



Marine Notice 15/2009
Supersedes 6/2006 and 10/2009

Piracy and armed robbery against ships

This notice is to advise shipowners, ship operators, masters and crews of:

- The latest guidance from the IMO on preventing and suppressing acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships.
- Specific guidance for ships transiting the Gulf of Aden and waters off the coast of Somalia.
- The Australian Ship Reporting System (AUSREP) Out Of Area (OOA) reporting facilities for Australian ships (Annex 1), and;
- Standard message formats for piracy/armed robbery attack alerts (Annex 2)

IMO Guidance

IMO Circular

The IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1334 (*Guidance to shipowners and ship operators, shipmasters and crews on preventing and suppressing acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships*) provides information on the activities of pirates on the high seas and armed robbers who attach ships in the territorial waters of the coastal State. MSC.1/Circ.1334 is available at www.amsa.gov.au

The aim of the circular is to give comprehensive, up-to-date advice on best practice measures that can be taken onboard to prevent attacks, or, when they occur, to minimise the danger to the crew and ship as well as to reinforce the vital need to report attacks to the coastal state and the ship's Flag state.

To assist in anti-piracy measures, the IMO issues reports on piracy and armed robbery against ships submitted by Member Governments and international organisations.

The piracy reports are available on the IMO website www.imo.org

Maritime Security regime

The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, which came into effect in 2004 and is implemented through Chapter XI-2 (Special measures to enhance maritime security) in the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) contains a comprehensive set of measures to enhance ships security. One of these measures is the development of a Ship Security Plan to ensure the application of measures on board the ship designed to protect persons on board as well as the ship and its cargo from any suspicious act or circumstance, including piracy and armed robbery.

The ISPS Code is implemented in Australia through the Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003 and associated Regulations, which legislates Australia's maritime security requirements including matters to be addressed in a Ship Security Plan and the reporting of incidents of piracy or armed robbery.

Piracy Reporting Centre

The latest information on piracy attacks and the regions of greatest risk can be obtained from the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Maritime Bureau's (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre at Kuala Lumpur. The centre operates 24 hours a day and can be contacted on:

Telephone: +603 2031 0014

Facsimile: +603 2078 5679

Telex: MA 34199 IMBPCI

email: piracy@imbpiracy.org

The centre also issues status reports and warning messages on the SafetyNET service of Inmarsat C at 0001UTC each day.

Radio watch and reporting

A constant radio watch should be maintained with the appropriate shore or naval authorities when in areas where attacks have occurred. Continuous watch should also be maintained on all distress and safety frequencies, particularly VHF Channel 16. Ships should also ensure all maritime safety information broadcasts for the area are monitored (NAVTEX and EGC SafetyNET service).

Other guidance

- BIMCO Publication "The Ship Master's Security Manual"
- Pirates and Armed Robbers: Guidelines on Prevention for Masters and Ship Security Officers 4th Edition (ICS/ISF)
- Guidance for Ship Operators on the IMO International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code 1st Edition 2003 (ICS)
- ICS Model Ship Security Plan (With CD) 1st Edition 2003 (ICS)
- Piracy – The East Africa/Somalia Situation: Practical Measures to Avoid, Deter or Delay Piracy Attacks (OCIMF)

Somalia and the Gulf of Aden

In recent years, most reported acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships, in particular, the seizure and attempted seizure of ships for ransom, occurred in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast on Somalia in the Western Indian Ocean, with some attacks taking place over 500 nautical miles off the coast.

In response to the increase in the number of attacks in the Western Indian Ocean, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) advised its members on 15 April 2009, to the effect that, as recommended by the Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) **shipmasters should not, unless unavoidable, plan their passage within 600 nautical miles of the Somali coast** in the Western Indian Ocean.

Further, the United Nations Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia (GCPCS) developed the Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Coast of Somalia. This guidance has been promulgated by the International Maritime Organisation in MSC.1/Circ.1335 (Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia). MSC/Circ.1335 is available at www.amsa.gov.au

Shipowners, ship operators and managers, shipping companies and ship masters who intend to operate in and around the Somali Coast or the Gulf of Aden, are advised to:

- Take note of the Best Management Practices provided in MSC.1/Circ.1335 when planning passage through these areas;
- Accept and implement the advice of MSCHOA and ICS;
- Refer to the UK Hydrographic Office Anti-Piracy Planning Chart when planning passages through the Gulf of Aden www.ukho.gov.uk/media/news/pages/antipiracychart.aspx;
- Register the intended movement of their ship with MSCHOA via the website www.mschoa.org (unless operating under national schemes);
- Report the navigation route of their ship to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Dubai, when navigating through the Gulf of Aden and/or the Western Indian Ocean (unless operating under national schemes);
- Take prompt action in response to any alerts or guidance issued by MSCHOA, UKMTO Dubai, Maritime Liaison Office (MARLO) Bahrain, the International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC), ALINDIEN or any coastal State authority in the region so as to minimise the risk of attack; and
- Report any attack or suspected pirate activity to UKMTODubai (Tel: +97 1505 523 215 ukmto@eim.ae) or IMB PRC (Tel: +60 3203 10014 imbkl@icc-ccs.org / piracy@icc-ccs.org) immediately, with further reports to MSCHOA (opscentre@mschoa.org) and the regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre as soon as possible.

