



Cook Islands Diplomatic Clearance Procedures: Marine Vessel

Foreign governments seeking diplomatic clearance for state marine vessels to transit Cook Islands territorial waters and/or berth in any port in the Cook Islands must obtain confirmation of Diplomatic Clearance via Note Verbale, issued either directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (MFAI) or the Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand. This process and confirmation may differ for partners who have been granted Diplomatic Blanket Clearance – further details can be found in the Diplomatic Blanket Clearance Factsheet.

Information required for Diplomatic Marine Vessel Clearance

To obtain Diplomatic Clearance for state marine vessels, foreign governments must submit the following information via Note Verbale, with a completed Diplomatic Clearance for Marine Vessel Form:

1. **Official purpose of visit** (e.g. governmental, humanitarian).
2. **Vessel information**
 - a. Vessel name
 - b. Vessel Type (e.g. patrol vessel, surveillance frigate)
 - c. Call sign
 - d. Hull number
 - e. Displacement
 - f. Length
 - g. Beam (extreme)
 - h. Navigational draft
3. **Ownership & operation**
 - a. Owner and operator of the marine vessel
 - b. Confirmation whether the vessel is state-owned or chartered for exclusive governmental use
4. **Crew & passenger information**
 - a. Full name of the Captain or Commanding Officer
 - b. Number of crew on board
 - c. Number of passengers on board
 - d. Number of VIPs
 - e. Complete manifest of crew and passengers summarising Passport information
5. **Vessel itinerary**
 - 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 of 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. **Communications**
 - a. Specific radio frequencies requested for use whilst Cook Islands territorial waters
 - b. Frequencies must be listed in Kilohertz (KHZ)
7. **Port agent**
 - a. Name of nominated port agent in the Cook Islands
 - b. 24-hour contact number of port agent
8. **Cargo/ Dangerous Goods**
 - a. Description of the type of cargo the vessel is carrying
 - b. Hazardous cargo must be clearly identified/ listed
9. **Clearance Diving Operations**

- a. Will this be taking place

10. Declaration & contact

- a. Declaration that the vessel will not be used to engage in commerce

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

- A marine vessel may not berth at a port not specified on the diplomatic clearance approval.
- Submission of complete crew and passenger manifests prior to arrival into Cook Islands territorial waters is mandatory under Cook Islands Immigration and Customs requirements.
- 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
- Compliance with other Cook Islands government agency requirements (e.g. Cook Islands Customs Service, Cook Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Biosecurity Service and relevant port authorities) is the responsibility of the requesting government.
- Failure to comply with these agency procedures could result in penalties and affect issuance of future diplomatic clearances.

Diplomatic Marine 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 via Note Verbale, with a completed Diplomatic Clearance for Marine Vessels Form, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Cook Islands or the Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand **no later than three (3) full business weeks (15 business days) 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.

Compliance with advance notification timelines is critical to enable inter-agency coordination. Failure to comply may affect the issuance of future diplomatic clearances. **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 (e.g. urgent medical evacuation, humanitarian and disaster assistance and 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 is 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 marine vessels initial entry into the Cook Islands.

Contact Points

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
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