

# **OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE FOR VESSEL CLEARANCE BY THE NPPO**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Boarding of ship vessels and monitoring, removal of ship generated waste are quarantine enforcement activities of the National Plant Protection Office, to ensure that incoming ship vessels, their shipments as well as their wastes, do not represent a potential risk of entry and dissemination of plant and animal pests/diseases. These wastes are considered as regulated articles under the Plant Protection Act (2006) and the Animal Diseases Act 1925 as they could represent sanitary and phytosanitary threat and a pathway for introduction and dissemination of plant and animal pests and diseases.

## **2. BERTHING**

One NPPO Officer is scheduled for ship vessel clearance daily on a 24 hrs. basis, with a shift starting at 00hrs and ending 00hrs the next day. The daily shipping movement schedule is provided to the NPPO by the Mauritius Ports Authority and the scheduled officer is also in regular contact with the Harbour Radio, for exact information on the arrival and berthing of vessels.

All sea vessels arriving from foreign ports, are boarded by scheduled NPPO Officer. These include carriers (sea vessels) of: passengers, general cargo, fishing, foreign naval fleet, cruise vessels as well as other private yachts that arrive from foreign ports. Boarding is performed along with representatives of other authorities like Ports Authority, Customs Departments, Immigration Office, and representatives from the Shipping Agency. However, boarding is only done after necessary clearance has been given by the Health Inspector of the Ministry of Health.

## **3. PROCESS OF QUARANTINE INSPECTION**

The procedure for the inspection and clearance of sea vessels is outlined below.

### **3.1 Meeting with Captain in Charge of Vessel for necessary formalities**

#### ***3.1.1 Ship Inspection Report***

The Master of vessel is explained the purpose of the inspection and is requested to complete and signed a Ship Inspection Report. A specimen of the report is at Annex 1 and an example of a completed report is at Annex 2. The Report contains information on the Vessel (name, port of origin, last port of call, any presence of live animals and plants, type of animal and plant waste on board, among others).

The master of the vessel, on which suspected case of any sanitary or phytosanitary issues of concern to local biosecurity, exists on board, shall notify the NPPO Officer during the preparation of the Ship Inspection Report. The NPPO Officer takes cognizance of the problems and initiates action accordingly.

The NPPO Officer requests that the Captain makes an announcement to all disembarking passengers and crew that plant and animal products especially fruits, vegetables and unprocessed animal products are not allowed to be taken off the vessel by passengers or crew that will disembark for tours in Mauritius.

### *3.1.2 Other Documentary Requirements*

The following additional documents are also requested from the Master of the Vessel:

- ✓ Nil List (This comprises of declarations by the captain of the vessel that there is not any presence of regulated narcotics, guns, ammunition, stowaways, mail, cargo, plants and animals. The NPPO Officer is mainly concerned with the declaration of the presence or not of mails, cargo containing animals or plants on the vessel). A specimen is at Annex 3.
- ✓ Crew List (a list of the names and nationalities of all personnel that work on the vessel and for verification of any potential Passenger (that is fare-paying persons) on board the vessel. Passengers may be carrying undeclared food items. An example is at Annex 4.
- ✓ List of Last ports of call (This consists of a list of ports and countries the ship has visited and will visit on its present voyage, Annex 5). The NPPO Officer assessed the level of risk associated with the ports of call and any specific concern from the port of origin or other previous ports of call and take this information into consideration while doing the inspection on board.
- ✓ List of Refer containers with temperatures of reefer containers of fruits and vegetables to be unloaded in Port-Louis (Annex 6).

## **3.2 Inspection on board**

### *3.2.1 Inspection of food stores to ensure absence of quarantine pest*

Once all the relevant documentation is secured, the NPPO Officer proceeds with verification and inspection of storage sites where food is usually kept, for example:

- ✓ Refrigerators, freezers and dry stores compartments
- ✓ Kitchen and Mess rooms.
- ✓ Any other area where provisions are stored.
- ✓ Crew/passenger cabins - inspect some of the cabins of the crew and passengers

The inspector inspects the products, the area around boxes, including the floors, walls and the pallets on which the boxes are stacked. During inspection the officer also determine if products are rotten, have insect bites or holes, are infested with insects or other pests or have labels which indicate that the products are from quarantine high risk countries. If any infestation detected, products are intercepted, sealed in plastic bags and sent immediately for destruction by incineration. Pests specimen are collected and submitted to the respective department for analysis. The area where pests are found is treated with appropriate pesticide, sealed and put under quarantine until the ship leaves Mauritian territorial waters.

