

Strong Cape Town winds disrupt fruit exports as containers diverted to alternative South African ports

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 28 November 2025

Fruit exporters scramble to use alternative ports as Cape Doctor hampers early grape and stonefruit shipments



Strong south-easterly winds over the past two weeks have caused havoc for container vessels loading in Cape Town.

Exporters and logistics companies have said they now must divert containers to the ports of Walvis Bay and those near Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape to get fruit on the water.

The wind, known locally as the 'Cape Doctor' because it blows away pollution, is an annual event, but logistics operators noted that it is particularly bad this year.

“We are forced to load at three ports to get containers away,” said Delena Engelbrecht, CEO of GoGlobal in Cape Town.

“This week’s vessel left some 350 containers behind in Cape Town because the vessel could not complete its loading.”

Early shipments from Namibia and the Orange River via Cape Town are the worst hit.

“We are loading Namibian grapes from Walvis Bay and grapes from the Orange River from the Eastern Cape,” she continued.

Delays will result in short market supply initially, with several vessels then arriving together in European and UK ports.

Originally it was expected that some 2,000 containers would be shipped from Walvis Bay with grapes from Namibia and South Africa this year.

These volumes on MSC vessels are now likely to increase.

For Orange River growers, containers are now being moved directly from packhouses there to Gqeberha, while shipments planned via Cape Town will be moved directly to the port.

To alleviate the problems with wind in Cape Town, the first conventional shipments of the season are expected to depart this weekend.

These vessels load directly from interior coldstores at the multi-purpose terminal, which is less affected by the strong wind.

Conditions are also affecting early stonefruit exports, and exporters have said that with a good crop, it is disrupting regular shipments.