



## Diplomatic Vessel Clearance Factsheet

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration  
Government of the Cook Islands

### *Cook Islands Diplomatic Vessel Clearance Procedures*

Foreign governments seeking diplomatic clearance for marine vessels to transit Cook Islands territorial waters or berth in any port in the Cook Islands must obtain confirmation of Diplomatic Clearance via Note Verbale, issued either directly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration or the Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand.

### Information required for Diplomatic Vessel Clearance

To obtain Diplomatic Clearance for state marine vessels, foreign governments must submit the following information to the above mentioned and below specified agent/s via Note Verbale, with technical information enclosed as required;

1. **Official purpose of the visit** e.g. governmental or non-governmental in nature.
  2. **Vessel information**
    - a. Vessel name
    - b. Type e.g. surveillance frigate
    - c. Displacement
    - d. Length
    - e. Beam
    - f. Navigational draft
    - g. SOLAS maritime security level of the vessel
  3. **Owner and operator of the vessel** e.g. owned and operated by a foreign state or chartered by a foreign state to exclusively perform a governmental function.
  4. **Crew Information**
    - a. Full name of the captain or commanding officer
    - b. The number of crew on board
    - c. The number of passengers on board
    - d. Complete manifest of both crew and passengers summarising Passport information
  5. **Vessel Itinerary:** please ensure all dates and times are noted in local time (CKT)
    - a. Time, date and name of port from which the vessel is originating and subsequent ports visited en-route to the Cook Islands
  - b. Time and date when the vessel will be arriving at its first destination in the Cook Islands and list all Cook Islands ports at which the vessel intends to berth (if applicable)
  - c. Confirmation that 48 hours' fore-notice prior to arrival into port will be provided
  - d. Time and date when the vessel will be departing from its final port in the Cook Islands
  - e. For transits only, note the entry and exit points and times as provided by the commanding officer or mission planner.
6. **Specific radio frequencies** being requested for use whilst in Cook Islands territorial waters. Please note, provision of general radio bandwidth is not sufficient, the specific frequency being requested is required.
    - a. When noting this information please ensure to list frequency in Kilohertz (KHZ).
  7. **Cargo Description:** describe the type of cargo the vessel is carrying; if the cargo is hazardous please ensure this is noted.
  8. **Logistical notes** as required e.g. need for push tug during berthing, refuel or bin evacuation on arrival
  9. **Declaration** that the vessel will not be used to engage in commerce, other than to exclusively transport government officials or government cargo for official government business.
  10. **A reliable after-hours telephone number or point of contact** of relevant personnel as relates to the vessel, for use in urgent situations.

### Further general notes for Diplomatic Vessel Clearance to the Cook Islands

- A marine vessel may not berth at any port that has not been specified on the diplomatic clearance request.
- It is the requesting government's responsibility to ensure submission of a complete manifest of



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both crew and passengers prior to arrival into Cook Islands territorial waters, as required by Cook Islands Immigration and Customs officials.

- It is the requesting government's responsibility to ensure all crew and passengers hold and are carrying with them valid travel documentation i.e. Passport with a minimum of six (6) months validity
- It is the requesting governments' responsibility to meet other Cook Islands government agency requirements. Failure to comply with these agency procedures could result in penalties and affect issuance of future diplomatic clearances.

### Diplomatic Vessel Clearance lead time and processing timeframes

Foreign governments seeking diplomatic clearance for state marine vessels to transit Cook Islands territorial waters or berth in the Cook Islands must submit the above information to the below specified agent/s via Note Verbale, with technical information enclosed as required, **no later than three (3) full business weeks (120 working hours) in advance of the vessel's initial entry into the Cook Islands.** Business days are routinely Monday through to Friday and do not include public holidays when the Cook Islands Government is closed.

Compliance with the three business week advance notification procedure is critical to ensuring necessary information and adequate lead time is provided to the various Cook Islands Government agencies involved with vessels into and within the territorial waters of the Cook Islands. **Failure to comply with the advance notification rule could affect issuance of future diplomatic clearances.**

Exception to the three business week notification rule may be made under the following circumstances;

- Bona fide emergencies: urgent medical evacuation, humanitarian and disaster assistance, search and rescue operations.
  - Medical emergencies must be accompanied by information about the emergency as verified or endorsed by

the Cook Islands Ministry of Health and considers the possible loss of life, limb or eyesight if treatment is not sought within 24 hours.

- Mechanical or weather delay

**Confirmation of clearance, should it be granted, will be conveyed via responding Note Verbale no later than five (5) working days in advance of the vessels initial entry into the Cook Islands.**

### Processing Agents for Diplomatic Vessel Clearance to the Cook Islands

**Mr Arakura Tatuava**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration**

Phone: (+682) 29 345

Email: [arakura.tatuava@cookislands.gov.ck](mailto:arakura.tatuava@cookislands.gov.ck) and [secfa@cookislands.gov.ck](mailto:secfa@cookislands.gov.ck)

**Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand**

**Attn: Corporate Services Officer**

Phone: (+64) 4 472 5126

Email: [admin@cookhicom.org.nz](mailto:admin@cookhicom.org.nz) and [cookislands@cookhicom.org.nz](mailto:cookislands@cookhicom.org.nz)

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