



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) ADMINISTRATIVE  
GUIDELINES TO FACILITATE MOVEMENT OF GOODS  
AND SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**EAC SECRETARIAT**

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# **EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES TO FACILITATE MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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## **1. PREAMBLE**

- 1.1. Taking cognisance of the Joint Statement by the Ministers responsible for Health and East African Community Affairs issued on 25th March 2020 on COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in East African Community Region;
- 1.2. Aware that Partner States are taking a number of measures at the national level to contain the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 1.3. Recognising that the World Health Organization has and continues to provide guidelines on what measures to be taken during this period of the pandemic;
- 1.4. Considering the guidelines by the World Customs Organization on facilitating the movement of goods to contain COVID 19;
- 1.5. Aware that COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the usual movement of goods and services in the region;
- 1.6. Acknowledging that to sustain lives of the peoples of East Africa, the movement of goods and services have to continue uninterrupted; and
- 1.7. Considering the need to facilitate the free movement of goods and services in the region during the COVID 19 pandemic period;

The EAC hereby introduces the following Administrative Guidelines for application during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES**

- 2.1. To complement national measures against the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 2.2. To ensure smooth and uninterrupted movement of goods and services during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 2.3. To encourage local production of essential products during this COVID-19 pandemic;
- 2.4. To enhance regional awareness on measures instituted against the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- 2.5. To mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on the movement of goods and services.

### 3. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

#### 3.1. TRADE FACILITATION

Partner States must continue to facilitate the movement of goods and services from and to other Partner States by:

- 3.1.1. Adopting a multi-Sectoral and coordinated approach;
- 3.1.2. Providing access at all designated points for entry and exit of goods;
- 3.1.3. Providing for adequate personnel at designated points;
- 3.1.4. Treating cross border movement of trucks and cargo as essential services;
- 3.1.5. Directing Transporters and Transporters Associations to adhere to the requirement of a maximum of three operators of the truck including the driver;
- 3.1.6. Mandatory screening/testing of truck drivers and operators at border posts and monitoring during transit at selected inland points;
- 3.1.7. Quarantining those with symptoms for 14 days under the supervision of the Ministry of Health;
- 3.1.8. Urge Partner States to: -
  - i. Prioritise essential goods to mitigate COVID-19 pandemic such include; food, fuel, medicaments, agricultural products and inputs, security supplies, emergency and humanitarian relief goods; and
  - ii. Promote local production of the items required to contain COVID-19 pandemic, for example, medicaments, sanitizers, protective gear, ventilators etc.;
- 3.1.9. Facilitate Intra-EAC Export/transfer of medical supplies and relief items such as food items amongst the Partner States from surplus areas to deficit areas;
- 3.1.10. Encourage Manufacturers and importers to utilise provisions in the East African Customs Management Act (EACCMA) 2004 on relief items for disaster and industrial inputs;

- 3.1.11. Allow use of warehousing facilities to address the liquidity challenges faced by importers and minimisation of spread of COVID 19 by people inspecting cargo;
- 3.1.12. Use the Single Customs Territory processes particularly information technology systems to minimise human contact and physical exchange of documents;
- 3.1.13. Partner States and Stakeholders to continuously create awareness on existing national and regional measures on COVID 19;
- 3.1.14. To harmonise restrictions to ensure common interpretation and application; and
- 3.1.15. Commissioners of Customs and other Agencies to facilitate the movement of goods by allowing scanned documents in lieu of original documents that may take longer to be physically couriered.

### **3.2. GAZETTED TRANSIT ROUTE**

- 3.2.1. Transporters should use gazetted transit routes along the Northern and Central Corridors as well as interconnecting routes;
- 3.2.2. Transporters are advised to use the routes at their convenience; and
- 3.2.3. Partner States are urged to facilitate the movement of cargo through their territory under the gazetted routes.

### **3.3. HANDLING OF CARGO AT PORTS OF ENTRY / INTERNAL BORDERS**

- 3.3.1. Cargo clearance should be facilitated at all designated entry points by multi-agency teams including, customs, Standards bodies, Health, Immigration, Security, Police, Port/Border control in the one-stop centre to minimise the time taken to clear goods, drivers and crew;
- 3.3.2. Any controls instituted by individual Partner States should be applied in a considerate and proportionate manner; and
- 3.3.3. Governments and transporters to adhere to and provide health and hygiene facilities as per the WHO recommendations and national measures for COVID 19.

