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# Barbados Ships' Registry

## INFORMATION BULLETIN 35

### SECURITY GUIDANCE

The purpose of this guidance is to assist both ship owners and ship masters in considering their exposure to illegal acts perpetrated against their vessels and to consider possible means to respond to these threats.

**Part One deals with the presence of unauthorised persons onboard for the purpose of stealing cargo, ship's materials or crew's personal effects.**

This unlawful intervention is considered as three categories:

**Piracy:** the boarding by unauthorised persons for the purpose of stealing property or perpetrating other illegal acts while the vessel is in international waters.

**Robbery (armed or unarmed):** the boarding by unauthorised persons while the vessel is underway for the purpose of stealing property while the vessel is in territorial waters.

**Robbery (armed or unarmed):** the boarding by unauthorised persons when vessel is either in port or at anchor for the purpose of stealing property while the vessel is in territorial waters.

This guidance proposes actions and reactions to lessen the risk of attracting the attention of these criminal types, and if attacked, the means to come through the ordeal with none or minimal injury to the crew and damage and loss to the ship.

The ship owner and shipmaster should review the points considered in this Guidance in conjunction with the conditions existing on the vessel. As a result of this assessment a **Security Plan** should be drawn up such that all persons onboard can be made aware of what to expect and how to conduct themselves to expedite a quick removal of the threat. When a vessel is known to be approaching locations where criminal interventions are known to occur the Master should drill the crew in the content of the Security Plan and put in place any precautions as prescribed.

**Part Two deals with the unauthorised placing of materials or persons onboard while the vessel is in port, for the purpose of clandestine transportation from one geographical location to another.**

### **The Risks Defined**

**At Sea:** The risk is of theft and/or injury to the crew

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The supplemental risk of the ship not being under command and therefore presenting a hazard to itself and other shipping.

**In Port:** The risk is of theft and/or injury to the crew

### **PART ONE (Underway)**

The extent of the exposure to risk is a product of the ship's location, time of day and status of the vessel.

Databases logging the location and frequency of these occurrences are being maintained and updated by the ICC International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre at Kuala Lumpur. The contact information is given at the end of this Bulletin.

Current information regarding higher risk locations is as follows:

#### **South East Asia Area**

Particularly	Indonesian waters	boarding while underway
	Malacca Straits	boarding while underway
	South China Sea	boarding while underway
	Philippines	boarding while underway

#### **Indian Sub-Continent**

Particularly	Indian waters	boarding while underway
	Bangladesh waters	boarding while underway

#### **African Continent**

Particularly	Nigeria	boarding in port or at anchor
	Ivory Coast	boarding in port or at anchor
	Somalia	boarding while underway
	Red Sea	boarding while underway
	Gulf of Aden	boarding while underway

#### **South America**

Particularly	Santos	boarding in port or at anchor
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## **Radio: Updating of Local Information**

When a ship is preparing to enter an area known to be frequented by criminals a continuous radio watch monitoring the safety information frequencies and VHF Channel 16 and 2182 kHz should be set to allow the current and pending risk to the ship to be assessed.

Broadcasts on the INMARSAT enhanced group calling system (EGC) SafetyNET (SM) should also be continuously monitored. Daily broadcasts are made at 0001 UTC from the ICC-IMB Piracy Centre Kuala Lumpur covering the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and on Inmarsat C SafetyNET service at 0100 UTC each day.

## **Risk Assessment**

Due to the opportunities afforded to the criminals for ease of access, ships are more likely to be boarded at anchor than while underway.

The factors giving rise to a ship being targeted are usually opportunistic in that the criminals will not have any prior knowledge regarding the presence of items of particular value being onboard.

As soon as a ship enters waters that are known to be frequented by criminal elements it should be accepted that the vessel will be observed. A ship may become a target if it is the only vessel in the area or it has been judged to be the 'soft' target.

The factors which go together to make a 'soft' target are those that are seen to be assisting a boarding of the vessel while underway.

- Ship speed less than 14 knots
- Ship course steady
- Low freeboard
- Local time between 23:00 and 04:00 in the morning
- Minimal or no illumination on the ship's decks
- Minimal or no illumination from the Moon
- No sign of activity on exposed decks

## **Prevention of Boarding While the Vessel is Underway**

The elimination or reduction of the effects of as many of the assisting factors as possible make up the technique for the prevention of boarding.

