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GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION FOR IDENTIFYING SHIPS WHEN TRANSMITTING SHIP SECURITY ALERTS

1 The Maritime Safety Committee (the Committee), at its eighty-first session (10 to 19 May 2006), noted reports that in a number of cases, when the competent authorities designated by Administrations received ship security alerts (SSAs), the information provided to them for identifying the ships¹ transmitting the alert were not adequate and they could not easily identify the ships concerned.

2 The Committee recognized that, if ship security alert systems were to function in an effective and efficient manner so as to provide the security-related benefits for which they were envisioned, there was a need to ensure a harmonized and consistent implementation of the provisions of SOLAS regulation XI-2/6 on Ship security alert systems and of the associated performance standards². As a result the Committee approved the Guidance on the provision of information for identifying ships when transmitting ship security alerts (the Guidance) set out at annex.

3 SOLAS Contracting Governments are invited to bring the Guidance to the attention of owners and of Companies operating ships entitled to fly their flag, of those they have recognized, authorized or approved to provide services in relation to SSAs and of the recognized organizations and the recognized security organizations they have authorized to act on their behalf.

4 SOLAS Contracting Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations with consultative status which encounter difficulties with the implementation of the Guidance should bring, at the earliest opportunity, the matter to the attention of the Committee for consideration of actions to be taken.

¹ The term "ship" in this circular refers to the ships which are subject to the provisions of SOLAS chapter XI-2 and of the ISPS Code.

² Resolution MSC.136(76) on Performance standards for a ship security alert system and resolution MSC.147(77) on Adoption of the Revised performance standards for a ship security alert system.

ANNEX**GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION FOR IDENTIFYING SHIPS WHEN TRANSMITTING SHIP SECURITY ALERTS****INTRODUCTION**

1 SOLAS regulation XI-2/6 and the associated performance standards³ specify that the ship security alert system, when activated, shall, *inter alia*, initiate and transmit a ship-to-shore security alert (SSA) to a competent authority designated by the Administration (the designated recipient) identifying the ship, its location, the date and time of the position and indicating that the security of the ship is under threat or it has been compromised.

2 Administrations have accepted, recognized or approved a variety of equipment and systems to perform the function of the ship security alert system (SSAS) some of which include communication (CSP) and application (ASP) service providers. However, in some cases when the SSA is received by the designated recipient, it does not clearly identify the ship which transmitted the alert.

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED TO THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES

3 When the SSA is delivered to the designated recipient the SSA should include the following information:

- .1 Name of ship;
- .2 IMO Ship identification number;
- .3 Call Sign;
- .4 Maritime Mobile Service Identity;
- .5 GNSS position (latitude and longitude) of the ship; and
- .6 Date and time of the GNSS position.

4 Depending on the equipment, system and arrangements used, the name, the IMO Ship identification number, the Call Sign and the Maritime Mobile Service Identity of the ship may be added to the signal or message transmitted by the shipborne equipment, by the CSP or the ASP, before the SSA is delivered to the designated recipient.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

5 To bring into line the performance of SSASs, these should be tested as follows:

- .1 ships constructed before 1 July 2006, not later than the first survey of the radio installation on or after 1 July 2006; and
- .2 ships constructed on or after 1 July 2006, before the ship enters service;

to verify that, when the SSAS is activated, the information specified in paragraph 3 above and the indication that the security of the ship is under threat or it has been compromised are received by the designated recipient. However, if the arrangements established by the Administration are in compliance with paragraph 3 above such additional tests are not required.

³ Resolution MSC.136(76) on Performance standards for a ship security alert system and Resolution MSC.147(77) on Adoption of the Revised performance standards for a ship security alert system.

TRANSFER OF FLAG

6 As from 1 July 2006, upon the transfer of the flag of a ship from another State or another SOLAS Contracting Government, the receiving Administration should test the SSAS to ensure that when the SSAS is activated, the information specified in paragraph 3 above and the indication that the security of the ship is under threat or it has been compromised are received by the designated recipient.

TESTING

7 When testing SSASs, the provisions of paragraphs II.3 and II.4 of the annex to MSC/Circ.1155 on Guidance on the message priority and the testing of ship security alert systems should be observed.

Related provisions: SOLAS regulation XI-2/6, resolutions MSC.136(76) and MSC.147(77), MSC/Circ.1072 and MSC/Circ.1155.
