

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR  
THE IMPORTATION OF HUMANITARIAN AID  
INTO THE BAHAMAS  
DURING THE RESPONSE TO HURRICANE DORIAN

(v01 17sept 2019)

The objective of SOPs is to describe the current procedures for the importation and temporary admission of relief consignments. This information is provided and validated by the department of Customs of the Bahamas.

Updated SOPs will be shared asap.

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### A. INITIAL INFORMATION

- On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019, the acting Minister of Finance has issued a *Notice tariff act declaration of exigency* (Annex 1). Please also find a notification on “How Individuals and Organizations Can Utilize the Exigency Order” (Annex 2).
- This minister has declared a period of 90 days, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> September to the 2<sup>nd</sup> December as an initial period for the importation of the goods under the provision of the said Item 9 (save for bottled water, clothing, food and personal Hygiene products). See details of the declaration in Annex 1. A list of the preliminary needs has also been distributed (Annex 3).
- If donors of aid are not sure about the Customs regime, it is better to choose the temporary admission rather than the importation. It will be easier to regularize than to re-export goods for other emergencies (such as telecommunication equipment).
- All consignments will be prioritized provided all documents are correct and in line with Customs legislation.
- Link to the WhatsApp Group on “DORIAN – Bahamas CIQP” (Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Procedures): <https://chat.whatsapp.com/H9tLBHMTDJIEEWklv27RX>

#### A.1. Entry points for relief consignments

- The Port Department would like to advise the general public that the port facilities in Marsh Harbor Abaco is now open to Mariners.
- International Vessels wishing to ship goods to Freeport or Abaco Bahamas are expected to email the following documents to: portemergency@bahamas.gov.bs and NEMADonations@bahamas.gov.bs-- C2 Customs Declaration Form NEMA form--Manifest Immigration Information Crew List / Pax List Vessel Registration Information
- Lynden Pindling International Airport – Nassau, Bahamas New providence
- Grand Bahama International
- Leonard M Thompson International – Marsh Harbour, Abaco Treasure Cay, Abaco

#### A. 2 One stop shop

A one stop shop exists at seaport Arawak seaport only (for now)

#### A.3. Relief Consignments

See Annexes 1 and 3

Bahamas has identified water and waste water management as a priority post-impact need.

Medicine and Medical supplies, building materials, tents, cots,, bedding materials and mosquito nettings, Electrical fixtures and materials, plumbing fixtures and materials, household furniture, furnishing and appliances, electrical generators , bottled water, clothing, food and personal hygiene products

Tariff code:- 9817.0000

Excise code:- 9881.0000

## **B. IMPORTATION**

See Annex 11 – Import Process for Hurricane Relief Supplies under the Hurricane Dorian Exigency Order of September 2, 2019

### **B.1. Registration of NGOs**

Registered charitable organization: NEMA has not defined the criteria yet for non-registered organization

### **B.2. Clearing Agents**

Clarification will be provided soon

### **B.3. Tax Exemption Procedure**

For further details about waiver of customs fees related to temporary imports you can contact Mr Whitney Kenny at the Ministry of Finance. ([Whitneykenny@bahamas.gov.bs](mailto:Whitneykenny@bahamas.gov.bs))

(see Annex 4 about NEMA press release procedures)

### **B.4. Customs Declaration**

**See all these forms in Annex:**

- Annex 5: Form A (approved goods- 30 days exigency order form)
- Annex 6: Form B (other items – 30 days exigency order form)
- Annex 7: form C13-vat
- Annex 8: form C17 with currency
- Annex 9: form C18 currency updated
- Annex 10: form C41 for temporary use

**The process is:**

- Received the shipping documents from the country of origin (AWB / PL / Invoice or Donation certificate)
- Complete the form A (for importation of relief goods) present it to NEMA on arrival for approval on arrival
- Send the approved document with the shipping documents to the custom broker to complete the clearance
- Every cargo manifest must be submitted prior to arrival

## B.5. Customs Clearance

### B.5.1. Medicines, medical supplies and equipment

Clarification will be provided soon

### B.5.2. Telecommunications equipment

For the importation of telecommunications equipment, the **URCA** ( Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority) is the body for Telecommunications and ITC equipment imported to Bahamas.

Bahamas is not a signatory nor has it ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to the **Tampere Convention**

### B.5.3. Vehicles

Application in writing should be made to the Ministry of Finance for the waiver of applicable fees.

Form B should be attached.

## C. TEMPORARY ADMISSION

Temporary admission means the Customs procedure under which certain goods (including means of transport) can be brought into a Customs territory conditionally relieved from payment of import duties and taxes and without application of import prohibitions or restrictions of economic character; such goods (including means of transport) must be imported for a specific purpose and must be intended for re-exportation within a specified period and without having undergone any change except normal depreciation due to the use made of them.

Clarification will be provided soon

## D. IMMIGRATION

Instructions from the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade* to obtain a visa:  
<https://mofa.gov.bs/consular-services/visitors-visa/>

List of countries of the countries that require a visa to enter The Bahamas:  
<https://mofa.gov.bs/consular-services/needs-visas-enter-bahamas/>

To the question on arrival of Bahamian nationals to the US, with passports but no visas, the answer from the US Customs and Border Protection is as follows:

(quote) Arrivals are being handled on a case by case basis. If Bahamian nationals apply for entry into the U.S. and do not have the proper documentation, the CBP officers will interview the subjects to determine if they can be granted admission. (unquote)

For the immigration into the US any kind of ID is necessary (passport preferred especially for minors). Minors must be accompanied by their parents.

See below for official guidance:

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2019/09/09/visa-requirements-bahamas-citizens-traveling-united-states>

## E. MISCELLANEOUS

### E.1. Contacts

CONTACT POINTS	CONTACTS DETAILS
OCHA GENEVA	Ms. Virginie Bohl <a href="mailto:bohl@un.org">bohl at un.org</a>
OCHA GENEVA	Ms. Margaux Boehrer <a href="mailto:Margaux.boehrer@un.org">Margaux.boehrer at un.org</a>

### E.2. Annex

**Annex 1:** Notice tariff act declaration of exigency

**Annex 2:** How Individuals and Organizations Can Utilize the Exigency Order

**Annex 3:** Preliminary needs list

For the most recent information, please visit <http://www.cdema.org/bahamas-disaster-relief>.

**Annex 4:** NEMA press release procedures

**Annex 5:** Form A (approved goods- 30 days exigency order form)

**Annex 6:** Form B (other items – 30 days exigency order form)

**Annex 7:** form C13-vat

**Annex 8:** form C17 with currency

**Annex 9:** form C18 currency updated

**Annex 10:** form C41 for temporary use

**Annex 11:** Import Process for Tax Free Relief Supplies