Sri Lanka

Source : Embassy of Switzerland in Sri Lanka

21.01.2021

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan authorities announced that the international airports in the country (Colombo BIA and Mattala HRI) will be reopened for inbound flights on 21.01.2021.



Here (PDF, 1.9 MB) you can read the Sri Lanka Tourism safety protocols published by the Ministry of Tourism based on the health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.

Guide for Tourists arriving in Sri Lanka. (JPG, 94.2 kB)

Travel to Sri Lanka

Source: https://www.eda.admin.ch/colombo

Remarks from the International Road Transport Union

Forthcoming

Source: Foreign Ministry - Sri Lanka

21.01.2021

Sri Lanka is Open for Tourist Arrivals: Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena informs ACD Member States at the 17th Ministerial Meeting



Source: https://mfa.gov.lk/acd-2021/

Source: IMPACCT/UN OCHA

23.07.2020

COVID-19 [Sri Lanka]
Bulletin n°3 – CIQP : 23 July 2020 (Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Procedures)

05.06.2020

COVID-19 [Sri Lanka]
Bulletin n°2 – CIQP : 5 June 2020 (Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Procedures)

IMPORTATION AND CUSTOMS

Customs, land, sea (updated 29 May 2020)

According to a best practices update published by the Sri Lanka Customs authority to the World Customs Organization on 28 April, the country has implemented a number of interim measures to ensure uninterrupted Customs operations during the pandemic.

This includes measures to facilitate the cross-border movement of relief and essential supplies:

• Routine cargo selectivity criteria have been tailored, especially to release medium and low-risk cargo, focusing only on high-risk cargo. As a result, around 70% of the essential items were released under Green Channel;

• With the concurrence of other government agencies, a procedure was introduced to receive and coordinate regulatory approvals such as standards and permits via electronic means to ensure expedited clearance and release;

• Provisional online procedures were introduced to verify certificates of origin and grant preferential tariff treatments for transactions under Preferential Free Trade Agreements (PTA) under the South Asian Association Regional Corporation (SAARC);

• Provisional goods clearance procedures have been extended, with priority for consignments of relief goods and consignments needing expedited clearance;

• Existing 24x7 services were limited to approximately 8 hours per day in view of the low volume of exports as most of the factories were closed for operations due to government policy on minimizing human gathering. However, facilities were made available on call as required during Customs non-operating hours;

• In addition to the regular Customs Enquiry Point, a special 24x7 help desk is in operation to attend public and stakeholder inquiries;

• COVID-19 Contingency Plans detailing working hours and arrangements and emergency official contact numbers were published and regularly updated on the Sri Lanka Customs website.

Other measures in the document aim at sustaining supply chain continuity, protecting Customs administrations' staff (including social distancing measures), and other internal restrictions.

Sea ports:
According to an update by Wilhelmsen on 5 June 2020, all sea vessels whose previous port call was from COVID-19 high risk countries must submit the following documents:

• Pre-arrival documentation on health declaration;
• Last 10 ports of call with dates;
• Vessel status report;
• Crew list;
• Information on port of embarkation and date.

Crew change is permitted, subject to the following conditions:

• Foreign crew changes are now allowed based on a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by Authorities. Various restrictions and rules apply for on- and off-signing crew.

• Bulk crew change (on signers and off signers) will be assessed and can be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Shore leave is not permitted unless it is for medical reasons. Further restrictions apply:

• No SSCE renewal can be carried out during this period;
• Minimal contact between individuals is to be maintained;

Customs, importation procedure (updated 15 May 2020)

. According to a Logistics Cluster update on 15 May 2020:

• All commercial borders are still open to cargo movement;

• There are a limited number of truckers and Customs officers on duty due to the pandemic.

• PCR tests are to be undertaken;

• Crew are to be accommodated in Safe Houses during transit.

According to an announcement from the Sri Lanka Customs department dated 18 April 2020, cargo import and export clearance operations have started while adhering to the government policy on social distancing during the pandemic.

The working hours of various Customs offices for both sea and air cargo importation are as follows:
• Long Room, Customs Headquarters – From 10.00 am to 04.00 pm
• RCT Examination Yard, Orugodawatte – From 10.00 am to 12.00 am
• GL 1&2, High Risk Examination Yard, Grandpass – From 10.00 am to 08.00 pm
• NNR LCL Warehouse, Peliyagoda – From 10.00 am to 04.00 pm
• Other LCL Warehouses, Colombo Port – From 10.00 am to 04.00 pm
• Valuation Unit, Orugodawatte RCT Yard – From 10.00 am to 08.00 pm
• Front Line Valuation Unit (Long Room) – From 10.00 am to 04.00 pm
• Air Cargo, Katunayake – From 10.00 am to 05.00 pm

More information, as well as information on exports and transshipments, can be found on the notice. As an extended facilitation, a template-based processing of applications and other operational requests will be provided over email. More information as well as contact details can be found on the notice.

Source: https://vosocc.unocha.org.....

