

Maldives Customs Services (MCS)
Initiatives and Action taken in response to COVID-19

26 March 2020

In compliance with instructions of Health Protection Agencies of Maldives, MCS took several measures to mitigate spread of COVID-19. These include:

1) Allocate the minimum time and staffs required to carry out the operations.

Under the directive number 26/2020 by the Deputy Commissioner of Customs, all the staffs working in non-operational sections were released from their normal duties and the operational sections made arrangements to provide the necessary services with the minimum number of staffs.

Under the announcement number (IUL) 14-PRS/1/2020/17, service times of all the operational sections were decreased.

2) Officers over 55 years old, officers with underlying medical conditions and the pregnant are released from duty.

Staffs that are more susceptible to the virus due to their age, pregnancy or other medical conditions have been released from their normal duties.

3) Use protective measures for our officers in high risk areas.

It has been made mandatory for the frontline officers working in the international airport and the seaport to take protective measure while at work. These include the use of face masks and gloves at all times. Furthermore, hand sanitizers have been provided to all sections and are kept near the finger-machine as well.

4) Use Risk Management to the maximum to expedite process & release consignments.

In order to facilitate smooth and fast release of goods in to the market, all the physical examinations are based on risk management, enabling to examine only the necessary items.

5) Government exempt duty on Masks, gloves & all protective equipment's related to COVID-19. Customs processes and systems have been updated accordingly.

Import duty levied under the import export law (31/79) and the processing fee taken under the import export regulation (R-34/2012) have been waived by the President of Maldives. Changes to the declaration and documentation process and the related systems have been made accordingly.

6) Faster release of medical equipment related to COVID-19.

Arrangements have been made in order to facilitate the hospitals and clinics and to ensure that medical equipment and tools imported are cleared as soon as possible.

7) Finalized an SOP Customs will work on all stages for COVID-19 national alert level.

MCS have formed and finalized a Standard Operating Procedure with detailed step-by-step guidelines on how to move forward in different alert levels (White, Yellow & Red). We are currently taking measures under White National Alert Level.

8) Represent in the National Task Force team.

Volunteering officers have been representing MCS in the National Task Force that has been formed to provide assistance to the relevant authorities during the epidemic.

9) Informing brokers, traders & all our Customers regarding the changes to the process

Customs media team has been working daily in order to update the relevant stakeholders about the changes being brought such as the changes in service hours and import duty. These information are announced on various platforms, such as TV programs, online news and social media.

10) Face-to-face meetings are minimized and all trips abroad suspended.

In order to ensure the safety of the staffs and other involved, face to face interactions have been minimized and all the work trips planned for this period have been suspended. Moreover, arrangements have been made to use the designated duty mobiles for each section. These numbers in addition to our support center can be contacted to receive information and emergency services as well. In addition to that the use of our online portal is highly encouraged, enabling customers to declare, pay and request for many other services without visiting.