Upon detection of prohibited or restricted products that do not meet the entry requirements of Mauritius the storage area is secured with Quarantine seal and remain under seal while the vessel is at port to prevent the introduction of the products ashore.

### *3.2.2 Inspection of bins of food waste to ensure they are closed or empty*

The NPPO Officer examines the garbage bins in the kitchen areas and garbage drums, containers on deck or any storage area designated to hold garbage. The Officer ensures that all waste material derived in whole or in part from fruits, vegetables, meats, or other plant or animal (including poultry) material, and other refuse of any character whatsoever that has been associated with any such material onboard, and including food scraps, table refuse, galley refuse, food wrappers or packaging materials and other waste material from stores, food preparation areas, passengers' or crew' quarters, dining rooms, or any other areas on vessels, are adequately safeguarded in the garbage storage rooms and bins. The officer verify that garbage is separated and stored hygienically and that pests and especially flies and larval stages of insects are not evident in and around the containers The NPPO Officer brief the Head cook on the need to keep food waste (wet garbage) in separate bins, that should be kept covered at all time.

The Vessel Master is also briefed on the following restriction with respect to vessel garbage, while the vessel is in the Mauritian waters and during berthing:

- ✓ No dumping of garbage into harbor or inland waterways
- ✓ No dumping of garbage in unauthorized manner
- ✓ Keeping garbage container or drums outside the vessel's railing is not allowed. Garbage containers to be kept only at a designated area for garbage
- ✓ Leaking garbage containers not authorized since pathogenic organisms can be spread through these leakages
- ✓ Uncovered garbage containers not authorized. Garbage to be placed in large sturdy and leak-proof plastic bags lining the container and the container properly covered. This helps in preventing the escape of any living plant pests which may be present.
- ✓ Exposed, incontinent garbage

**All garbage must be kept aboard the vessel while in Port Louis, unless prior arrangements exist for discharge, adequate safeguarding and disposal under quarantine supervision. Consequently, any garbage to be discharged from ship are collected by authorized waste disposal service/carriers and sent to the NPPO incinerator located at Mer Rouge for immediate incineration. This is applicable if vessel remains for an extended period in Port Louis and garbage need to be discharged.**

Many vessels have incineration facilities especially, cruise liners. All wet garbage is incinerated by these vessels. Permission should be requested to discharge dry garbage, which is under supervision of the NPPO Officer, who ensures the proper disposal and handling of those that pose a sanitary and phytosanitary threat to Mauritius.

### *3.2.3 Inspection of deck and other potential pest carriers*

- ✓ *Ship Furnishings*

Plant species on board is prohibited as they may be hosts of serious quarantine pests. All plant and plant products, aboard the vessel are inspected and if they are examined and found healthy and free of pests and diseases they may be retained on board and noted in the Ship Inspection Report. If the inspection reveals the presence of any living insects or plant disease symptoms and presents a pest risk, these will be detained and destroyed by incineration immediately. Samples are also taken and sent to the appropriate department (NPPO Laboratory, Entomology Division) for investigation.

**In the event that regulated pests are detected in significant quantities in the areas inspected, then strict quarantine safeguard measures and treatments are applied.**

✓ *Main Deck*

Besides the inspection of the stores and ship's furnishings the NPPO Officer also examine the main deck (preferably under the lights), cargo holds and after decks. If any egg mass or regulated pests are detected, offloading of any agricultural product, cargo or containers will not be authorized.

Samples are carefully collected and sent immediately to the laboratory for quick identification.

#### **4.0 ACTION INITIATED BY NPPO OFFICERS IN CASE OF ANY BIOSECURITY THREAT DETECTED ON BOARD**

The NPPO works in collaboration with the following authorities:

- ✓ Entomology Division
- ✓ Division of Services
- ✓ Food Technology Laboratory of the Ministry
- ✓ The National Park and Conservation Service
- ✓ Ministry of Health
- ✓ Mauritius Port Authority
- ✓ Cargo Handling Corporation Limited

The NPPO having Officers posted at the points of entry, acts as a first line of defense and immediately notify relevant Authorities of the Ministry, of any concern falling under their purview, as follows:

- ✓ Entomology Division= presence of insects on board
- ✓ Division of Services = presence of any animal on board and other issues related to animal health
- ✓ The National Park and Conservation Service = presence of reptiles any other species that warrant their intervention.

## 5.0 FLOWCHART ILLUSTRATING THE VESSEL CLEARANCE PROCEDURES BY NPPO

