



COVID-19 Measures

In keeping with Government's decision to go to Code Yellow to help combat the threat of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ports Authority will shortly begin restricting public access to the Avatiu Harbour area.

In particular there will be limits placed on vehicles and members of the public entering:

- the international port area;
- the Origin Gas delivery area; and
- both the domestic port area and the southern wall of the harbour as used by Taio Shipping for vessel docking and cargo handling.

The western access to the main harbour basin, opposite CITC Hardware, will be closed off from Monday 30 March 2020. While the restrictions are in place, access to and from the Port will be limited to the main entry and exit points on either side of the Ports Authority main office at the Avatiu roundabout.

Bim Tou, as the Authority's CEO, reminds people that keeping the port open is vital for the well being of the people of the Cook Islands. Ports Authority staff, along with stevedores, shipping agents, and the staff and crew of Taio Shipping are on the frontline of the country's international and domestic supply chains.

"People know the international terminal hosts container cargo vessels and fuel supply tankers that, over coming months, will be a vital lifeline for the Cook Islands people" says Tou " And with the Pa Enuu now, effectively, locked down, inter-island shipping services are equally important in maintaining supplies for those in both the Southern Group and the Northern Group".

Tou points out that it is essential to prevent these key workers from being infected with COVID-19. The Authority can play its part by restricting access to the wharf to only those who have urgent and necessary businesses – reinforcing the present social distancing preventive measures.

Ports staff have already started taking measures to reduce the need for customer and Ports staff face to face services; further restrictions through the social distancing preventive measures will be introduced. Specifically;

1. Main Office face to face serving its customers will be limited to Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10.00 to 3.00pm from the week starting on Monday 30 March 2020
2. The Authority will be encouraging customers with requests or queries *not to enter the offices*, but instead to email or telephone for assistance.

The public can be assured that with the Avatiu port regarded as critical infrastructure, the Ports main office will remain open Monday to Friday each week. Tou stresses that while the Port and the country is closed to cruise ships and other pleasure craft, it will be business as usual for the fortnightly cargo vessels carrying goods to the Cook Islands. The Ports Authority apologises in advance to the inconvenience caused, but is confident that users of the Port and the general public will understand the critical importance of keeping cargo supply chains open by safeguarding personnel who are vital to achieving that goal.

For further information, please contact the CEO Bim Tou on 21921 or mobile 55750.