

2M adjusts Asia-US East Coast ship schedules to account for Cape reroutings



Container ship voyages are taking anywhere from three days to over a week longer than normal, according to Maersk, as vessels reroute around the African Cape. Photo Credit: byvalet / Shutterstock.com.

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Maersk and Mediterranean Shipping Co. have reset schedules for container services between Asia and the US East Coast through the end of March due to the ongoing diversion of ships away from the Suez Canal. The 2M Alliance partners are telling shippers that vessels will return to regular weekly departures as they adjust to longer voyages around southern Africa.

Maersk said in a Wednesday advisory that four US East Coast services jointly operated with MSC will continue to forgo Suez Canal transits and reroute around the Cape of Good Hope as the security risk in the Red Sea “remains at a significant level.” Houthi militants based in Yemen have been launching drone and missile attacks against commercial shipping since mid-December.

The latest attacks came Wednesday when the Iranian-backed Houthis fired three missiles at the US-flagged *Maersk Detroit* during a transit through the Gulf of Aden, according to US Central Command. A US Navy guided missile destroyer intercepted two of the missiles, while a third landed in the sea. Maersk confirmed the attack in a statement to the Associated Press, adding that another US-flagged vessel, the *Maersk Chesapeake*, also came under attack.

Maersk said it adjusted schedules on the four other services “to preserve weekly departures for our services with the goal of offering more predictability, reliability, and consistency, despite the associated delays that come with the current reroutings.”

The TP17/America service between South China and the US East Coast will divert around the Cape of Good Hope for 15 east and westbound voyages departing between Jan. 24 and March 26. Maersk said it will add another vessel to the TP17 service, starting with the *Maersk Sana* departing Hong Kong on Feb. 18, to compensate for the “longer transport times.”

The Red Sea vessel updates show that a transit from Singapore to Newark will now take between 27 and 28 days, while the pro forma schedule for the TP17 shows an estimated transit time of 25 days.

Similarly, a transit from Vietnam’s Vung Tau to Newark will now take 33 days compared with TP17’s pro forma transit time of 25 days.

The TP11/Elephant service from Southeast Asia will also divert 16 westbound and eastbound voyages around the African Cape between Jan. 25 and March 30, according to Maersk, with westbound weekly departures resetting with the *Maersk Saigon*’s Feb. 22 departure from Singapore. The update shows that a voyage from Oman’s Port of Salalah to Newark will take between 24 and 25 days via the African Cape compared with an 18-day pro forma voyage time through the Suez Canal.

The TP12/Empire and TP16/Emerald services will use the African Cape for eastbound voyages to North Asia from the US for departures through Feb. 29 and March 18, respectively. The Red Sea update shows the Cape reroutings will affect 11 scheduled US departures through March 18.

The TP12 will omit eastbound calls at Salalah starting with the Jan. 25 US departure of the *Georg Maersk*.

The two services, though, will continue to use the Panama Canal for their voyages from Asia to the US East Coast.

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