



Vessels calling at Kavkaz and Novorossiysk for bunker stem may face operational delays different for each port, and these delays can be prolonged by weather factor.

- **Novorossiysk**

Delays in arranging the inward or outward clearance formalities are primarily associated with periodical unavailability of the customs officer to work at the outer roads. Depending on work schedule of customs and number of duty officers in a day or night shift, the vessel may loose up to one day while awaiting the officials onboard.

- **Kavkaz**

A service boat with the formalities team departs from shore terminal every morning-noon to return the next day early morning. The way to the outer roads takes 2.5-3.5 hours on average and in order to get back ashore in due time, the formalities are unlikely to board any vessel after 01:30-02:00 a.m. except very rare occasions.

In case the vessel is in the schedule for the outward clearance formalities but the bunkering is not complete before this time, the clearance will be postponed to the afternoon – evening time when the next boat arrives from Kavkaz shore terminal.

Each team consisting of the customs and immigrations officers would normally visit 3-4 vessels per working shift, depending on the time they leave terminal and other factors. If the vessel is the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> in the list for clearance her chances to pass formalities are low.

- **Weather**

A vessel completed bunkering at Kavkaz and was ready to depart, when the weather started worsening and gale warning was announced. The boat with the formalities team had to return ashore. The weather got better only a week later resulting in considerable delays affecting vessel's operations.

In another case there was no gale warning in the area and the bunker barge was about to commence mooring despite small swell from the West which was not predicted. The swell was gradually increasing and by the time the hose was connected the barge had started pitching and rolling heavily. The Master of bunker barge ordered to disconnect the hose and left vessel for safety reasons. The next opportunity for bunkering arose two days later.

Depending on their direction, moderate winds at outer anchorage can create waves making safe embarkation of the authorities impossible even though the weather is considered working for ship-to-ship cargo transshipment or other operations. When a gale warning is announced, traffic of the service boats is suspended. That means that the vessel will have to wait for weather improvement.

Note: as a general rule, the bunker barge should leave before arrival of the authorities. Otherwise the clearance formalities will be cancelled.

The advice is to consider the existing risk of delays, make sure the bunker barge is ready and double check weather forecast before proceeding with 'bunker call' at Kavkaz and Novorossiysk when the time is pressing...