

Cargo ships, airfreight, port regulations relaxed

Cargo ships and air freight companies will be able to dock and land on South African shores to deliver essential services, Trade, Industry and Competition Minister Ebrahim Patel said on Thursday.



©Eric Gevaert via [123RF](#)

The regulations, implemented by government during the 21-day National State of Disaster Covid-19 enforced lockdown, have been amended by Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

"All cargo has now been allowed into the country and to be offloaded from ships. This applies to essential goods and other goods, subject to sanitising and disinfection," said Patel at a briefing of Ministers from the Covid-19 National Command Council.

Patel said this will prevent ports from clogging up and allow essential goods to reach South Africans.

The regulations also make provision for cargo planes entering South Africa.

Patel outlined the rules for crews from such cargo planes.

"From there, they will go to a dedicated hotel near the airport, where they will be on lockdown in their rooms until they return to their planes and fly back. Airfreight companies have strongly welcomed this clarification," he said.

Additionally, internationally operated call centres are now permitted to operate, provided they observe social distancing rules.

"There are a number of them that operate in South Africa and the regulations clarify that they may provide essential services in respect of healthcare, social services, government services and financial services - subject to social distancing rules that will be determined by the Ministers of Health and Trade, Industry and Competition," Patel said.

The Ministers are currently finalising these.

Meanwhile, Patel said given the taxi operating hours, supermarkets have been required to adjust opening hours. Most major retailers now open at 7am.

"The stores have tried, especially with the payment of social grants, to maintain social distancing and they are at the same time able to service customers who have come to purchase basic needs.

"We are now reviewing areas around exemption to ensure that the regulations are implemented appropriately. Action is now being taken around the regulations dealing with price [hikes].

"We have received hundreds of complaints that have been lodged with the National Consumer Commission and the Competition Commission. Within a very short period of time, we will see the first cases coming up at the tribunals, where the two commissions will lay the evidence they have collected from complaints laid. We anticipate that the decisions will be made quite quickly," said Patel.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>