### **3.4. MOVEMENT OF GOODS IN TRANSIT / INLAND DELIVERIES**

- 3.4.1. Drivers and crew in transit to other Partner States and those delivering essential goods inland, should be facilitated to move through their territory and to inland destinations as needed and their safety should be guaranteed in situations where travel restrictions have been put in place on the grounds of public health to minimise COVID-19 spread;
- 3.4.2. Transporters are urged to ensure that drivers and crew wear masks throughout the trip;
- 3.4.3. Under the prevailing circumstances, it might take longer for some goods in transit to reach exit customs offices. Customs Administrations are required to waive the time-limit between customs office of departure to the Customs office of exit;
- 3.4.4. Shipping lines are urged to waive charges on containers delays during this pandemic period;
- 3.4.5. Partner States to harmonise and adopt the use of an EAC temperature monitoring form to track the health of drivers and crew throughout the trip;
- 3.4.6. Partner States and transporters are required to regularly disinfect the trucks carrying cargo;
- 3.4.7. Partner States to provide designated areas for stopovers of trucks along the transit routes to avoid the crew mixing with the public;
- 3.4.8. Partner States and transporters to ensure that truck drivers and crew stop at government-designated points only; and
- 3.4.9. Transporters should ensure that they have an alternate set of crew to take over in case the assigned crew is found to be infected.

### **3.5. PRIORITY TREATMENT FOR CARGO MITIGATING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

- 3.5.1. Partner States should ensure priority is given to goods required to contain COVID-19 and relief items; and
- 3.5.2. Where a Partner State considers additional goods as necessary to fighting the COVID 19 pandemic, it is incumbent for the Partner State to inform other Partner States for the additional goods to be accorded priority treatment.

### **3.6. PAYMENTS AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

- 3.6.1. Partner States may waive fees on Port/Border handling charges for essential goods required during this period;
- 3.6.2. Partner States to facilitate the use of electronic payments, such as mobile money to significantly reduce the use of cash to curb the spread of COVID-19;
- 3.6.3. Service providers including banks and telecommunication companies are urged to lower transaction costs on money transfer, data and roaming charges; and
- 3.6.4. Partner States to accept payment in US dollars for border and Port charges where necessary.

### **3.7. APPLICATION OF CUSTOMS LAWS AND INTERPRETATION**

- 3.7.1. Taking into consideration the movement restrictions to contain COVID-19 which might delay communication of Customs decisions to field officers, field officers should be given delegated powers to decide as provided for in section 2(h) and (i) of the EAC Customs Management Act to handle essential goods;
- 3.7.2. Partner States should make use of existing provisions under section 114 (Part B of the 5th Schedule on General exemption) EACCMA 2004 to import relief goods for emergency use in specific areas where a natural disaster has occurred in a Partner State including raw materials to manufacture essential goods to contain COVID 19; and
- 3.7.3. Ports and Customs Administrations to waive fees, storage and handling charges and warehouse rent relating to goods that may be imported during the COVID 19 pandemic and were not transferred to the respective destination.

### **3.8. INSPECTION OF GOODS FOR QUALITY AND SAFETY**

- 3.8.1. Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, goods with direct impact on human health, safety and environment shall continue to be inspected for quality and safety;
- 3.8.2. Inspection Agencies in the Partner States are urged to devise measures to expedite the process;

- 3.8.3. Priority should be given to inspection of essential goods required for the control of the pandemic.

### **3.9. EXCHANGE AND SHARING OF INFORMATION**

- 3.9.1. Partner States are urged to continuously share information on the COVID-19 pandemic with each other and with the EAC Secretariat;
- 3.9.2. Government agencies, traders and cargo handlers are urged to share information on challenges encountered in the movement of goods and services during this period of COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate timely response; and
- 3.9.3. The Partner States and the Secretariat to designate contact offices which will facilitate the exchange and sharing of information.

### **3.10. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

- 3.10.1. To ensure availability of the necessary capacity and readiness to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Partner States and the Secretariat will continuously conduct awareness and training interventions; and
- 3.10.2. Particular attention will be given to the frontline personnel in the fight against the pandemic and crucial for facilitating the movement of goods and services in the region.

### **3.11. AWARENESS ON NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEASURES / REQUIREMENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

- 3.11.1. Following confirmation of the COVID-19 cases in the EAC, Partner States have moved to institute containment measures including:
  - a) Restrictions on movements of citizens, curfews and full lock-down;
  - b) Movement of international cargo freely across the region by air, water, road and sea, within strict guidelines;
  - c) Restricting to a maximum of three accompanying persons per truck; and
  - d) Adhering to strict hygiene/sanitation guidelines to wash and sanitise hands regularly.



