

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CUSTOMS SERVICES DURING LOCKDOWN

26 March 2020 – A letter was issued to clients yesterday stating that SARS Customs has made provisions to continue rendering services to clients during this lockdown period. However, we strongly urge clients to make use of digital channels to communicate with SARS as far as possible to limit the need for visiting our offices. Staff will be available to respond to email and telephone enquiries throughout the lockdown period.

The following are the procedures that SARS Customs has put in place during the period 27 March 2020 until 16 April 2020, focusing primarily on facilitating trade in essential goods:

Services at Customs offices

In cases where visits to SARS offices are unavoidable and essential, such as for the processing of origin certificates, a procedure has been introduced to ensure that we comply with all regulations and guidelines relating to the combating of COVID-19. These include the following:

1. All visits to SARS offices will be by appointment only and no walk-ins will be allowed.
2. All service requests should be directed to the Customs Branch email address.
3. To enable speedy resolution, please provide sufficient information (including name, ID number, etc), relevant supporting documents, case numbers, LRN numbers etc. in all your correspondence.
4. The request will be assessed and only if it cannot be resolved without a visit to the office by the client, SARS will respond by granting approval for such a visit. Please ensure that you provide your full names and ID number, as the appointment letter/email will have to reflect these details to aid your passage through checkpoints during the lockdown period. Your own organisation should also provide authorisation for you to travel under the lockdown regulations under the Disaster Management Act.
5. A scheduled appointment time will be indicated in the email and clients are urged to keep to those times as there will be limited staff. We also need to ensure social distancing appointments will be staggered so that only one client is served at a time. All appointments that are not honoured within 15 minutes from the scheduled time will be cancelled and new arrangements will have to be made.
6. A copy of the approval letter/email and your ID (or a certified copy) will be required in order to gain access to SARS premises. Please refrain from bringing any other documentation during the visit and rather email them before your appointment as indicated above.

7. All visitors should adhere to hygiene and social distancing requirements as per Department of Health guidelines.

Please note: An updated list of contact details (phone and email addresses) for all offices will be posted on the SARS website and can be accessed through the following link: [SARS Coronavirus page](#)

In urgent cases where your issue has not been resolved via the branches, you can mail the Customs Command Centre at osc@sars.gov.za or call 012-4228463. Please include as much detail as possible, including attachments of your prior correspondence with the relevant branch.

Registration, Licensing and Accreditation

Registration – all registration activities will be postponed. However, an exception process has been set up centrally to cater for the registration of entities importing essential goods. The following procedure applies:

- Submit applications for import/export via email to osc@sars.gov.za
- This should include:
 - A completed DA185
 - Relevant supporting documents
 - A commercial Invoice clearly stating the value and the description of goods in question.

Licensing – all licensing activities will be postponed, with the exclusion of licensing for rebate manufacturing of essential goods i.e. sanitisers. These clients should submit their applications to osc@sars.gov.za

Accreditation – all preferred trader and authorised economic operator activities will be postponed.

Applications for Embargoes, Special Attendance, Degroup Removal in Bonds, etc

1. All applications in this regard should be forwarded to osc@sars.gov.za
2. The OSC will provide you with feedback on the same day. This will include further instructions on how to proceed.
3. In the case of approval, that email will be your source document to enable further action.

Physical Inspections

1. Service Manager inspections will follow the normal process
2. Inspections will only be performed in Customs controlled facilities
3. No-one will be allowed at the inspection without the appropriate protective gear eg. Gloves, masks, etc.