

Confluence of strong winds, lack of equipment, inefficiencies at port

Cape Town congestion continues



The situation at the port of Cape Town is "not great", says Mike Walwyn, vice-chairperson of the South African Association of Freight Forwarders.

Left: straddle carriers at the Cape Town Multipurpose Terminal

"We have vessels waiting outside from as long ago as 25 December. The access to port has been hampered by strong winds with the result that truck congestion is still very much a factor, and consequently the booking system doesn't really work properly."

On average ships are waiting 14 days to berth at Cape Town port at present.

He continues that there is no proper staging area for trucks and the consequent backlog extends out into the roads of Cape Town (as it does into Durban when that port is congested).

Truckers complain because they have to queue in the road where, a truck driver tells FreshPlaza, the police also give them a hard time

Delays caused by wind, the unavailability of well-maintained equipment and the power failure late December at the port are exacerbated, industry sources maintain, by the general low productivity at Cape Town's terminals and inefficiency of the terminal.

Moves per gross crane hour at Cape Town are 11 where it should be above 20, preferably between 24 and 28.

Cape Town is a headache, confirms a grape exporter. Grapes destined for the Middle and Far East are this year taken to Durban in larger numbers, but even so, notes a shipping agent, all of the vessels on the European and Middle East lines are "way out of schedule".

There are containers in the stack for two weeks now; yesterday a vessel departed after spending a month on the South African coast.

There's no import / export breakdown and there is no storage pressure at all, a freight forwarder explains. "What is at issue is the delays on both water and landside. We have 8 container ships at anchor. There is huge frustration with land and water performance at present. The current main excuse is staff shortage but equipment remains an issue."

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