The measures instituted by the Partner States and other Regional and International organisations are hereby attached as **Annex 1**

#### **4. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The EAC Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation with regard to the movement of cargo and services across the region.

Additional guidelines will be issued as the situation may demand.

## **ANNEX 1: MEASURES TAKEN TO COMBAT COVID-19**

### **1. JOINT STATEMENT BY THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTH AND EAC AFFAIRS**

- ❖ All Partner States to continue implementing the mandatory quarantine for 14 days;
- ❖ All face to face meeting suspended and use of technology encouraged;
- ❖ Partner States to implement 100% exit and entry screening;
- ❖ Resolved to facilitate free movement of goods and services;
- ❖ Directed all Partner States to ensure that trucks/vehicles carrying goods;
  - Have only 2-3 crew members to facilitate smooth border crossing;
  - Crew members are in good health, crew screened and found to be at high risk or positive for COVID -19, the truck will be decontaminated before it is allowed to continue to the final destination and crew members will be quarantined for 14 days;
  - In case crew members are quarantined while in transit, truck owners/operators make necessary arrangements to back-up crew to ensure that goods are delivered to the intended destination;
  - Truck drivers are required to declare their final destination and are urged to stop only at designated points along the transport corridors so as to limit chances of spreading of COVID-19;
- ❖ Directed Partner States to establish a surveillance system to monitor crew health and enable contact tracing; and
- ❖ Directed Partner States to support local companies to ensure production of and availability of key consumables / products used in COVID-19 response including hand sanitizers, medical products, soaps etc.

### **2. UGANDA**

- ❖ Closed all educational institutions;
- ❖ Suspended prayers in mosques and churches or in-stadia;
- ❖ Stopped all public gathering and conferences;
- ❖ Banned Ugandans from moving in or through category (1) countries;
- ❖ Allowed returning Ugandans provided they undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days at a venue identified by the Ministry of Health;
- ❖ Suspended discos, dances, bars, sports music shows, cinemas and concerts;
- ❖ Stopped all passengers coming into Uganda by air, land or water;
- ❖ Prohibited entry of pedestrians from the neighbouring countries;

- ❖ Stopped all public passenger transport vehicles, i.e. trains, taxis, buses, tuk-tuk, Boda-bodas and private cars;
- ❖ Suspended non-food sellers from markets; and
- ❖ A curfew is affected from 19.00 hours.

### 3. KENYA

- ❖ The cargo trucks clearing exercise will be facilitated by multi-agency teams comprising KRA, Immigration, Health, Interior, EAC, MFA and Trade;
- ❖ Trucks and cargo transport have been listed as essential services in the Curfew Notice and therefore permitted to be cleared to travel at night;
- ❖ Immigration, Customs and Port Health officials are exempted from the provisions of curfew and therefore required to work 24 hours;
- ❖ Temperature to be taken at Entry Point and thereafter at designated weighbridges as follows:
  - Namanga - Mlolongo
  - Busia- Gilgil- Mlolongo- Mariakani
  - Malaba - Gilgil- Mlolongo- Mariakani
  - Taveta Mariakani
- ❖ Each truck occupants must have their temperature health forms until they exit Kenya unless they are Kenyan residents;
- ❖ Should any truck occupants show symptoms, they will be quarantined for 14 days under supervision of Ministry of Health;
- ❖ No police escort is required. However, police will be required at various weighbridges stations for security and oversee temperature checking;
- ❖ Only trucks entering Kenya at border points will be subjected to temperature testing requirements;
- ❖ That there shall be cessation of all movement by road, rail or air in and out of:
  - the Nairobi Metropolitan Area; and
  - the counties of Kilifi, Kwale and Mombasa
- ❖ The cessation of movement within Nairobi Metropolitan Area shall be for an initial containment period of 21 days with effect from 7:00 pm on Monday, 6th April 2020; and
- ❖ The movement within the Nairobi Metropolitan Area and the Counties of Kilifi, Kwale and Mombasa shall continue subject to the nationwide curfew.

### 4. RWANDA

- ❖ Unnecessary movement and visits outside the home are not permitted;
- ❖ Places of worship are closed;
- ❖ Public and private employees to use technology to work from home;

- ❖ Borders remain closed except for goods and cargo as well as returning Rwandan citizens and legal residents who will be subject to mandatory 14 days quarantine at designated locations;
- ❖ Travel between cities and districts of the country is not permitted;
- ❖ Shops and markets will remain closed;
- ❖ Motos (motorcycles) are not permitted to carry passengers;
- ❖ All bars will remain closed;
- ❖ Restaurants and cafes to only provide take away service; and
- ❖ Electronic payment and online banking should be used.

