



NIGERIA IMMIGRATION SERVICE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

Mission:

To give the Immigration Service a new sense of direction that can make it relevant at all times to the world security order and responsive to global migration trend.

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STANDARD OPERATION PROCEDURES **AT SEAPORTS**

INTRODUCTION

The Seaports has in recent time become commercial hub centers that control substantial percentage of the nation's economy. Associated security risks will also not be ruled out. Therefore standardizing the clearance modalities of vessels, crews and passengers becomes necessary to ensure hitch free activities at the Ports.

PURPOSE OF S.O.P: The purpose of this SOP is to ensure clearance consistency throughout the seaports in the country without jeopardizing national security.

GENERAL REQUIREMENT

EMBARKATION AND DISEMBARKATION PROCEDURE

1. All persons seeking to enter or leave Nigeria are required to present themselves before an immigration officer and answer such questions, as in the opinion of the immigration officer, are necessary to decide the condition under which such persons may be permitted to enter Nigeria.
2. Any such person may be required for examination to declare to the immigration officer whether he is carrying or conveying any document which in the opinion of an immigration officer are relevant for the purpose of examination, and if he is carrying or conveying such documents to produce such documents for the examination of the immigration officer.
3. Where such documents are not produced, the immigration officer has the right to search the person and any baggage belonging to him or under his control to ascertain whether or not he is carrying such documents. No search of any woman or girl shall be carried out except by a woman.
4. The immigration officer may detain for examination any such documents produced. Any such documents detained should be forwarded to the Comptroller General of immigration if necessary by

the quickest possible means bearing in mind the time limit under the immigration, Act section 2 (3).

5. No search under the provisions of paragraph 3 and 4 above should be carried out in respect of any minister of the federal or state governments or any person possessing diplomatic immunity.
6. All persons appearing before an immigration officer are required to produce their travel documents for examination.
7. Travel documents for entry into Nigeria include in any case a visa/entry permit and employments papers, and international certificates of health valid for such entry, and where a citizen of Nigeria is departing, include any visa/entry permit employment papers and international certificates of health.
8. All persons on entering or leaving Nigeria are required unless they are ministers of the federal or state Governments. (This shall be construed or including the Head of State and the Governor of any state) to complete Embarkation/Disembarkation cards

DISEMBARKATION PROCEDURE

9. Disembarkation procedure will commence immediately on the passengers reporting for immigration clearance. It is not necessary to wait for the production of the passenger manifests.
10. All persons on presenting themselves before an immigration officer are required to produce their valid travel documents and completed disembarkation cards and answer such questions as the immigration officer considers necessary to decide the conditions under which such persons may be permitted admission or alternatively refused admission. This requirement applies to all persons irrespective of whether they are exempted persons provided that, in respect of all ministers of the federal and state Governments and Heads of diplomatic missions, a member of their official staff may permitted to carry out immigration clearance on their behalf. The immigration officer, acting in his discretion, may waive the requirement of personal attendance in respect of any Government sponsored V.I.P. Travel Agent will not be permitted to be in the immigration control area or in interfere in any way with the immigration control area or in interfere in any way with clearance of passengers. Travel documents will not be accepted from Travel Agents on behalf of passengers.

11. No person is exempted from the provisions of the immigration Act until such time as he has satisfied the immigration that he comes within the category of an exempted person. The passports of all exempted persons will be stamped with the "seen on Arrival" stamp and a similar endorsement placed on the back of the disembarkation card, particulars of the Visa/entry permit also being endorsed at the back of the disembarkation card.
12. All persons irrespective of age are required to produce an immigration disembarkation card and children under the age of 16years shall, provided they are accompanying/joining their parents be treated as exempted persons.
13. The immigration officer will then check the disembarkation card to ensure that it is correctly completed in all respects and ensure that the name on the card is identical with the name on the passports presented. He will ensure that in all cases of persons entering for employment, the full names and address of the firm in whose employment he is entering is clearly stated.
14. The passport will then be checked to ensure:
 - a) That it is the passport of the person concerned and that the photograph is that of the person presenting it.
 - b) That the validity of the passport has not expired and that the passport is endorsed valid for travel to Nigeria.
 - c) That if the person is an alien, he is in possession of a valid visa or entry permit in the case of a common wealth National.
 - d) That the passport is a genuine document,
 - e) That the particulars of all children are recorded on the accompanying adult's passport unless the children concerned hold their own passports.