The following actions may be generally applied when a vessel enters a high-risk zone or when a vessel close by is observed to be behaving in a suspicious manner. It must however be considered that when electing to implement the procedures for the prevention of boarding, the security of the ship is largely dependent upon the efficiency of the Bridge lookout, particularly in the detection of a suspicious craft.

It should also be considered that the criminals may have utilised ships to either act as mother ships for the smaller craft used for approaching and boarding or to act as decoys by attracting the attention of the Bridge Watch by suspicious manoeuvres, while a small craft approaches undetected.

By the time the criminals are thinking of deploying their craft your vessel has already been targeted and therefore can be assumed to have presented itself, for whatever reason, as a preferred target.

### **Measures To Reduce the Risk of Boarding**

Of the seven factors conspiring to make your ship seem the most attractive prospect for boarding, three of these may not be controlled. The remaining four factors make up the counter measures that can be considered to discourage the criminals.

- Ship speed in excess of 12 knots
- Erratic course changes
- Deck lighting
- Activity on deck

From the perspective of criminals in small craft at night trying to approach a ship that is maintaining steady course with a speed of under 12 knots, it is completely different from a vessel moving at a speed in excess of 14 knots executing small but random course changes.

While it is normal to consider the general vulnerability of merchant shipping we should also consider the criminals' perception of their own vulnerability.

The criminals will feel most vulnerable when making their approach to the ship's side and climbing onboard. It is therefore important to concentrate the ship's efforts to reducing the chances of being boarded to this period of time. Once the criminals have gained the deck successfully they will be more confident, whether they are armed or not.

While a vessel is underway it is most likely to be boarded on its sides and therefore the maximum amount of deck lighting should be provided consistent with the safe navigation of the ship.

In conjunction with deck lighting the ship should give the impression that there is activity on deck despite it being at night. This may take the form of highly visible security patrols or the carrying out of deck maintenance. Each member of the deck patrol should carry two flashlights switched on and held apart while on patrol.

The Master may consider the actual scheduling of maintenance to be carried out at night while the vessel is in high risk areas or may simulate the effects of such activities. The greater the amount of evidence that can be seen and heard by the criminals showing the ship to be populated by alert and active crew the better.

The continual pressurising of the ship's fire main with the lashing of nozzles to give a jet over each side is a good visual disincentive. Depending on the type of ship and company policy the Master may consider other visual effects. The flashing of a welding arc suggesting the possibility of an increased presence on deck in the form of a riding squad, the intermittent use of chipping hammers and the presence of sound, e.g.. loud music, will disorientate criminals by making them re-assess their approach from one of expected silence under the cover of darkness.

Where a ship has the possibility of overflowing ballast tanks to either deck run off or via through-flow discharges high in the ship's side the quantity of water may act as a deterrent.

## **Effective Bridge Look Outs**

Probably the most important counter measure against boarding that can be made on a ship is one that the criminals will not, unfortunately, immediately appreciate and that is the posting of effective lookouts.

The difference in keeping an effective security lookout against the approach of suspicious craft and the normal navigation lookout duties at night must be emphasised. The difference is best underlined by the posting of double Bridge Watches at night while the vessel is in the high-risk area.

In many cases the presence of criminals onboard first becomes known when they have entered the Wheelhouse or the Captains cabin, by which time the initiative rests with the criminals.

Lookouts at night should appreciate that they represent the first and most significant counter- measure against an illegal boarding. They should be made aware of the following:

- Criminal vessels may not be showing any lights
- That small craft may not be picked up on the ships radar
- That there may be more than one craft
- That one craft may deliberately seek to gain the attention of the lookout so that a second craft can approach undetected.
- The procedure for raising the alarm when a suspicious craft has been detected.

## **The Repelling of Boarders**

As soon as it is confirmed that a boat is approaching the ship should sound its emergency alarm to let the criminals know that they are seen and to get all passengers and the crew not engaged on deck to muster in the designated area.

The alarm is to be made continuously until such time as the criminals have departed the area or a period of 5 minutes has passed.

The crew assigned to deck combined with those already on decks shall stand by the already rigged fire hoses. The Master, after considering the situation, should order the crew to either turn the hoses on the approaching boat or order the crew to withdraw to the accommodation block. Before undertaking any actions that could be seen by the criminals as a justification to escalate the level of violence the Master must evaluate the known factors regarding the situation his ship is now facing.