## 5. TANZANIA

- ❖ All travellers will be subjected to mandatory 14 days at their own cost at designated facilities identified by the government;
- ❖ Passengers should fill in the Health Surveillance Form;
- ❖ All travellers to be subjected to screening and where necessary COVID-19 rapid testing;
- ❖ After 14 days all passengers to register personal information for future tracking purposes;
- ❖ All people residing in Tanzania to avoid non-essential travel to COVID-19 affected countries;
- ❖ For medical emergencies while in Tanzania call 199;
- ❖ Trucks/vehicles carrying goods and services to have only 2-3 crew members per vehicle to facilitate smooth border crossing in the region;
- ❖ The Trucks will be decontaminated if crew are members are suspected to have COVID-19;
- ❖ Crew members have to declare their final destination at points of entry (PoE) and during their journey are allowed to only stop at Government designated locations;
- ❖ Crew members will be subjected to enhances screening at Points of Entry and may be quarantined or isolated at designated facilities in case they are suspected of COVID-19 infection;
- ❖ In case crew members are quarantined while in transit / isolated while in transit, truck owners/operators must make necessary arrangements to back-up their crew to ensure that goods are delivered to the intended destinations;
- ❖ Crew for cargo planes and other vessels will be quarantined at designated hotels or within their vessels(in case of ship) for the period of their stay; and
- ❖ Air operators should maintain two sets of crew to work in rotation in order to minimise the chances of being subjected to mandatory quarantine.

## **6. BURUNDI**

- ❖ Melchior Ndadaye International Airport closed for passengers. However, the Airport and all the borders are open for cargo;
- ❖ Mandatory quarantine at own cost for returning Burundi citizens and legal residents for 14 days;
- ❖ Enforcing WHO measures to combat COVID-19; and
- ❖ As regards the movement of goods, Burundi has not yet put in place specific administrative measures.

## **7. SOUTH SUDAN**

- ❖ South Sudan has confirmed incidence of COVID -19;
- ❖ The Government is enforcing the WHO guidelines to combat the COVID-19;
- ❖ All international airports are closed;
- ❖ The following air operations are exempted under specific conditions: food cargo flights, aircraft in state of emergencies, flights passing through South Sudan airspace, humanitarian aid operations including medical and relief flight;.
- ❖ All border crossings are closed for passenger buses and vehicles. Cargo trucks and fuel tankers are exempted;
- ❖ No physical contact outside household including no handshaking, no hugging, keep 2 meters (6 feet) distance between two individuals;
  - Wash hands regularly with soap and water;
  - Stay at home;
  - Employers, both public and private should encourage their employees to work from home;
  - Avoid crowds at any place including the market place, tea stalls and shisha places;
  - Night clubs and bars must remain closed; and
  - Funeral gatherings be limited to less than five (5).

## **8. WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION GUIDELINES;**

- ❖ Wash your hands frequently;
  - Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
- ❖ Maintain social distancing;
  - Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- ❖ Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth;

- Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.
- ❖ Practice respiratory hygiene;
  - Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- ❖ If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early; and
- ❖ Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance.

## **9. NORTHERN CORRIDOR TRANSIT AND TRANSPORT COORDINATION AUTHORITY**

- ❖ Provide hygiene facilities at each transport node, such as ports, ICDs, CFSs, RSS, transit border posts and inland terminals;
- ❖ Design and implement a sensitisation program for transit operators and their employees;
- ❖ Designate Facilities to spray trucks and cargo at the point of loading and discharge;
- ❖ Place health workers with COVID-19 detection and testing facilities at the port and inland terminals, as well as drive wellness centres;
- ❖ Register all transit operators and their employees, formally engaged in the provision of cross-border transport services;
- ❖ Provide isolation or quarantine facilities for retention of suspected truck crew prior to testing;
- ❖ Developments Partners to assist Member States to acquire more testing kits;
- ❖ To ensure that trucks/ vehicles carrying goods:
  - Have only 2-3 crew members per vehicle to facilitate smooth border crossing in the region;
  - Crew members are in good health, screened and if found to be at high risk or positive for COVID-19,
  - They be quarantined for 14 days and the truck decontaminated before it is allowed to continue to its final destination;
- ❖ Truck owners/ operators make necessary arrangements to backup crew to ensure that goods are delivered to the intended destination in the event that the crew are quarantined while in transit;
- ❖ Make arrangements for truck drivers to declare their final destination and ensure they stop only at designated points along the transport corridors; and

- ❖ Determine crew for vessels by the specifications of the ship and set international guidelines.