Note: A passport on which the wife of the holder is endorsed or on which the children of the holder are endorsed is not valid for the wife or children unless accompanied by the holder of the passport.
15. The immigration officer will then check the name of the person against the suspect index. If the name appears in the suspect index he will take appropriate action as indicated in the index.

1. **PRE-ARRIVAL:** Pre-arrival re-report must be made of passengers and crews to the NIS office of the port using the designate format.
2. All ships entering or leaving Nigeria are required to clear Immigration formalities at recognized Port. Recognized Ports for the clearance of vessel are: Lagos, (Apapa) Tin Can, Warri, Sapele, Port Harcourt, Calabar, and Koko.
3. In the event of a vessel arriving at other Port than a recognized Port, it is the responsibility of the Master of the vessel to contact the nearest Immigration Officer and ensure that no one leaves his vessel without permission of an Immigration Officer.
4. Documents required in respect of vessel arriving at a Nigerian Port.

The following documents are required in respect of a vessel arriving at a Nigerian Port:

- i. Crew list duplicate;
- ii. List of ports of call on inward journey;
- iii. List of disembarkation passengers showing the port of embarkation;
- iv. List of passengers in transit showing the Port of embarkation and intended port of disembarkation.
- v. List of all persons on board including stowaways.

5. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED IN RESPECT OF VESSEL DEPARTING FROM NIGERIAN PORT

The following documents are required in respect of vessel departing from a Port in Nigeria for a destination outside Nigeria:

- i. List of embarking passengers showing Port of destination;
- ii. List of outward Port of Call;
- iii. List of embarking crew;
- iv. List of any crew members or other persons missing from the ship on departure.

6. VISITING OF SHIP ON ARRIVAL IN PORT

The immigration officer immediately on the arrival of a vessel in Port shall visit that vessel and carry out immigration clearance in accordance with instruction contained in this manual. It is the responsibility of an immigration Officer in charge of a port to liaise with the Shipping Companies to ensure that he receives advance warning of the expected arrival of any vessel in Port or alternatively receives immediate notification of the arrival of any vessel. Where the vessel does not come side quay, the immigration officer must make arrangements with the shipping Company to provide transport to the vessel.

7. PASSENGER CLEARANCE

All persons seeking to disembark from a vessel arriving at a port in Nigeria who have embarked at a port outside Nigeria are required to report before an Immigration Officer, complete a disembarkation card and produce their passport, valid Entry Permit/Visa where applicable for examination by an Immigration Officer. Such examination shall be carried out in accordance with Chapter 1 of this manual. Passenger clearance will normally take place on board the vessel unless otherwise directed by an Immigration Officer who may permit landing for the purpose of examination.

8. DIRECT TRANSIT PASSENGERS

All passengers in transit on a vessel are liable to examination by an Immigration Officer and are not permitted to go ashore without the consent of an Immigration Officer. (*Sec 3 Imm. Act*) all such passengers shall be examined by an Immigration Officer and where any passenger is found to be, or is suspected to being a prohibited immigration, the Immigration Officer shall prohibit such person from going ashore whilst the vessel is in Nigeria waters. Such passenger shall be prohibited in writing of the refusal of shore leave, and the master of the vessel notified accordingly, and it shall be the responsibility of the master of the vessel to ensure that such person does not go ashore whilst in Nigeria.

The travel document of any such person permitted shore leave shall be endorsed with the Immigration Officer's stamp and a note made in the passport showing that the person is permitted shore leave whilst the vessel is in that port. No Alien shall be permitted to leave ashore whilst the vessel is in the port unless he is wished to go ashore and re-embark on the vessel at a different port in Nigeria, he may on receipt of a letter from the Agent of the vessel

confirming acceptance of immigration responsibilities in respect of normal disembarkation formalities provided that, in Nigeria visa, such person is not within category of a prohibited immigrant. (sec. 10 Imm. Act)

9. Shore leave may be withdrawn at any time by an Immigration Officer and when this is done the passenger must be so informed in writing by the Immigration Officer. The master of the vessel shall likewise be informed and is responsible for that passenger does not go ashore.

10. **DEFINITION OF CREW:**

All persons actually employed in the working or service of the vessel including the master of the ship. All persons on board the vessel who do not come within the terms of this definition ????