- Are the criminals in possession of weapons?
- Can the criminals be prevented from boarding by the use of fire hoses?
- The numerical strength of possible boarding party

If the ship has been showing signs that the main deck is populated by crew it is probable that the criminals, if they are in possession of fire arms, will commence firing on the ship to persuade the crew to vacate the deck allowing the criminals to board the vessel unhindered.

If the ship's fire main can maintain a pressure of more than 5 bar the directing of the water jet on the small craft can have the desired effect.

**If it is confirmed that the criminals are in possession of firearms the crew should proceed immediately to the sanctuary of the accommodation block.**

### **Communicating: Boarding in Progress**

When it has been ascertained that the vessel is being approached for the purpose of boarding the Master should immediately order the broadcast of an alert.

Reports should be made to the relevant Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) contact information can be found in the Admiralty List of Radio Signals, volume 5 Search and Rescue.

‘All Stations’ ‘Urgency Message’ on VHF Channel 16, 2182 kHz and/or DSC call on VHF Channel 70 and/or 2187.5 kHz using the ‘all ships emergency’ category.

If the threat does not materialise and no assistance is required the cancel should be sent to ‘All Stations’ as soon as possible.

In cases where boarding is imminent and where the ship can be set on a course for open waters with the Bridge left unmanned, the use of distress flares can be considered to alert nearby shipping.

### **Confrontation with the Boarding Party**

Providing the assailants are not in possession of firearms the Master may consider forcing the criminals to leave the vessel. Aggressive acts by the crew should not be contemplated unless the ship has a numerical advantage and the crew is of a disposition to offer resistance. If neither of the preceding applies the crew should act as if the criminals are in possession of firearms and should proceed immediately to the sanctuary of the accommodation block.

Before attempting to drive the criminals off the ship it should be considered that even in the absence of firearms they may include amongst their numbers individuals who have been trained by the military.

Also a criminal being hurt during a confrontation may result in unexpected and disproportionate response by the coastal authority especially if the casualty is a national of the coastal state.

If resistance is to be offered the crew must be aware that the sole purpose of the aggression is to drive the criminals back to their boat. The crew must not separate to pursue individuals but seek to contain them as a group ensuring that the crew does not get between the criminals and the ship railings over which they first made their appearance.

At the point when the crew withdraws to the designated area to join the other crew and any passengers, the Master must consider the watch officers.

The engine room should be vacated with the main engine control being switched to the Bridge; the engine room personnel to proceed to the Sanctuary.

If possible the ship should be set on an auto pilot course for the open sea with the engine set at a minimum speed sufficient to ensure steerage. Where this option is not possible the Master should assume command of the Bridge, directing the Bridge personnel to proceed to the designated area.

## **Accommodation Citadel**

As part of the ship's **Security Plan** the accommodation block must be considered to enhance its possibility to protect the crew and passengers.

All points of access must be considered as to how they can be adequately secured. All windows and ports which can be looked into by a person standing on an outside deck or grating should have deadlights or metal screens fitted where possible.

One point of entry should be designated for use during the period the vessel is in high-risk waters. The entry point should be manned and have a board on which it can be confirmed when all crew are inside the accommodation block.

The use of CCTV to monitor the point of entry can be considered.

Entry points should be secured by utilising the steel watertight doors by lashing the clips in the engaged position on the inside of the door. External locking of the doors by padlocking is not sufficient.

A lack of substantial closures will prevent the accommodation acting as a citadel and therefore one secure compartment within the accommodation should be designated the Sanctuary for all crew and passengers.

## **Sanctuary**

The ship's Sanctuary should have the possibility to provide **ALL** the crew with a secure safe haven away from the criminals, while they search for valuables.

Radio communication should be possible from this location to update the authorities. Therefore the prior hiding of a VHF transceiver in this area is recommended in case the main communication equipment will be damaged.

The gathering of all the crew and passengers in one area presents the criminals with a perceived advantage as it will allow them to relax from a possible attack by the crew on individual criminals and will therefore allow the search to progress quickly. The quickest departure of the criminals from the ship is the aim in such situations.

