

PORT ALERT FOR VESSELS FROM WEST AFRICA

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South Africa - The Harbour Master for Richards Bay has issued an alert about the potential exposure to Ebola disease from vessels visiting the port from west African countries. No crew member may leave a vessel without a port health clearance. The same applies to off port limit crew transfers, including medical evacuations. Port workers have also been warned to wear face masks and hand gloves, not to eat or drink or accept food or liquids on board vessels, including gifts, and not to use any of the facilities on board.

The captains of vessels are also required to confirm in writing that a stowaway sweep was done on departing a previous port, that if a stowaway is found he is reported and the ship held at anchor until cleared by Port health, and that on arrival at a South African port there could be another sweep alongside, conducted by members of stowaway sweeper companies who have undertone training and awareness of Ebola virus disease. Furthermore ships found to have been contaminated are to be held in isolation and that nobody be allowed on board until port health clearance is provided.

The signs and symptoms of infected people include high fever, bleeding and central nervous system damage. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, and in some cases bleeding.