



RMS VOYAGE 256

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Passengers

When will you know whether the RMS will sail from Cape Town?

It is too soon to say. Technicians are currently investigating the cause of the problems and as soon as they know we will let you know what the plans are.

What happens to my booking? Will I get a refund?

If you cannot now travel or would like to change your arrangements please contact AWSML. Your booking can be transferred to another sailing without the administration fee. If the cabin grade is lower, the difference will be refunded or a full refund will be given.

But you can't tell me when the next ship is due to sail. What happens to my booking?

Please discuss your arrangements with AWSML. They will be able to explain all the options to you.

What has happened to Ascension? Can I book through there?

Yes, you can still sail to Ascension but at the moment you cannot fly onward. The revised schedule for the RMS will be published as soon as we know the likely time to effect repairs.

I'm booked on a flight out of Ascension, what happens to my flight booking?

Updated 19 April 2017

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) are temporarily re-routing the South Atlantic Airbridge via an alternative location and have decided to suspend operations to Ascension Island for the landing of the Airbus A330 (AirTanker Voyager) until further notice.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and MOD are working closely to put in place measures to support the people who work on Ascension Island. Arrangements are currently being made to repatriate individuals currently on Ascension Island who are unable to travel back to the UK on the Airbridge due to the re-routing.

Unfortunately, Ascension Island Travel Agency (AITA) is unable to process any further flight bookings (new bookings or amendments) until we have clarity about an alternative service to and from Ascension Island.

AITA will contact all passengers booked to travel to Ascension Island in the coming weeks to provide further information about their booking. However, please be advised that at this stage, all non-essential passengers are unlikely to be able to travel to Ascension Island.

I am in South Africa waiting on this voyage, who is going to pay for my accommodation?

Please discuss this with the passenger agents on the RMS. You should always notify your Travel Insurance provider.

When will I know when I can book another voyage if I cannot travel on voyage 256?

AWSML and the local agents will contact all passengers to ascertain their requirements and passengers will be given confirmation ASAP.

I have friends/family that are currently in Cape Town, one of them on medical and the other accompanying them. They were scheduled to come back on Voyage 256. What happens to them? They have been there a long time because Voyage 255 was cancelled. Also, would you know if the Health Directorate would cover the extra cost of staying there or would my friends/family have to cover it?

If a patient needs to remain in Cape Town because there was no berth available for them on the RMS, then the Health Directorate would cover the cost of the extended stay. This would include any official carer.

Carers are responsible for their own medical insurance cover. Carers will need to get a family member on St Helena to extend their insurance cover with Solomons if it becomes necessary.

Will SHG compensate me for the fact that I cannot now attend an event which was booked months ago?

No, SHG will not offer compensation, please contact your Travel Insurance provider.

Cargo and Provisions

I'm expecting a delivery on Voyage 256, what happens to that?

We are currently waiting for information on Voyage 256. Once that is received we can make a decision about cargo. We will, consider alternative arrangements once we know the outcome of the technicians' investigations.

Can the MV Helena bring cargo and passengers from Cape Town to St Helena?

If the MV Helena is used there are no passenger berths available but she will be able to carry cargo for the Island.

If we get the MV Helena to bring cargo, will she continue to Ascension?

We will discuss this with the Ascension Island Government.

Businesses

I have tourists booked on this journey; will I be compensated for this loss?

There will be no compensation but Enterprise St Helena's Business Support Initiative is there to help.

I have staff booked on this voyage; how am I going to keep my business going?

Please contact Enterprise St Helena to see if their Business Support Initiative can help.

General

Who makes the decisions about whether to cancel RMS voyages?

This is a matter for St Helena Line (SHL). It is not the responsibility of St Helena Government and although we are in close contact with the company there is little we can do to influence the decision making of the company.

Why was the RMS allowed to leave Simonstown with only one engine when you knew it needed attention?

The RMS left Simonstown on two engines which were working at the time - the repair was approved and cleared by the Rolls Royce engineer and the surveyor from Lloyds Register. The current problem was not identified until after arrival in Cape Town and subsequently confirmed by specialist divers and technicians.

Surely this problem should have been sorted out in dry dock?

On leaving the dry dock it was believed the original propeller problem had been resolved - the RMS would not have been cleared to sail by Lloyds Register if this was not the case.

Will the rest of the schedule be affected?

Yes the current schedule will be affected.

The rest of the schedule will be reconsidered when the engineers give us an estimate of the time needed to effect repairs.

Will the RMS need to go back into dry dock?

We cannot say until the extent of the repairs needed is clear.

Why can SHG not charter a plane to allow people to travel?

Charter flights to cater for the number of passengers affected would be complex and expensive to organise. We are currently considering every option.

Updated 17 April 2017

Will the replacement vessel sail on to Ascension?

Discussions continue about Ascension. It is intended to maintain a link to Ascension through the shipping service.

I am a medical referral patient and I don't want to have to return to Panorama Lodge, what happens to me?

The need to find accommodation for a large number of people means we have to make best use of any available resources, and the Panorama Lodge is one of them. The new Director for Health, Akeem Ali, is on the RMS in Cape Town and he will be contacting all those who have been referred to Cape Town to discuss their individual needs.

I think it would be best if I just go back to the UK - will you pay for my flight?

You may cancel your trip to St Helena. You will receive a full refund. Please contact a member of the team on-board the RMS.

I have heard that the May sailing is fully booked; will I get a berth on that sailing if I can't get to St Helena now?

Bookings on the May voyage will be honoured. It is unlikely that there will be many berths available but you should check with your booking agent.

When will we know whether there is another ship or a plane?

While progress is being made to find alternative means of transport this is taking some time, and it is unlikely that there will be any news before Wednesday this week. As soon as there is confirmation of the alternatives available, passengers will be contacted.

I have a job to go to in St Helena. Who do I contact?

You should contact your HR department or employer direct. The SHG Resilience Forum has set up a dedicated e-mail address for enquiries: rmsdelay@sainthelena.gov.sh. Your concerns will be passed on to the relevant bodies.

I am running out of money. What can I do?

You should contact your insurer and explain what has happened.

SHG

19 April 2017