## 10.SADC

- ❖ To regulate trade and transport;
  - For continuity of supply chains, only trucks/vehicles with the following cargo, goods and services - food, medical equipment and medicines including medical supplies and personal protection gear, fuel including coal, agricultural inputs and supplies, chemicals, packaging, equipment, spares, maintenance materials, and ancillary products used in production and processing of food products, security, emergency & humanitarian relief services will be allowed to operate interstate operations;
- ❖ Enhancing trade and transport facilitation processes:
  - Simplify and automate trade and transport facilitation;
  - Introduce or enhance the pre-clearance of goods and single window processing;
  - Accelerate the creation of online applications and platforms for processing, clearance of imports and exports, application, issuance and renewals of licences and permits, registration of drivers, operators, vehicles and loads, payment of fees and for information dissemination and sharing;
- ❖ Information sharing;
  - Member states to share information on the implementation of the measures and additional list of products considered essential with the Secretariat for it to share out to all stakeholders;
  - Recognise that there not classified as essential but very critical to the economy of another, countries are encouraged to accept authentic correspondence that may be produced to facilitate movement to destination;
- ❖ Cross border road transport;
  - Interstate mass movement of persons by buses/minibuses or other vehicles to be suspended with the exception of;
  - returning citizens and residents returning home; security, emergency and humanitarian services;
  - Engineering and maintenance support services (including engineers and support staff);
  - Transportation of work crews and teams under the special arrangements between member states;
- ❖ Must reduce numbers of passengers in vehicles to allow social distancing;

- ❖ Must provide WHO recommended hygiene facilities on the vehicle, at the bus terminus, borders and other places cross-border buses may stop;
- ❖ Disseminate information on COVID-19 preventive measures in languages passengers understand;
- ❖ Passengers complete travel history form.
- ❖ Governments;
  - To categorise cross border truck drivers, pilots and crew as workers performing essential and exempted services and facilitate their movement;
  - to accord priority to clearance and transportation of essential goods and services;
  - exit and entry screening of drivers and crews at ports of entry;
  - implement expedited protocols for entry and exits screening and testing of drivers, pilots and crews of airplanes, vessels and vehicles carrying essential cargo and services;
  - provide hygiene facilities at air and seaports, internal container depots, container freight services, roadside stations/ truck stops border posts and inland terminals as recommended by WHO and national governments;
  - facilities to disinfect airplanes, vessels and vehicles and cargo at the point of loading and discharge;
  - Designate safe and secure parking facilities for cross border road transport vehicles in transit and performing deliveries/pickups
  - Scale-up border patrols in order to deter and to arrest people who might attempt to cross borders at authorised or ungazetted crossings;
- ❖ Transporters to instruct drivers of cross-border trucks/vehicles to fill Trip-Sheets / logbooks which show their stops, destinations and times during the trip;
- ❖ A system be put in place to ensure pilots, drivers and crew members are in good health;
- ❖ Law enforcement officers and regulators, treat with leniency and recognise the extension of validity of short-term cross-border permits/licenses, which expired en route due to different administrative procedures in force following the COVID-19 measures until the vehicles are able to complete the journey;
- ❖ Truck drivers to declare their final destination and stop only at designated points along the transport corridors to limit the chances of spreading of COVID-19;



- ❖ No operational restrictions will be imposed on foreign-registered transporters entering a member State as long as they operate within the essential services spectrum;
- ❖ Protection of officers and staff undertaking regulatory, control, law enforcement, screening, testing and treatment of travellers and crew;
- ❖ Existing wellness committees are expanded to include psychological support to drivers affected by COVID-19.
- ❖ Monitoring and review;
  - Review national transport instruments and proposed harmonised policies, regulations and measures;
  - Put in place mechanism for sharing information;

## 11.ECOWAS

- ❖ All missions are suspended until further notice except those with special waivers;
- ❖ Anyone with even mild cough or low-grade fever (37.3 degree Celsius or more) needs to stay at home and self-isolate;
- ❖ Staff should also stay at home and work from home if they have to take simple medications such as paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin may mask symptoms of infection;
- ❖ Staff must self-isolate and work from home if they feel they have come in contact with a COVID-19 patient;
- ❖ Staff who are at higher risk of COVID-19 should avoid any travel and should practice self-distancing; and
- ❖ Staff at higher risk include those over 60 years, those with depressed immunity, or those with medical conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung diseases.