



BERMUDA MERCHANT SHIPPING GUIDANCE NOTICE

Guidance on SSAS tests

2026-02

Application

Ship Owners, Managers, Officers and crew of Bermuda registered ships

Summary

This notice is to guide Ship Owners, Managers, officers and crew of Bermuda registered ships on SSAS tests

This Notice was issued on 19th February 2026.

- (1)** A Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) is required to be installed on board the following types of vessels in accordance with SOLAS Chapter XI-2, regulation 6:
 - a.** Passenger ships, including high speed passenger craft;
 - b.** Cargo ships including high-speed craft of 500 gross tonnage and more;
 - c.** Mechanically propelled Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODUs) as defined in SOLAS Chapter IX, Regulation 1.
- (2)** In accordance with SOLAS Chapter XI-2, Regulation 6.2, the SSAS, when activated shall:
 - a.** Initiate and transmit a ship-to-shore security alert to a competent authority designated by the Administration (which in these circumstances, may include the company) identifying the ship, its location and indicating that the security of the ship is under threat or has been compromised;
 - b.** Not send the ship security alert to any other ships

- c. Not raise any alarm on-board the ship;
 - d. Continue the ship security alert until deactivated or reset.
- (3)** The competent authority means the entity responsible for receiving SSAS transmissions. The competent authority must be identified in the Ship Security Plan (SSP)
 - a. This can be either the Company Security Officer (CSO) or the Alternate/Deputy Company Security Officer (ACSO/DCSO) or a company designated qualified third party.
 - b. Company means the owner of the ship or any other organisation or person, such as the manager, or the bareboat charterer, who has assumed the responsibility for operation of the ship from the owner of the ship and who, on assuming such responsibility, has agreed to take over all the duties and responsibilities imposed by the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.
- (4)** All real alerts (unplanned alerts transmitted during an actual security incident, threat or perceived threat) must be communicated to the Duty Officer at the Bermuda Maritime Operations Centre by emailing both dutyofficer@marops.bm and operations@rccbermuda.bm
- (5)** CSOs are required to verify that each SSAS installed on a Bermuda flagged ship has been correctly programmed to transmit all SSAS alerts directly to the Competent Authority.
- (6)** Following the initial installation of the SSAS, the company must ensure that the system is tested and maintained to satisfy operational requirements as per the approved SSP and keep on board the records specified in ISPS Code Part A, 10.1.10.
- (7)** A Test alert means a planned alert transmitted to ensure that the SSAS equipment is functional and properly programmed. (e.g. initial installation, ISPS Code verification audits, security drills or prior to entering a High Risk Area (HRA) etc). SSAS equipment is part of the annual Safety Radio Survey under SOLAS and will be checked for all ships installed with SSAS.
- (8)** SSAS must be tested annually to verify proper operation. Testing must include the entire alert system, from activation to the alert's receipt by the Competent Authority.
 - a. Test alerts should be marked as "TEST".
 - b. Companies are required to notify the Bermuda Shipping and Maritime Authority and Bermuda Maritime Operations Centre (RCC Bermuda) at least 3 working days in advance of their intention to carry out the annual SSAS test.

(9) The annual SSAS test may be combined with the ship-shore security drill that must be conducted at least once each calendar year (ISPS Code Part A, section 13.4 and 13.5, SOLAS Chapter XI-2).

a. The email notification regarding the SSAS test drill must be sent to the following email addresses with the subject line and beginning of the email message annotated as “DRILL-DRILL-DRILL”.

- i. survey@bermudashipping.bm
- ii. dutyofficer@marops.bm
- iii. operations@rccbermuda.bm

b. As SSAS equipment is tested during annual Safety Radio Survey for all ships installed with SSAS, when combined with the annual ship-shore security drill, companies may choose any one of their ships for the purpose of the annual SSAS test involving the Bermuda Shipping and Maritime Authority and the 24 hour Bermuda Maritime Operations Centre.