

**National Customs Authority (Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas) - Panama**  
**3 April 2020**

**MEASURES ADOPTED IN RESPONSE OF COVID – 19**

The Republic of Panama has declared a National Health Emergency status due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is why the National Government has enacted temporary measures to guarantee the public health of Panamanians.

Therefore, the National Customs Authority of the Republic of Panama, consistent with national mobility restrictions, pertinent sanitary controls and acting as guarantor of the fluidity for international trade, ordered measures consistent with the temporary state of emergency.

**I. Among the measures adopted to secure the flow of international trade are the following:**

1. It was established by means of a Cabinet Decree, the reduction to zero of import tariffs (temporary measure), of products and supplies of first necessity. This measure is aimed at guaranteeing the necessary supply of products during the national emergency situation. It details the different basic products such as medical supplies, alcohol gel, gloves, and face masks, among others.

2. Implementation of WORK-AT-HOME initiative for public servants, which allows proper development and oversight of national and international supply chain operations. It was established through emails enabled by the different operational departments of the National Customs Authority, as well as its regional headquarters. In the same way, those officials who remain in their operational posts at ports, land borders, airports and customs facilities at the national level must comply with their regular schedule and follow public health procedures and control measures. The national government guarantees their mobility to and from their jobsites.

3. Paperwork for the nationalization of goods, transshipment, transit, as well as any customs regime in ports, airports and land borders, will be carried out on the electronic platform of the Customs Management Integrated System (SIGA). The Customs administration will carry out the corresponding documentary verifications and validations, on the same platform, to avoid conglomeration of brokers in the enabled entry sites. The legal effects of the documentary supports presented on the electronic platform will have their corresponding validation, as if they were physically presented. Inspectors at entry points at the national level will maintain the verification authority, according to the risk analysis system and its determination of release (traffic light system).

The presence of the Customs broker will be mandatory at the time of physical examination (red light) and he must make available to the Customs authority all the physical documents

necessary for the execution of the operation, including the requirements of the consenting bodies such as AUPSA or Quarantine in accordance with the nature of the merchandise. (Attached temporary procedure resolution)

## **II. Measures taken regarding Customs Dispatch:**

4. Inter-institutional development of Tracking and tracing for foreign non-resident land freight transport drivers that enter through our borders, in order to establish authorized sites where these drivers can rest overnight under surveillance and observation measures of the health authorities (Sanitary precaution).

5. The Unified Central American Statement (DUCA) will continue to be submitted by electronic transmission, with their respective validations by the consenting bodies. The DUCA must be supported in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations to the Central American Uniform Customs Code, as required by each customs regime, which must be transmitted electronically in accordance with the procedures established for this purpose.

## **III. Measures taken regarding Emergency Procedures:**

6. Special procedure for Relief Dispatch and humanitarian aid for urgently needed goods. By means of an Administrative Resolution, the National Customs Authority of Panama regulated a temporary procedure for the import of merchandise established under the "Relief dispatch special modality" (Aid and humanitarian assistance). The authorized procedure applies to merchandise, including vehicles and other means of transportation, food, medicines, clothing, blankets, tents, Prefab building structures, items to purify and store water.

Likewise vaccines and medicines, human organs, blood and plasma, medical devices, radioactive materials and perishable materials for immediate or essential use by a person or hospital or other essential goods are also included.

The form established to process this merchandise will have a term of six (6) months to complete the procedure set here forth at Customs.

## **IV. Other Measures:**

7. Coordination with the Central American Integration System: In order to secure the Humanitarian Assistance corridor throughout Central America, food banks and medical supplies in regional emergency situations and to avoid shortages of products, as well as facilitate trade and finance measures to ensure freedom of transit for goods, and cross border coordination we have developed a Plan at the binational level.

8. Institutional contingency plan of the National Customs Authority: to implement health and hygiene safety control measures at the headquarters and other administrative offices of the institution, and the Panamanian Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives program (CBRNE) of emergency.