had also included anticipating an influx of empty refrigerated containers landing in the country for packing, he said. The terminal is also optimising the 109 A empty stack to ensure punctual delivery of containers to packing houses.

The port will meet with stakeholders in the citrus sector to ensure efficient cargo handling this season.

“We are in the process of scheduling customer engagements that aid our 2024 planning. There have been a lot of learnings throughout this experience, and we ought to ensure we never find ourselves in the same situation as we did in October 2023,” Peters said.

DCT Pier 2 averaged 3 896 TEUs per 24-hour period and has continued to average less than ten vessels at anchor this week, DCT said in the statement.

Initiatives to clear the vessel backlog had included technical support from onsite original equipment manufacturer representatives, having additional staff on duty, undertaking maintenance around the clock, and working on public holidays, DCT said. It has also engaged in customer and stakeholder collaboration and had Navis container management system experts onsite to ensure optimal operations while executing the port’s recovery plan.

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