For this reason the criminals will seek to establish immediately that all the ship's complement has been gathered in the designated compartment

The grouping of all ship's staff in this manner also has the effect of making it less likely that an individual crew member will be mistreated while out of sight of his crew mates.

Last but not least the gathering of the complete crew to sit closely together will afford psychological comfort to assist them to overcome the stress of the situation.

The sanctuary can only be effective if all the ships complement can be secured inside; where this is not the case the Master should consider the Sanctuary purely as a place to muster all the ship's complement in one area.

## **Interaction with the Criminals**

When the criminals are confronted with the ship's complement in one space they will usually seek to deal with one person only, this is normally the Captain.

The ship's complement should remain seated cross-legged on the floor in rows with any women or children present being in the back row. Women should wear trousers and cover their hair with headscarves. Nobody should speak to the criminals except the Captain or the designated spokesman, unless they are directly addressed. The crew and passengers should keep their eyes averted from the criminals' faces.

The assembled crew should not be wearing any jewellery or watches they particularly wish to keep.

From this point on, the main aim of the Master and crew is to assist the criminals to leave the ship as quickly as possible. The pillaging of the ship and the taking of personal belongings should not be resisted.

Due to the time that has elapsed since the sighting of the approaching boat to the confrontation with the assembled crew, the criminals will be seeking to leave as soon as possible and will conduct quick searches. The Master will be ordered to open the ship's Safe, which he should do immediately.

## **Control of Ship and Crew Valuables**

When sailing in waters known to be frequented by criminals the Company should seek to reduce their losses by minimising the amount of cash carried in the ship's Safe, which is always the main target for the criminals once they are in the accommodation.

It should be considered that a small amount of cash be left in the ship's Safe to help encourage the criminals to leave quickly.

Any further amounts of cash that have to be carried for operational reasons, should be locked in a secure place, the location of which is known only to the Captain and the Company.

The crew should similarly secure most but not all of their cash and any valuable items of jewellery and watches.

When all the criminals are preparing to depart the assembled crew should remain together until somebody has been to the Bridge and can confirm that the boat is pulling away.

## **Communicating: Following Boarding**

Following the departure of the criminals and the securing of the ship and the crew the information regarding the boarding is to be communicated to the Coastal Authorities via the Rescue Co ordination Centre.

The message should include: the location where the attack occurred, the description of the boat used and the heading on which it departed, a description of the criminals and their number, details of injuries sustained, losses and damage incurred, and if any assistance is required.



A copy of this communication is to be forwarded to the Barbados Ships' Registry.

As soon as possible following the attack a full report including crew statements is to be forwarded to the Coastal Authorities with a copy being forwarded to the Barbados Ships' Registry.

### **PART ONE (in Port or at Anchor)**

The precautions and responses to an illegal boarding of the ship are substantially the same as those previously described for a ship underway.

The differences are as follows:

#### **The Increased Ease of Boarding by Criminals**

The boarding of vessels in Port is usually accomplished by using the accommodation ladder. The boarding of vessels at anchor may be carried out by way of the anchor chain or any other point having reduced freeboard.

#### **The Proximity of Support from Ashore.**

The close availability of port and coastal authorities make the prompt detection and raising of an alarm the best response for the ships crew.

Prior to anchoring or berthing at a port having a record of criminal interference with merchant ships, the company should refer to its **Security Plan**

#### **Crew Responses**

The deterrent of keeping a well-lit ship including all decks and the accommodation block can be fully utilised without any restrictions imposed by the night vision of the Bridge Watch. However, all lights should be directed in a downwards direction to prevent the dazzling of passing traffic.

Consistent with the general guidelines laid down for the use of distress flares it is not considered that a ship will be put at risk by an illegal boarding occurring while in port or at anchor. Therefore the use of distress flares in these circumstances is not condoned.

### **PART TWO (in Port or at Anchor)**

This part deals with the illegal carriage of persons or materials by the ship:

#### **The non detection of persons or items moving through the Port (failure of the Port Security):**

Entry into the Port Area of illicit goods or persons impersonating either ship's crew or port workers.

#### **The non detection of persons or items gaining access to the ship (failure of the Ship Security)**

The arrival onboard of illicit goods or persons impersonating port workers.

## **PORT SECURITY**

A ship entering a Port shall expect a level of security to be provided by the authorities commensurate with the type of Port and its location.

