

Ports Responses facing Covid-19

How are Med Ports facing the Covid-19?

The present synthesis is willing to give a global overview of the current situation in the Mediterranean port area.

It is based on the answers to following questions:

- How did you organize the employees that are not essential to work from the office?
- What are the bans/restrictions on travel and/or meetings?
- What are the special measures regarding the organisation of the operational teams?
- What is the level of cooperation with other ports?
- What is the level of engagement/actions to support local community?
- Any new local authorities' restrictions imposed to vessels docking?
- Any special care with stevedores and Dockers? (or any labours that interact directly with the crew)
- How do you ensure continued operation of port services?

The document has been divided in 4 parts: Ports' employees' security, Operational services, Business continuity plans and Ports' solidarity. MEDports are mobilized to face the Covid-19 and keep operational to serve all our traditional. This synthesis present the best practices of how our Members are facing the Covid-19.

For more information, please contact the General Secretary of the MEDports Association: www.medports.org

1. Ports' employees' security

As a general measure taken by most of the countries facing Covid-19, national populations are confined at home and it is not possible to hold physical meetings. Trips are prohibited and travels between the home and the office are restricted to essential employees.

In most of the Ports, crisis cells have been quickly created to develop crisis protocols. Various levels have been created to identify any possible covid-19 infection. In case of suspicious case or close contact, eventual isolation and quarantine are decided.

Most of the Ports' employees are working from home. Partial unemployment, voluntary holidays and child care procedures have been strongly recommended in some ports to facilitate the Port situation.

Employees are using tools provided by the Port. IT system protocols have been developed to ensure the access to the Port digital resources. Team working tools (such as Microsoft Teams, Webex and firm networks) are useful to hold meetings and maintain the team spirits.

Only essential employees are still allowed to work in the Ports, using a special derogation. In most of the Ports, units and hours have been reduced. Key staff have been separated in different premises to avoid contact between them.

As most of the countries, the Med area have suffered by a lack of masks and protections at the begin of the crisis. However, most of the Ports have ordered masks, gloves and sanitizers. Strict measures have been given concerning the use of personal protection equipment (PPEs), such as protocols to interact: barrier gestures on site and operation meetings are held keeping safe distance. Special shifts have been organized to limit the contact between employees and working areas are disinfected frequently.

2. Operational services

Digitalization has been consequently developed, such as partially digital procedures for container trucks. Except for passenger or cruise activities, operational and intermodal transport services are working as usual. Most terminals are functional and are welcoming vessels and cargos. Access to the Port has been limited and security personnel are trained to perform screening. For the less contaminated areas, preventive measures have been reinforced. Procedure to stock goods have been facilitated. Ro-ro and ferry traffics are maintained only for goods transportation.

Focus has been made on crews and port services operations (piloting, cargo handling). For stevedores and Dockers interacting directly with the crew, restricted protocols and protection have been given. Crews are examined, boards are disinfected, equipment cabins are fumigated. Thermal cameras have been installed. Inspections are made regularly and commandants have to give regular information on the health of their crew.

3. Business continuity plans

Some Ports are considered national importance. Ports are very important to ensure the continuity of the operational activities and the international and national supply chains. Most of the Ports have made a priority to communicate as fast as possible on their situation to ensure the contact with their customers. To cope with the economic consequences of the pandemic, some ports are paying their bills in advance to offer more liquidity to their partners. In some countries, Ports taxation have been suspended such as reduction of Port tariffs in some ports.

4. Ports' solidarity

All Ports are sharing information, especially through their personal media and organizations. National organizations (such as Spanish Puertos del Estado, Algerian Agence National des Ports ANP and Tunisian Office de la Marine Marchande des Ports OMMP) are organizing national coordination and exchange best practices. Port to Port relationships (maintained by calls, videoconferences meetings) are encouraged to learn the best ways to manage the situation.

To support the local community, Ports have taken restrictive measures. Premises of some Ports have been offered for health purposes and medical material has been donated to local hospitals. To avoid the pandemic propagation, crews are not allowed to leave their vessels while in Port. Port logistics for a safe and secure supply chain have been shared locally to improve the community sense.