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## Port Handles First Container of COVID-19 Test Kits With More on the Way

*Cargo Receives Priority Treatment, Leaves Terminal in Less Than Two Hours*

**NORFOLK, VA** – The Port of Virginia® is beginning to handle its first import containers of COVID-19 test kits and protective gear for frontline medical personnel and is processing that cargo in rapid fashion through a newly-instituted critical cargo initiative.

“We moved our first import load of test kits on Monday and our operations team worked closely with the ocean carrier and the cargo owner to make sure we moved that container first,” said John F. Reinhart, CEO and executive director of the Virginia Port Authority. “Three more containers are set to arrive later this week and we are working with the ocean carriers to identify additional priority cargo.

“This cargo is vital and getting it to the people that need it the most as quickly and efficiently as possible is a priority for The Port of Virginia team. We want to help and we’ll continue to look for more ways to do so.”

Early Monday morning the vessel *COSCO Philippines* arrived at Virginia International Gateway and the container with the test kits was offloaded just before 9 a.m. Barely two hours later, the truck carrying the container left the terminal and was bound **for a pharmaceutical company in Indianapolis**. It was the port’s COVID-19 Critical Cargo Initiative that allowed for the rapid unloading and departure.

The port’s COVID-19 Critical Cargo Initiative identifies critical import cargo moving across Virginia that is needed in the effort to fight the Coronavirus and allocates the equipment and personnel assets needed to get

the container moving to its destination as fast as possible. The cargo includes personal protective equipment (PPE) for the medical industry [face shields, gowns, gloves] test kits and virus-critical shipments like hand sanitizer and raw materials going into PPE production.

In this effort, the port is committing to:

- Prioritize COVID-19 critical import shipments at Norfolk International Terminals and Virginia International Gateway
- Pre-positioning these containers in the stacks to enable urgent pick up
- Work with designated motor carriers to secure and confirm truck reservations within the port's TRS system
- Collaborating with the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) to coordinate plans for any containers requiring urgent discharge from the vessel
- Any delivery scenarios occurring outside of our normal operating hours will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the decision will be made at the discretion of port management, in consultation with the ocean carrier, motor carrier, labor and the receiver of the cargo

The success of the program will require significant collaboration between the ocean carrier, the ILA and the port's operations team to identify the cargo and its location on the ship well before its arrival, Reinhart said.

"Everyone understands the importance of this cargo to those who really need it," he said. "More is on the way and as it arrives, it will receive priority treatment and expedited delivery."

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*The Virginia Port Authority (VPA) is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The VPA owns and through its private operating subsidiary, Virginia International Terminals, LLC (VIT), operates four general cargo facilities Norfolk International Terminals, Portsmouth Marine Terminal, Newport News Marine Terminal and the Virginia Inland Port in Warren County. The VPA leases Virginia International Gateway and Richmond Marine Terminal. A recent economic impact study from The College of William and Mary shows that The Port of Virginia helps to create more than 400,000 jobs and generated \$92 billion in total economic impact throughout the Commonwealth on an annual basis.*