

VESSELS



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

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1. Background

South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands can only be accessed by ship. As a result, vessels operating within the South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands Maritime Zone (SGSSI MZ) present a critical biosecurity risk. While cargo is subject to specific controls, vessels themselves pose a risk through their potential to harbour rodents and invasive invertebrates, which may subsequently be transferred ashore.

The introduction of rodents or invasive invertebrates would have severe and potentially irreversible impacts on terrestrial biodiversity. Preventing their introduction is therefore a priority, and strict biosecurity standards apply to all vessels entering and operating within the SGSSI MZ.

Failure to comply with this SOP may result in enforcement action, including refusal of entry, a requirement to leave the Maritime Zone, or other measures necessary to protect the biosecurity of the Territory.

2. Scope and application

This SOP applies to all vessels entering or operating within the SGSSI Maritime Zone, including but not limited to:

- Government vessels.
- Research vessels.
- Royal Navy vessels.
- Fishing vessels.
- Commercial cargo vessels.
- Passenger vessels.
- Yachts and private vessels.

3. Measures for the prevention of rodents

3.1 Pre-departure rodent prevention measures

A valid Ship's Sanitation Certificate must be in date upon entry into the Territory. In addition, to minimise the risk of rodents boarding vessels prior to arrival:

- Rat guards must be deployed at all times when vessels are alongside at any ports before visiting the Territories.
- Masters and skippers must remain vigilant for signs of rodents before and during the voyage and undertake rigorous pre-departure inspections.
- External doors, hatches and windows should be kept closed wherever practicable when in port.



3.2 Biosecurity Detector Dog Team screening

Vessels departing Stanley, Falkland Islands, for South Georgia may be required by the Government to undergo rodent screening by the Biosecurity Detector Dog Team.

- A typical vessel and cargo search takes less than one hour.
- Searches are conducted as part of a risk-based biosecurity programme adopted by GSGSSI.

Risk assessment may consider:

- Previous search history (including residual odours or past rodent detections)
- Vessel class and design.
- Planned activities in South Georgia (e.g. cruising only, landing at sites, or coming alongside jetties).

For the following vessels, detector dog searches are mandatory within 24 hours prior to departure:

- *Pharos SG.*
- *RRS Sir David Attenborough.*
- Royal Navy vessels planning to use the King Edward Point (KEP) jetty.

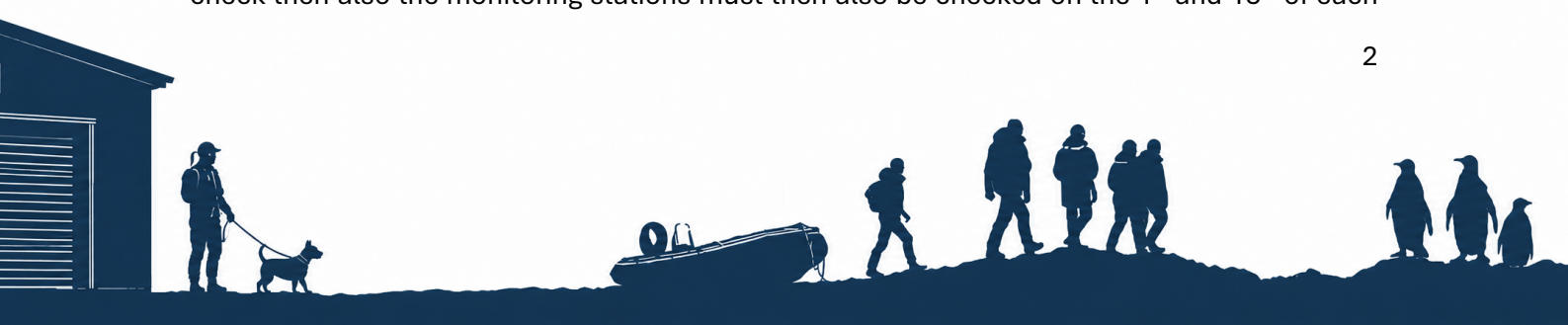
The GSGSSI Visitor Manager will communicate with Masters, skippers and/or Expedition Leaders ahead of a vessel's call to Stanley to confirm whether a Biosecurity Detector Dog Team inspection is required.

3.3 Rodent bait and monitoring stations

- Rodent bait boxes containing non-toxic bait must be carried on board at all of the following locations where present. Vessels may therefore require up to six bait boxes:
 - Fo'c'sle / Bosun's locker (entry/exit point)
 - Aft mooring deck (entry/exit point)
 - Zodiac storage or shelter deck (entry/exit point)
 - Cargo receiving areas (entry/exit point)
 - Dry food and provision stores (harbourage)
 - Waste storage areas (harbourage)
- Rodent monitoring stations must be deployed prior to entering the SGSSI Maritime Zone.