11. All crew are subject to examination by an Immigration Officer and may not go ashore without permission of an Immigration Officer. Immediately on the arrival of a vessel in a Nigerian port, the Immigration Officer shall obtain from the Master of the vessel two copies of the crew manifest and the Immigration Officer will examine such members of the crew as he considers necessary and return one copy of the manifest which member of the crew, if any, are refused permission to go ashore whilst the vessel is in Nigeria waters. No member of the crew comes within the category of a prohibited immigrant, or whose shore leave is considered undesirable by special branch of the National Security Organization will be granted shore leave. Where any member of the crew is refused shore leave the Master of the vessel is responsible that such member of the crew does not go ashore whilst the vessel in Nigeria waters. Permission for shore leave may at any time be rescinded by an Immigration Officer by notification in writing to member of the crew and the Master of the vessel.

12. **SIGNING ON OF CREW**

All persons, other than citizens of Nigeria, signing on as a crew in a Nigeria port are required to report before an Immigration Officer prior to embarkation, produce his travel document and complete an embarkation card. Where the person is signing on a vessel operating from a port and between Nigerian Ports such person is required to be the holder of a residence permit, he is considered for this purpose to be residence in Nigeria.

13. DISCHARGE OF CREW

No member of the crew of a vessel, not being a citizen of Nigeria, may be discharged without the consent of an Immigration Officer.

Such consent may be given at the time at which the Immigration Officer clears the vessel or when the crew member is attending the Shipping Master's office for discharge. Such consent will not be given unless the Immigration Officer is satisfied that adequate arrangement have been made for the repatriation of the crew member or his signing on another vessel. Each member seeking discharge is required to complete a disembarkation card and shall be listed, when approval is given for his discharge, with a transit pass to cover the period pending his departure from Nigeria.

Where a person is discharged from one vessel and immediately signed on another vessel which is at that time in the same port, the Immigration Officer may dispense with requirements of completion of Disembarkation/Embarkation cards. It is the responsibility of the Immigration Officer to maintain liaison with the Shipping Master of the port concerned to ensure that the crew members are discharged without his consent. *(sec. 28 Imm. Act)*

14. STOWAWAYS

A stowaway is any person who boards a ship and secrets himself on board with the intention of evading payment of his passage. Any person who arrive Nigeria by sea as a stowaway on board a vessel, shall, unless he is a citizen of Nigeria, be treated as a prohibited immigrant and refused permission to land in Nigeria. It is the responsibility of the master of the vessel to report to the immigration Officer the particulars of any stowaway on board his vessel. *(sec. 27 (1) Imm. Act)*

Where a person is found attempting to stowaway on a vessel in Nigeria port or has arrived as a stowaway on a vessel and is a citizen of Nigeria he shall be handed over to the Nigeria Police for action under Sect. 501(1) of Criminal Code.

15. DESERTERS FROM SHIPS AND PERSONS LEFT BEHIND AFTER THE VESSEL HAS DEPARTED

Any seaman or crew member, not being a citizen of Nigeria, who shall desert from the ship or shall for any reason whatsoever be left behind after the vessel, of which he is a member of the crew, has departed shall be arrested as a prohibited immigrant and detained in custody pending arrangements being made for his repatriation by the Master/Owner or Agent of the vessel concerned who shall also be responsible for the costs of his maintenance and deportation.

In the case of seaman who is Commonwealth subject, their arrest should be reported to the Shipping Master of the port concerned.

In the case of Alien seaman or crew members, their arrest should be reported to their consulate if they have consulate representative in Nigeria.

16. PASSENGER LEFT BEHIND AFTER THEIR SHIPS HAVE LEFT

Passengers who have been left behind after the ship on which they were traveling are prohibited immigrants as they have remained in Nigeria without the consent of an immigration officer. They should not however be arrested and detained unless there is reason to believe that they have deliberately missed the ship and after seeking to enter and remain in Nigeria. In all cases of this nature, the Agents of the vessel concerned should be contracted to arrange their repatriation by the first available ship.

17. EMBARKING PASSENGERS

All passengers seeking to embark on a vessel for the purpose of leaving Nigeria shall appear before an immigration officer and shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of manual????

18. REFUSAL OF ADMISSION

Where a person has been refused admission by an immigration officer, the immigration Officer shall inform that person in writing and likewise the Master of the vessel of the refusal of admission. The master of the vessel shall ensure that such person does not go ashore in Nigeria. Where the person has been permitted by an Immigration Officer to go ashore for the purpose of examination and as a result of examination is found to be prohibited immigrant, he shall be returned to the ship on which he arrived.

