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American Shipper Container Intermodal International Maritime News

Georgia ports employ 'isolate and operate strategy' to battle COVID-19

Best February ever recorded despite challenges from coronavirus pandemic

Kim Link-Wills • Thursday, March 26, 2020 0 333 1 minute read



📷 The ports of Savannah and Brunswick remain open during the coronavirus crisis. (Photo: Georgia Ports Authority)

It's business as usual at Georgia's ports, but with an "isolate and operate strategy."

That strategy includes spreading out workers at the 1,300-acre Garden City Terminal in Savannah to [minimize the risk of exposure to the coronavirus](#), Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) Executive Director Griff Lynch said.

GPA operates deepwater ports in Savannah and Brunswick as well as inland terminals in Chatsworth, Bainbridge and Columbus, Georgia.

"Operationally, we are redesigning staffing and procedures, such as assigning operators to specific cranes and having them report directly to the machinery," Lynch said in a posted update on the coronavirus crisis. "As a preventive measure, GPA is providing disinfectants to equipment operators, who have been instructed to wipe down their controls at the beginning and end of each shift."

Lynch said the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) has started monitoring the temperature of union members as they report to work, and GPA is securing equipment to start temperature monitoring of port employees.

"As the country's third-busiest port complex, we clearly understand the importance of keeping our ports operational through this crisis to support the needs of our customers and the nation," Lynch said. "Because of recently completed projects that are now coming online, our container terminal has additional storage space and we stand prepared to meet our customers' needs at the challenging time."

Despite the challenges, the [Port of Savannah achieved its busiest February ever](#) last month, handling 364,405 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), an increase of 17% over the same month last year.

For the fiscal year to the end of February, 3.1 million TEUs crossed the docks at Garden City Terminal, up 4% year-over-year.

March volumes year-over-year are expected to dip because of the impact from COVID-19. But GPA said earlier in the month that it already could see brighter days ahead. [“Bookings on the water show a strong increase](#), which is an important indicator for a return to normalcy,” the GPA said. “Another positive factor for Savannah is increased demand from importers, with projects coming online such as new distribution centers supplying U.S. factories for domestic production.”



Tags

container terminal

Coronavirus

COVID-19

Garden City Terminal

Georgia Ports Authority

Griff Lynch

ILA

International Longshoremen's Association

port complex

Port of Brunswick

Port of Savannah

TEUs

twenty-foot equivalent units

U.S. factories