

Queen Mary 2 leaves Durban after 6 SA crew disembark

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) has confirmed that the Queen Mary 2 passenger vessel has departed the Port of Durban after refuelling and the disembarkation of six South African crew members.



RMS Queen Mary 2. Image source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC BY-SA 2.0

The ship had been positioned outside the port since 27 March 2020, after requesting clearance to berth to receive bunkers and stores.

Approval was granted on 31 March 2020 by the Department of Transport and the Port Health unit of the Department of Health, for the vessel to dock, refuel and allow the six crew members to come ashore.

The six South African crew were among 27 individuals on-board including passengers and crew members who were tested for Covid-19 due to flu-like symptoms and/or contact with symptomatic individuals on-board.



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Crew to self-quarantine

Although all 27 individuals tested negative, Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize said the six South Africans will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days as a precautionary measure.

TNPA said the ship, which arrived in Durban with 1 215 crew and 264 passengers departed the Port of Durban on Thursday and is now sailing to Southampton in the United Kingdom with the remaining 1 209 crew and 264 passengers.

“The ship’s line, Cunard, announced earlier this month that it had ended its three international voyages early in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Most passengers were flown home by Cunard earlier during the voyage prior to arrival in Durban,” TNPA said in a statement.

TNPA said it has been working closely with the Department of Transport, South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) and the Department of Health to manage requests from cruise liners after new Regulations were promulgated by the Minister of Transport on 18 March 2020.

These Regulations essentially prohibit cruise liner calls, any crew changes, any disembarkations apart from returning South African citizens or permanent residents, and any embarkations unless they are for departing foreign nationals.

“The Port of Durban has a final call from the Holland America cruise ship Amsterdam scheduled for Sunday, 5 April 2020. Officials are in communication with the vessel agent and master to determine how this ship will be managed and any measures that need to be put in place,” TNPA said.



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Covid-19 tests related to cruise liners in SA to date included:

- **AIDAmira** – docked in Cape Town on 16 March following a Covid-19 scare involving six AIDAmira passengers and two MV Corona bulk carrier crew, all of whom tested negative.
- **Arcadia** – docked in Durban on 26 March after results were negative for 13 symptomatic individuals on-board. The vessel docked to refuel and restock provisions, as well as allow six South African crew members to disembark and return home.
- **MSC Orchestra** – currently working with the Department of Health to trace passengers following confirmation of positive test results for two individuals who cruised on 28 February and 13 March, respectively.

The port authority noted that it is standard procedure for the Department of Health’s Port Health unit to be required to grant free pratique including checking and confirming a clean bill of health for all on board, before any vessel is allowed to dock.

Pratique is the license given to a ship to enter port on assurance from the captain to convince the authorities that she is free from contagious disease.

“Flu-like symptoms reported by vessel masters are being investigated and tested accordingly to curb the spread of Covid-19 in the country.”

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