19. EMBARKATION AND DISEMBARKATION CARD

It is the responsibility of the shipping company or its Agent to supply Embarkation/Disembarkation cards to their crew members.

20 **CONTROL AREAS**

All Immigration personnel are issued with identity cards and these must be produced when in a controlled area at the request of members of the Nigeria Ports Authority, Nigerian Customs personnel and members of the Nigeria Police. They must also produce identity cards to members of the public when requested to prove their identity as immigration officer.

21 **SEAMAN ARRIVING IN NIGERIA TO SIGN ON- ON VESSELS IN NIGERIAN PORTS**

Seaman arriving in Nigeria for the purpose of signing-on on vessels fall into two categories:

- (a) Persons joining foreign and commonwealth Ocean going vessels registered outside Nigeria.
In this case the seaman will be required to be in possession of a letter from the agents of the vessel confirming that he is joining a vessel in Nigeria port. He will be required to produce his passport, or seaman's discharged book complete a disembarkation card and be issued a transit pass to proceed to the port in Nigeria at which he intends to sign-on on the vessel. He will on signing-on on the vessel be required to produce his passport or seaman's discharge book and a departure card.
- (b) Persons joining vessels registered in Nigeria or operating wholly or partly in Nigeria waters and are based in a Nigeria Port. This also applies to all crew of fishing vessels operating from Nigeria ports. Such person will be required to be in possession of valid entry permits in the case of a commonwealth citizens and valid visas for residence, in case of Aliens. They will be dealt with as person entering for residence accordingly.

22 **SMALLPOX AND CHOLERA VACCINATION, YELLOW FEVER INOCULATIONS**

The Immigration Officer-in-charge of a seaport shall maintain a record of all yellow fever inoculations, smallpox and cholera vaccination and shall ensure that all inoculation and

vaccination certificates of his staff? are maintained valid. The period of validity of certificates is as follows:

Smallpox Vaccination3 years

Yellow Fever inoculation10 years

Cholera Vaccination6 years

23 **PROHIBITED IMMIGRANT**

Where passenger arrives in Nigeria by sea and is found on examination to be a prohibited immigrant, he shall be informed of the findings of the Immigration Officer in writing and the master and the Owners/Agents of the vessel shall likewise be informed. The prohibited immigrant shall not be permitted to land from that vessel and where he has already been permitted to land for examination shall be escorted back on board the vessel. The Captain/Master of the vessel is responsible for ensuring that such person does not leave the vessel whilst it is in Nigeria waters. The immigration Officer shall also take steps to ensure that the person leaves Nigeria on that vessel.

24 **DETENTION OF A PROHIBITED IMMIGRANT (ARRIVAL BY SEA)**

A prohibited immigrant whose entry has been refused by an Immigration Officer shall be detained in such manner as the Immigration Officer directs pending his departure from Nigeria.

25. **SUSPECT INDEX**

- i. The suspect index is a list of persons whose entry into Nigeria is prohibited or special instructions are in force in regard to their entry into or departure from Nigeria.
- ii. A copy of the Suspect Index shall be maintained at all admission to Nigeria or departure from the names of all persons seeking admission into Nigeria or departure from Nigeria shall be checked against the Suspect Index and where any person is found whose name appears in the index appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the instructions contained in the index.

- iii. When checking the Suspect Index it is essential that the names checked shall be carried out against the name on the passport of the person being checked and not the name that appears on the passenger manifest as such names are often corrupt.

REFUSAL OF ENTRY ON MEDICAL GROUND

No refusal of entry on medical ground shall take place except on the request of in writing of a Medical Inspector duly appointed under the relevant section of the Immigration Act.

NOTE: No person is permitted to disembark from a vessel without the consent of an Immigration Officer.

Any Immigration Officer may board any ship at Nigeria.

The handling agent has to furnish a repatriation guarantee bond for the foreign seaman with the signature and seal of the Agency and full particulars of the crew. The Agent/Foreign Crew shall be responsible to repatriate signed off crew by the scheduled flight. The foreign seaman shall be in possession of yellow fever vaccination certificate if he is coming from a yellow fever zone.

All matters requiring special attention shall be handled at NIS Office at the Port.