



## Prevention and Suppression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships

To : *Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters and Officers*

### *Summary*

This Note promulgates:

- an IMO document on *Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Coast of Somalia* to assist companies and ships in avoiding piracy attacks, deterring attacks and delaying successful attacks in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia;
- a new MSC Circular on the *Guidance to Shipowners, Companies, Ship Operators, Shipmasters and Crews on Preventing and Suppressing Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships*; and
- the importance of prompt reporting of any piracy incidents to the coastal and flag States is also highlighted.

This Note supersedes Hong Kong Merchant Shipping Information Note Nos. 42/2004, 13/2006 and 17/2007.

1. Acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships are often violent in nature and continue to pose a serious threat in a number of high-risk areas. “High-Risk Areas” are of sea areas where attacks of terrorism, piracy or armed robbery have taken place. It should be noted that although the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa are currently considered High-Risk Area due to intense pirate activity in these regions, there are other areas to which this definition may apply.

### **IMO Guidelines on Prevention and Suppression of Piracy and Armed Robbery**

2. The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 86<sup>th</sup> session, considering the distinctive nature of the incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships, approved the following MSC Circulars for the guidance of shipowners, ship operators, masters and crews on preventing and suppressing acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships:

- MSC.1/Circ.1332 – *“Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Waters off the Coast of Somalia”*

The Circular contains an updated set of best management practices developed by a working group of industry organizations to deter piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. The practices are intended to address the unique challenges present in this area. Additional guidance is also provided for vessels engaged in fishing in these waters.

- 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”*

This Circular revises and revokes MSC/Circ.623/Rev.3, which includes recommendations for the carriage of additional crewmembers when the ship is scheduled to operate in high-risk areas with increased emphasis on security training and drills. Advice on the use of non-lethal measures to deter boarding by pirates or armed robbers is also given.

3. MSC.1/Circ.1332 and MSC.1/Circ.1334 can be found on the webpage of Marine Department ( <http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/msnote/msin.html> ) as attachment to this Note.

### **Maritime Security Regime**

4. The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code 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 ship security. One of these measures is the development of a Ship Security Plan to enhance ship security to protect persons on board as well as the ship and its cargo from any suspicious act or circumstance, including piracy and armed robbery.

5. All Hong Kong registered ships should have a Ship Security Plan meeting ISPS Code requirements.

### **Information about Piracy Activities**

6. The latest information on piracy attacks and the regions of greatest risk may be obtained free of charge from the ICC International Maritime Bureau’s Piracy Reporting Centre at Kuala Lumpur. The centre operates 24 hours a day and can be contacted as follows:

ICC International Maritime Bureau (Asia Regional Office)

PO Box 12559, 50782 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Telephone : +60 3 2078 5763

Facsimile : +60 3 2078 5769

Telex : MA34199 IMBPCI

Email : [imbkl@icc-ccs.org.uk](mailto:imbkl@icc-ccs.org.uk)

24 Hours Anti-piracy HELPLINE – Telephone : +60 3 2031 0014

7. The Centre posts the weekly updates of attacks on the Internet on <http://www.icc-ccs.org> . Ship owners and authorities ashore as well as ships at sea can access the weekly updates.

### **Reporting Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships**

8. It must be emphasised that prompt reporting is extremely important for remedial measures to be taken locally and for the formulation and institution of more effective preventive measures at regional and international level in the fight of piracy. Owners managers and masters of Hong Kong registered ships are requested to report all incidents of piracy and armed robbery, even minor incidents on board their ships in standard message format as contained in Appendix 5 to MSC.1/Circ.1334 without delay to the nearest rescue coordination centre (RCC) and to Hong Kong Marine Department as follows:

Address : Hong Kong Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre  
Marine Department  
5/F., Outer Island, Macau Ferry Terminal, Hong Kong  
Telephone : +852 2233 7999 or +852 2233 7998  
Facsimile : +852 2541 7714  
Email : hkmrcc@mardep.gov.hk

9. This Note supersedes Hong Kong Merchant Shipping Information Note Nos. 42/2004, 13/2006 and 17/2007.

Marine Department  
Multi-lateral Policy Division

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