

8 May 2020

Dear Customers

The opening of some lockdown regulations under Level 4 has exposed a serious inability of the system to manage the catch up and back logs. Our team at SCT is working passionately around the clock to ensure we move your cargo as efficiently as possible but we highlight the problems currently being experienced and seek your understanding that this is the environment in which we are operating. Please be assured that our team is being as proactive as possible in every situation:

- (1) Full Container Depots – Depots are insisting on advanced notice for collection (many 72 hours or more) so that they can find containers. Stacking and overcrowding of facilities is seriously hampering sourcing and movement of units. In many cases storage charges have to be raised and settled by SCT prior to a booking being accepted. Trucking queues at depots range from 7 hours to over 24 hours or more which in itself adds to serious problems for subsequent logistics movements to destination especially to Gauteng where drivers have to be changed.
- (2) LCL Unpack Depots – Congestion at all depots is critical. Collection of cargo can only be booked once cargo is found (in many cases this is taking the depot days) as mixed stacking, over-stacking and splitting of consignments has led to significant “temporary loss” of cargo within the systems. Most depots too will not allow collection until storage charges have been calculated and accepted or paid by SCT. Depot queues for truckers once they have a booking are even longer than full container depots and one of SCT’s own vehicles was in a depot queue yesterday from 7am till 8pm and then turned away without cargo collection.
- (3) Shipping Line Charges and Customs Clearance – under COVID-19 lockdown Level 4 conditions shipping lines are still insisting on clearance and release 72 hours prior to vessels arrival and in many cases they only provide ANF details necessary for clearance hours before this deadline. Charges for overstay when this deadline is not met are in excess of R 15 000 a container and when vessel schedules suddenly change through rerouting and come in earlier than planned there is no concession given to the 72 hour deadline. Our association is addressing these incredibly unfair shipping line practices at the highest level because we cannot secure release until charges are paid in full even if under dispute and disputed charges are receiving very limited attention. Most lines are working on skeleton staff and communication is very difficult and response times significantly lengthened from normal.

- (4) Port Operations and Vessel Berthing – Ports are fully functional and vessel berthing delays have been reduced however changes in vessels schedules at the last minute are creating some lengthy berthing changes port to port. Terminal queues are often in excess of 7-15 hours.
  
- (5) Airfreight Operations – COVID-19 restrictions are still dictating that only freighter aircraft are servicing Johannesburg apart from the occasional repatriation flight. There has been a slight increase in the number of freighters and also addition of charter services to and from some regions but space still remains critical and costs exorbitant. However, the greater concern is the utter chaos on the landside operations at ORT. See link to a recent article published in this regard <https://www.freightnews.co.za/article/cargo-ortia-scattered-all-over-show> . To say it is chaos is mild, with cargo lying all over warehouses and on the open tarmac and mixed so incredibly that it in most cases full consignments can't be sourced, checked in correctly, or released to drivers. Split consignments coming in add to this mayhem. Trucking queues even after securing bookings and confirmation that cargo has been found range from 6 to 10 hours.
  
- (6) Trucking – Due to the catch up of 6 weeks lockdown, sourcing truckers is critical with serious shortages on all routes. Huge volume demand to clear backlog, trucks tied up in excessive queues and return loads from Gauteng being exceptionally limited, make securing the necessary vehicles a major bottleneck point for all logistics service providers. SCT has been proactive in securing (prior to the level 4 change) commitment from our preferred truckers for dedicated vehicles for SCT use, although this does not cover all our requirements especially when these trucks are sitting in depots, at the port and in NVOCC queues.

Despite these very obvious, real and difficult conditions and restrictions SCT has managed this week to deliver substantial volumes of cargo for our customer base and we will be working 24x7 to deliver the remaining backlog under storage. We endeavour to keep clients updated on a daily and often hourly basis but we trust your understanding when the best laid plans have to change as a result of the above. We are well aware that importers are already being seriously penalised by costs for storage over this period and our every effort is being placed on reducing these costs and effecting your deliveries. If you have any concerns regarding outstanding deliveries please do not hesitate to address to Tamrynn ([Tamrynn.pearce@sctsolutions.co.za](mailto:Tamrynn.pearce@sctsolutions.co.za)) or Rishi ([ops@sctsolutions.co.za](mailto:ops@sctsolutions.co.za)) who will provide updates and please feel free to elevate to any of our management team. We assure you of our attention to your cargo.

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We thank you for your continued support and partnership

Mail: [Graeme.impson@sctsolutions.co.za](mailto:Graeme.impson@sctsolutions.co.za)  
Tel: + 27 (0)31 818 0320

Fax: +27 (0)31 818 0324  
Mobile: +27 (0) 71 4140472