Source: WCO/Sri Lanka Customs (SLC)

28.04.2020

SLC has implemented interim mechanism to ensure uninterrupted operations during the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic

1. Measures aiming to Facilitate the Cross-border Movement of Relief and Essential Supplies

1.1. Routine cargo selectivity criteria were tailored, especially to release medium and low risk cargo, thus focusing only on the high-risk cargo. As a result, around 70% of the essential items were released under Green Channel.
1.2. With the concurrence of other government agencies, a procedure was introduced to receive and coordinate regulatory approvals such as standards and permits via electronic means to ensure expedited clearance and release.
1.3. Provisional online procedures were introduced to verify certificates of origin and grant preferential tariff treatments for transactions under Preferential Free Trade Agreements (PTA) under South Asian Association Regional Corporation (SAARC). For consistent implementation of the same a special webinar was also organized by the SAARC Secretariat with the participation of members; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
1.4. Provisional goods clearance procedure was extended, with priority, for consignments of relief goods and consignments needing expedited clearance.
1.5. Existing 24x7 services were limited to approximately 8 hours per day in view of the low volume of exports as most of the factories were closed for operations due to government policy on minimizing human gathering. However, facilities were made available on call as required during Customs non-operating hours.
1.6. In addition to the regular Customs Enquiry Point, a special 24x7 help desk is in operation to attend public and stakeholder inquiries.
1.7. COVID-19 Contingency Plans detailing working hours and arrangements and emergency official contact numbers were published and regularly updated on the Sri Lanka Customs website http://www.customs.gov.lk

2. Measures aiming at Supporting the Economy and Sustaining Supply Chain Continuity

Sri Lanka Customs, as the Frontline Border Agency, provided active contribution to the
Presidential Task Force that was established to monitor and prevent spreading COVID-19, as
well as to provide essential services to sustain overall community life in the country.
Following policy decisions were put into action in respect of Customs accordingly.
2.1. Hold meetings on a regular basis with key governmental agencies that are engaged in the
essential services thus carrying forward real political will.
2.2. Take immediate steps to maintain the social distancing and to minimize human Gathering
in Customs operational work areas.
2.3. Implement concessionary tariff rates introduced to ensure constant supply of essential
medicines and medical devices.
2.4. Relax regulatory requirements such as standards approvals and licenses subject to post
clearance checks.
2.5. Introduce a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for processing of applications for Inward
Processing and attending incidental operational requests and inquiries over electronic mail
with templates ensuring undisrupted execution of industry and related import and export
activities during difficult periods such as epidemics and terrorism.
2.6. Facilitate Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) to evacuate the spaces near the cargo
unloading bays in order to maintain the continuity of unloading goods from the vessels
keeping supply chain undisrupted, by providing clearance for even nonessential goods
from time to time.

3. Measures aiming at Protecting Customs administrations' Staff

Following Steps were taken to maintain social distancing of the staff while minimizing
intervention of Customs staff.
3.1. Number of staff deployed was kept to a minimum on a roster divided into several groups
where one such group consists around 20% of the normal number of staff.
3.2. The staff continued their duties by connecting virtually from their homes.
3.3. Sanitizing facilities and protective gears were provided to the staff where required.
3.4. An approved disinfecting chamber was established at the entrance to the Customs
premises.
3.5. An interim paperless procedure was introduced for electronic submission and
processing of CusDecs (Goods declarations) taking advantage of existing e-payment
platform for implementing social distancing requirements introduced by the government
for countering contagion.

4. Measures aiming at Protecting Society

4.1. Expedited Customs clearance processes were provided for the clearance of inward and outward passengers in terms of the prompt measures taken by the government (given below) to prevent COVID 19.
Facilitated processing of departing foreign nationals, mostly tourists, on special flights that were arranged.
Facilitated processing of Sri Lankan nationals who were brought down by special flights arranged by the government.
Steps were taken to refer the passengers arrived from abroad directly to the specially established quarantine centres managed by the government.
Actions were taken to temporarily shut-down the unaccompanied passenger baggage clearance depots until the situation stabilizes in view of the fact that the majority of these passengers are from every corner of the island.
4.2. As the frontline border Agency in Sri Lanka, active contribution was provided to the Presidential Task Force that was established to monitor and prevent spreading COVID19, as well as to provide essential services to sustain overall community life in the country.

5. Other Measures.

5.1. Continuous dialog was established with related other governmental agencies and private sector for co-ordination and to address concerns. Meetings with other governmental agencies and private sector were held continuously maintaining social distancing standards.
5.2. Necessary arrangements were made with Sri Lanka Police to coordinate and facilitate travel of Customs staff, transporters, and Customs House Agents who are engaged in clearance of goods.
5.3. Request to waive demurrage charges were efficiently coordinated with Sri Lanka
5.4. Ports Authority, two private terminal handlers and Air Cargo Authorities by the traders on port demurrage charges, as and when required.
5.5. Fullest cooperation was established with Private stakeholders of Inland Clearance Depots (cargo examination points) in order to facilitate the clearance while adhering government policies to protect staff and the Customs House Agents.
5.6. Prompt actions were taken to facilitate requests send by foreign missions, especially to expedite some essential exports.

Further information: http://www.wcoomd.org/...../natural-disaster/covid_19/sri-lanka_en.pdf?la=en

Source:

18.04.2020

Sri Lanka Customs has decided to start the operations for the clearance of all import and export cargo while adhering to the government policy to maintain social distancing during the COVID19 epidemic.

Source: http://www.customs.gov.lk/public/images/ict_17032020/wrup18042020.pdf