In this respect a shipping company may request the Port Authorities to confirm the level of security in place for the duration of the ship's stay.

It should be confirmed what level of security is provided by Port Authorities to ships anchored in the port's anchorages.

## **SHIP SECURITY**

### **The ship security will depend upon the following factors:**

The security record of the Port

- Reports of illicit goods being handled within the Port in the previous 6 months.
- Reports of persons illegally gaining access to ships while berthed within the secure area of the Port.

### **Resulting in the degree of consideration given to the following:**

The port security in place

- The proper control of goods entering and leaving the Port Area
- The proper control of persons entering and leaving the Port Area

The goods and persons coming onboard

- The confirmation of the **Cargo** being taken onboard
- The confirmation of the **Stores** being taken onboard
- The confirmation of the **Persons** coming onboard

## **Cargo**

The various categories of cargo present varying security risks

Containers

- Negative: Lack of opportunity for ship to verify contents against documentation.
- Positive: Smaller number of shore labour having access to the ship.

General Cargo

- Positive : Increased opportunity for ship to verify packages against documentation
- Negative: Larger numbers of shore labour having access to the ship.

Crude Oil / Petroleum Products / LNG

- Positive : Higher levels of port security at terminals
- Positive : Minimal access to ship by shore labour
- Negative : Higher risk on ship and terminal due to nature of cargo

Cargo should only be accepted against verified shipping documents including bills of sale. The identification of the Dispatcher, Packer, Content and the Recipient should be evident.

Ports should demand from Shippers that they have exercised such checks that they are in a position to vouch for the authenticity of all shipping documents and the cargo presented for loading through their port.

## **Stores**

All ship's stores taken onboard should be supplied from known sources and should be checked carefully against paperwork before stowing. The check should not be restricted to quantity and quality but also confirm that no other items have been included and that the packaging has not been tampered with.

## **Persons**

All persons wishing to be allowed onboard should be able to produce some form of identity documentation. The names of persons entering should be registered noting their time of arrival and their time of departure.

Persons wishing to enter the accommodation on business should have announced their intention to visit the ship to the Master. Such persons after registering arrival onboard should then be escorted to the officer with whom they have made an appointment to visit.

Persons who arrive at the ship without prior appointment after registering onboard shall wait at the entry control point for the officer with whom the person wishes to speak. If the business cannot be conducted at the control point the officer shall escort the person to the office and on completion of the business personally escort the person off the ship.

**At no time shall visitors to the ship be left unattended.**

## **Departure Port Ship Searches**

As soon as possible on leaving the berth or anchorage the vessel should be subjected to the search procedure contained within the ship's **Security Plan**.

The search procedure should be separated into two types of search patterns, one of the search of stowaways and the other the locating of items having no legitimate reason for being there.

## **Person Search**

A person search pattern should be prescribed to allow a systematic search of the ship to be conducted. Such a search pattern will require all areas/compartments where a person or persons could conceal themselves to be searched. It must be born in mind that stowaways often hide deliberately in areas not suitable for staying in for any length of time, in order to evade the ship's initial search, moving to a more comfortable location some hours later.

For example, stowaways may initially hide in the funnel casing moving later to the rope store under cover of darkness.

The person search pattern for the ship should take the form of a check list in which each area can be signed off noting the date and time the search has been completed.

### **Item Search**

Due to the size of items not necessarily being large the search has to be conducted in all spaces and therefore it is important that such a search should be systematic, for example top to bottom or fore to aft. The search pattern in this case should endeavour to identify all spaces that were or could have been accessible during the vessel's stay in port or at anchor.

Irrespective of the fact that all crew cabins would normally be expected to be locked in port or at anchor the search of individual cabins should be carried out without exception. It would be desirable for the occupier of the cabin to carry out the search.

To ensure that such searches are carried out the shipping company should issue a declaration to each crewmember that they are to sign on departing each port to confirm the date and time of the search and its thoroughness.

The item search pattern for the ship should take the form of a checklist in which each area can be signed off noting the date and time the search has been completed.

### **Summary**

While it is appreciated that many ports will have difficulty meeting these requirements it is believed that they will soon become widespread and that ship operators should start to consider their incorporation into their **Security Plans** as soon possible.

A draft format for a Ship's Security Plan can be supplied from the Barbados Ship's Registry upon request.

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### Appendix

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