AUSREP Out of Area Reporting facilities

AMSA provides an extension to the Australian Ship Reporting System (AUSREP) with its Out of Area (OOA) reporting facilities for Australian ships operating in piracy threat areas. A summary of the AUSREP OOA procedure is provided in Annex 1 to this notice.

Standard message formats

The standard message formats for:

- Initial messages - Piracy/armed robbery attack alert; and
- Follow-up report - Piracy/armed robbery attack alert

were agreed by the IMO Maritime Safety Committee in June 2009. They are reproduced in Annex 2 to this notice.

Conclusion

Acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships are often violent in nature and continue to pose a significant threat in a number of high risk areas.

It is essential that owners, masters and crews of vessels operating in waters where attacks occur take appropriate measures to guard against attack, minimise the risks if an attack takes place, report attacks and cooperate in criminal investigations if requested to do so.

Ships entering piracy risk areas must be aware of the risk of attack and should take appropriate measures to increase the level of surveillance and security on board and devise means of responding to attacks. A clear and comprehensive Ship Security Plan and the training of crews in security measures and response techniques are essential. Without clearly defined and rigorously practiced procedures, the risk of an uncoordinated response during the inevitable confusion of an attack increases the danger faced by those on

board the ship. While a Ship Security Plan and crew training may not prevent an attack they should help reduce the risks if an attack takes place.

Attacks by pirates or armed robbers pose an immediate threat to the safety of a ship and individual crew members. When responding to attacks, masters and crews should seek to minimise the risk to those on board and maintain effective control over the safe navigation of the ship.

Finally, it is important that all incidents of piracy and armed robbery, even minor incidents, are reported in detail to the appropriate authorities as soon as practicable. Accurate knowledge of the type and extent of piracy and armed robbery of ships is valuable for assessing the risk and formulating a comprehensive response.

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Chief Executive Officer
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AUSREP Out of Area (OOA) Reporting in Piracy Threat Areas

Because of the threat of attacks by pirates and armed robbers on ships operating outside Australian waters, Australian flag vessels may continue reporting their position to RCC Australia while outside the AUSREP area and within a piracy threat area. The generic term 'AUSREP OOA' is used to identify these reports.

Sailing Plan Report (AUSREP SP)

Ships should initially indicate at Section X of the format in the AUSREP SP their intention to employ AUSREP OOA reports during the current voyage, on leaving the Australian area, or prior to entering the AUSREP area.

Position Report (AUSREP PR)

- While in the AUSREP area normal daily AUSREP PR reports are to be sent.
- Once across the AUSREP boundary the header on all subsequent daily reports to RCC Australia (except the final [AUSREP FR] report) should be changed to read 'AUSREP OOA'.
- Continuity of daily reporting is essential.

Final Report (AUSREP FR)

On clearing the designated Threat Zone outbound, or on arrival at the destination port if within the Threat Zone, the AUSREP FR message should be sent to RCC Australia.

Ship's Message Formats

Report 1 - Initial Message - Piracy/armed robbery attack alert

1. Ship's name, callsign and IMO number, INMARSAT IDs (plus ocean region code) and MMSI
MAYDAY/DISTRESS ALERT (see note)
URGENCY SIGNAL
PIRACY/ARMED ROBBERY ATTACK

2. Ship's position (and time of position UTC)
Latitude Longitude
Course Speed KTS

3. Nature of event

Note: It is expected that this message will be a Distress Message because the ship or persons will be in grave or imminent danger when under attack. Where this is not the case, the word MAYDAY/DISTRESS ALERT is to be omitted.

Use of distress priority (3) in the INMARSAT system will not require MAYDAY DISTRESS ALERT to be included.

Report 2 - Follow-up report - Piracy/armed robbery attack alert

1. Ship's name, callsign and IMO number
2. Reference initial PIRACY/ARMED ROBBERY ALERT
3. Position of incident
Latitude Longitude
Name of area
4. Details of incident, eg:
 - While sailing, at anchor or at berth?
 - Method of attack
 - Description/number of suspect craft
 - Number and brief description of pirates/robbers
 - What kind of weapons did the pirates/robbers carry?
 - Any other information (e.g. language spoken)
 - Injuries to crew and passengers
 - Damage to ship (Which part of the ship was attacked?)
 - Brief details of stolen property/cargo
 - Action taken by the master and crew
 - Was incident reported to the coastal authority and to whom?
 - Action taken by the Coastal State
5. Last observed movements of pirate/suspect craft, eg
Date/time/course/position/speed
6. Assistance required
7. Preferred communications with reporting ship, e.g.:
Appropriate Coast Radio Station
HF/MF/VHF
INMARSAT IDs (plus ocean region code)
MMSI
8. Date/time of report (UTC)