

Version 2021/03  
Issued 26 November 2021  
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## **The Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands**

### **Policy Statement**

#### **Visiting South Georgia – COVID 19**

##### **Summary**

This document sets out the policy of the Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) in relation to vessels visiting South Georgia. This document replaces any previous advice or guidance on measures relating to COVID-19 restrictions on visiting South Georgia.

##### **Objective**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarification for vessel owners, agents, passengers, and crew over the procedure in place to enable visitation to South Georgia but minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to those based on the island.

The provisions of this policy do not apply to:

- The GSGSSI Fisheries Patrol Vessel; or
- Vessels operated by or under the control of HM Armed Forces.

##### **Context**

GSGSSI encourages visitors to visit South Georgia, to enjoy its wildlife, wonder at its landscapes and learn of its history. We recognize that COVID-19 remains a global threat, and visits must be conducted in way that reduces the risk of transmission.

There is no COVID-19 present amongst personnel on South Georgia, and all resident persons have been fully vaccinated. To minimise the risk of possible COVID-19 transmission, this policy set out the procedures to be followed to maintain this Coronavirus free status.

There are no medical facilities for visitors on South Georgia. There is no search and rescue, or other emergency service on the Island. All visiting vessels must therefore be self-sufficient in every respect, including the provision of medical cover.

There is no independent transport available from South Georgia to the Falkland Islands or to South America, which are at least three- or five-days sail away respectively.

##### **Who is affected by this Policy?**

All vessel owners and agents that intend to land in South Georgia, and the passengers and crew of any such vessel.

##### **Policy**

Vessels, wishing to visit South Georgia will be placed into one of three categories;

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Red, Amber or Green, dependent on their disease status, previous routing, time at sea and places visited.

The decision as to the status of the vessel under this policy will be made by either:

The Government Officer on duty on South Georgia; or

The GSGSSI Immigration Officer at South Georgia or in the Falkland Islands.

Regardless of the status of any vessel, no passengers or crew will be permitted to enter King Edward Point or Hope Point. These areas remain closed to visitors.

For Green vessels we aim to deliver a “business as usual” scenario for passengers and crew. i.e.

- a) Government Officers will board Green vessels to undertake Immigration, Customs and Biosecurity clearance;
- b) Green vessels *will* be permitted to land passengers at Grytviken;
- c) When open, passengers and crew may make use of indoor facilities at Grytviken

Amber and Red vessels will be subject to certain restrictions and changes to procedures (see below) to reduce the possible spread of COVID-19.

**A Green vessel** is a vessel which, immediately before landing passengers at Grytviken, meets the following criteria: -

1. A vessel that: -
  - a. has been at sea for 10 consecutive days or more;
  - b. during the period at sea has not arrived in any place other than Ascension Island, British Antarctic Territory, Falkland Islands, St Helena or Tristan da Cunha;
  - c. during the period at sea, no person aboard has shown symptoms of Coronavirus;
  - d. during the period at sea has only been boarded by persons from, and passengers or members of the crew have only alighted to, other vessels that meet the criteria in paragraphs (a)-(c); **or**
2. A vessel whose passengers and crew have arrived directly from Ascension Island, British Antarctic Territory, the Falkland Islands, St Helena, or Tristan da Cunha, and has spent 10 days or more in those territories, including any subsequent time at sea, and during that period at sea no person aboard has shown symptoms of coronavirus; **or**
3. A vessel whose passengers and crew have either: -
  - a. been at sea for at least 5 consecutive days before landing at Grytviken and are all fully vaccinated for COVID-19 (see Annex A) **and** all of whom have had a negative test for COVID-19 from a compliant test (see Annex B) on or before the second day after embarkation, repeated on the fifth day after embarkation; **or**
  - b. been at sea for at least 8 consecutive days before landing at Grytviken **and** all of whom have had a negative test for COVID-19 from a compliant test (see Annex B) on or before the second day after embarkation,

repeated on the eighth day after embarkation.

**An Amber vessel** is a vessel that does not fully meet the criteria to be considered as a Green vessel, but does **not** have confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 on board.

Amber vessels *will* be permitted to land passengers and crew at Grytviken, but with the following control measures:

- a) Except in the most exceptional circumstances, Government Officers will not board Amber vessels.
- b) Government Officers will conduct remote customs clearance and the vessel will be asked to, and report on, enhanced biosecurity self-audits.
- c) At Grytviken, visitors will only be permitted to visit areas in open space. The Church, Post Office, Museum and Public Toilets will be closed.
- d) All visitors must remain at least two metres from any personnel not from their vessel.

**A Red vessel** is a vessel which has confirmed or suspected isolated cases of COVID-19 on board.

- a) except in exceptional circumstances, Government Officers will not board Red vessels.
- b) Government Officers will conduct remote customs clearance and the vessel will be asked to, and report on, enhanced biosecurity self-audits.
- c) No landing of passengers or crew will be permitted at Grytviken.
- d) All visitors must remain at least two metres from any personnel not from their vessel.
- e) Only persons testing negative for COVID-19 in the 48 hours immediately prior to landing will be permitted ashore anywhere on the landmass of South Georgia (outside of Grytviken).

## **Procedures**

The provisions in this policy are in addition to the procedures for visiting South Georgia as set out at [Visitors – Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands](#). The procedures for permission for vessels to visit and the biosecurity regime remain in place.

## **Post-visit protocol**

In the event that, in the 14 days immediately following entry to the Territory, any passenger or crew member aboard a vessel:

- Develops symptoms of Coronavirus infection; or
- Tests positive for Covid-19

The Master of that vessel, or a person duly authorised by them, shall as soon as practicable notify the GSGSSI Government Officer in South Georgia stating:

- The date and time the positive result was received; and
- Whether that person or their close contacts disembarked within SGSSI; and
- The places visited by them within the Territory.

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## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed no later than 1 March 2022.

## **Contact**

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## **Annex A – List of Approved Vaccinations**

**“fully vaccinated”** means: -

Two doses (a mix of doses is permitted) of either of the following vaccines

- Pfizer/BioNTech;
- Oxford/AstraZeneca; or
- Moderna

Or one dose of the following vaccine

- Janssen (Johnson and Johnson)

Formulations of these vaccines, such as AstraZeneca Covishield, AstraZeneca Vaxzevria and Moderna Takeda, also qualify as approved vaccines.

Persons vaccinated with any other vaccine than those listed above will not be considered “fully vaccinated” for the purposes of this policy. GSGSSI retains the right to ask for proof of vaccination.

## **Annex B - Compliant Tests**

1. A test that is a viral detection test for current infection for the detection of SARS-CoV-2.
2. A **“viral detection test for current infection”** means —
  - a. a nucleic acid amplification test; or
  - b. a viral antigen test.

GSGSSI retain the right to ask for proof of a negative test.