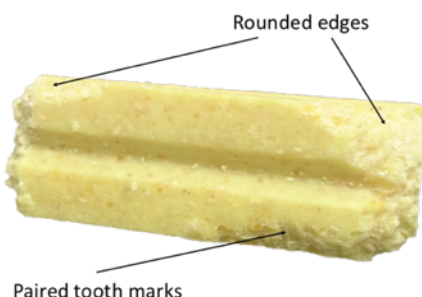
3.4 Signs of rodents

On entry into the SGSSI MZ, monitoring stations must be checked by a nominated crew member who is competent to do so. For vessels that remain in the MZ for longer than 2 weeks, you should check then also the monitoring stations must then also be checked on the 1st and 15th of each



month. Each time a check is undertaken findings reported to Government officers at King Edward Point.

- Check the bait block for chew marks. Edges should be crisp; rounded edges or paired grooves indicate rodent activity.



- Look for other rodent signs nearby, such as faeces and chewed food, packaging and wood. Note the size and shape of rat and mouse faeces.



3.5 Detection or suspicion of rodents

- If there is any concern or suspicion regarding the presence of rodents on board, the Government officer at King Edward Point must be contacted immediately.
- Any vessel believed to have rodents on board will be required to leave the Territory.
- Re-entry will only be permitted once GSGSSI is satisfied that appropriate remedial action has been taken and the vessel is free of rodents.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in denial of entry or further enforcement action.

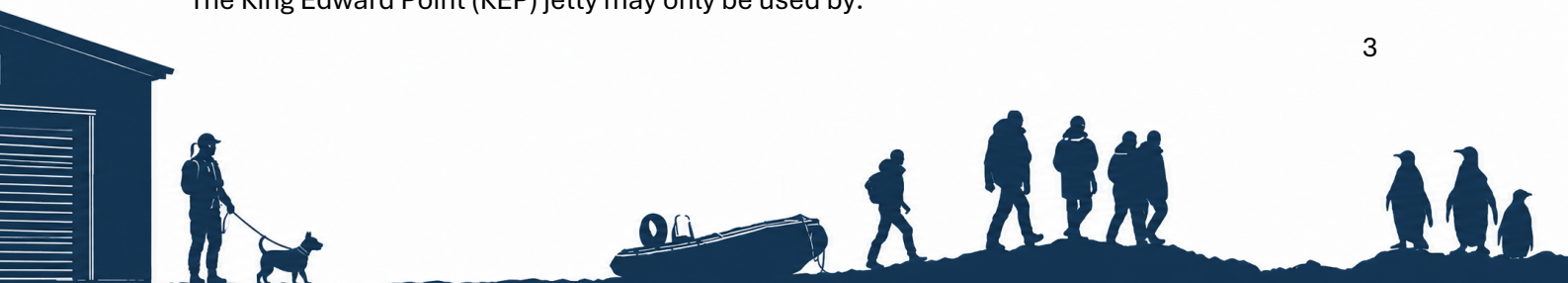
4. Use of jetties

Biosecurity risk is significantly increased when vessels are alongside fixed structures. There are only two jetties on South Georgia, and their use is strictly controlled.

4.1 Authorised jetty use

Only vessels engaged in cargo operations or other agreed operational, logistical, or safety-related activities may berth alongside jetties.

The King Edward Point (KEP) jetty may only be used by:



- *Pharos SG.*
- GSGSSI / BAS harbour launches permanently based on South Georgia.
- *RRS Sir David Attenborough.*
- Royal Navy vessels by agreement.
- Yachts ≤ 24 m load line length, by specific arrangement with GSGSSI and only in exceptional circumstances.
- Vessels in emergency situations involving safety or mechanical failure.
- Vessels with explicit permission under a Regulated Activity Permit (RAP) and an approved biosecurity risk assessment.

The Tijuca jetty (Grytviken) may only be used by:

- Passenger tenders.
- Yachts ≤ 24 m load line length.

4.2 Biosecurity requirements when alongside

When a vessel is alongside a jetty:

- Gangways should be raised overnight wherever practicable.
- Where 24-hour access is required, gangways may be lit to deter rodents, with careful consideration given to the risk of bird strike.
- Enhanced biosecurity measures must be in place due to the increased likelihood of rodent transfer.

5. General measures for invertebrate detection and deterrence

Invertebrates may be introduced via provisions, personal baggage, or by flying on board while vessels are in port. Once established, they may spread between vessels or be transferred ashore.

To reduce this risk:

- Doors and windows should be kept closed in port where possible.
- Deck lighting should be minimised in foreign ports.
- Cardboard packaging, particularly from fresh produce, should be minimised and incinerated promptly.
- Crawling and flying insect traps must be installed in high-risk areas and checked regularly.

Government officers may inspect invertebrate traps at any time. Discovery of an infestation may require additional biosecurity controls or restrictions.



6. Reporting

Masters of vessels must log completion of rodent checks and any findings via an online form which is submitted to the Government Officers.

