Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-133

To: Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers and Recognized Organizations (ROs).

Subject: Ship Security Alert System (SSAS).

Reference: Law No. 38 June 4th, 1995 UNCLOS 1982.
Resolution J.D. No. 028 of December 22th, 2003.
Resolution No.106-107-DGMM of October 9th, 2017.
MMC-123 International Ships and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code).
MMC-230 Ship Protection Measures to pirates attacks
MMC-359 Guidance for the implementation and certification of the ISPS Code.

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1. This Merchant Marine Circular supersedes **MMC-371.**

2. Purpose:

The purpose of this Circular is to communicate the instructions and procedures of the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) according to SOLAS 74', as amended Chapter XI-2 Reg. 6, the IMO Resolution MSC.136(76) and Resolution No. 106-107-DGMM dated October 9th, 2017 (Visit: https://panamashipregistry.com/ - SEGUMAR, Maritime Security link, ISPS Regulations, SSAS) https://panamashipregistry.com/maritime-services/maritime-security/

3. Scope:

3.1 This Merchant Marine Circular applies to all Panama flag vessels engaged on international voyage of 500 gross tonnages and above.

3.2 Background:

3.2.1 The ISPS Code came into force in 2004, when it was passed as an amendment to the SOLAS (Security of Life at Sea) Convention under Chapter IX-2.

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4. Index:

4.1. Resolution No. 106-107-DGMM:

4.1.1 From October 2017, through Resolution No.106-107-DGMM dated October 9th, 2017 this Administration communicated that all Panama flag vessels **must configure the email address** threat@amp.gob.pa **as the main recipient on their SSAS-designated terminal** from January 2018, the annual SSAS TEST, will be received only through the SSAS Community electronic platform in the following link: https://polestarglobal.force.com/SSAS/login.

4.1.2 Once the SSA terminal has been configured with the main email address threat@amp.gob.pa, the company operator shall request access to platform by email to the e-mail address: info@panama-ssas.com, and should submit copy of the last Declaration of Company Security Officer (CSO) endorsed by this Administration in order to receive an email from info@panama-ssas.com, with their access credentials and instructions for using the platform and be able to schedule the annual SSAS TEST.

4.2. SSAS Equipment Configuration

4.2.1 The SSAS TEST messages must include the information described below. It is important that the information is encoded as it is being requested so that the SSAS TEST MESSAGE can be process correctly.

> **4.2.1.1 Name of vessel:** The name of the vessel must be written in upper case and should appear exactly as it is written in the Navigation Documents.
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> **4.2.1.2 IMO number:** It must contain 7 digits and may be preceded by the word "IMO". It must not include zeroes before the number or spaces in between each number.

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4.2.1.3 Maritime Mobile Service Identity: The MMSI must contain 9 digits, which cannot be separated by spaces, hyphens or other characters.

4.2.1.4 Call Sign: It must contain between 4 and 7 digits and must appear exactly as it is written in the ship's navigation registration certificate. Do not use spaces, hyphens or other characters other than letters and numbers.

4.2.1.5 Date and time: The date can be represented in any of the following 3 formats.

DD-MM-YYYY
MM-DD-YYYY
YYYY-MM-DD

For which "DD" represents the day, "MM" represents the month and "YYYY" represents the year. The deviders can be slashes, points or dashes.

4.2.1.6 The time: can be represented in any of the following 2 formats:

HH: MM
HH: MM: SS

For which "HH" is the hour expressed in 24-hour format, "MM" represents the minutes and "SS" represents the seconds. All hourly times must be submitted according to the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).

4.2.1.7 Coordinates of the position of the vessel at the time of the SSAS test: The coordinates can be expressed in degrees, minutes and seconds, degrees and decimals of minutes or in decimals of degrees and additional should indicate the hemisphere.

Deviders between grades, minutes and seconds can be:

The symbols for degrees, minutes and seconds (° ' ")
Two points (:)
Spaces

The indicators of the hemispheres for the coordinates must be expressed in the initial letter of the hemisphere and in English in upper case letters:

"N" or "S" for latitude
 "E" or "W" for longitude

The hemisphere can be placed before or after the position coordinates. No spaces or dashes should be left between the coordinates and the hemisphere.

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4.2.1.8 Speed: The heading and speed of the vessel at the time of the TEST shall be detailed as follows:

The heading of the vessel shall be expressed in degrees into 0 to 359 and shall be preceded by the words "Heading", "HDG", "Course" or "COG" and may be written in uppercase, lowercase or a combination of both.

The speed of the ship shall be expressed in knots and shall be preceded by the words "Speed", "SOG" or "Spd" and then indicate one of the following terms "knots", "knts", "kn" or " kt "and may be written in uppercase, lowercase or a combination of both.

4.2.1.9 TEST indicators should contain:

Messages must include the word "TEST ". (The Word TEST at least once). In order to be considered an SSAS test and not a real alert.

In case the message received does not contain the words **"TEST"**, the Panama Maritime Authority will request confirmation from the CSO about the status of the ship, the crew and thus, in this way rule out any case of false alarm. The vessel that has already made the TEST, it is completely valid).

4.3. Annual SSAS Test Confirmation

4.3.1 Only one annual SSAS TEST is mandatory and must be schedule through the following link: https://polestarglobal.force.com/SSAS/login, in a period no longer than twelve (12) calendar months and can be scheduled 24 hours in advance. Test that is scheduled after the SSAS message has been received will not be valid.

4.3.2 Once the SSAS test has been carried out, the CSO will receive a flag confirmation by email indicating that the SSAS test has been successful, as the model is attached (Successful Test Message) and the CSO shall ensure to send the flag confirmation on board the vessel in view of the fact that it will be subject to verification during the ISPS initial, intermediate y/or renewal verification..

4.3.3 In case of not receiving a Successful Test Confirmation: there are two possible scenarios to be considered:

> **4.3.3.1 FAILED TEST:** If the test does not comply with the configuration described in paragraph 2, it will remain as a failed test and must be reprogrammed through the SSAS platform.

> **4.3.3.2 PENDING TEST:** In the event that the SSAS TEST cannot be carried out, and this must be notified by email to the account info@panama-ssas.com 24 hours in advance, the reasons and the new date of programming through the SSAS platform.

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4.4. Vessel´s Change of Name

4.4.1 When the vessel changes name it will be necessary to request an update CSO declaration with the new vessel name through the following website link http://certificates.amp.gob.pa/certificates
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4.4.2 When the vessel name is shown in the SSAS platform, the company operator must schedule a new SSAS TEST through the platform, due to change of name.

4.5. SSAS Malfunction Authorization

4.5.1 In those cases, that the SSAS equipment is not operating correctly, the operator company may request a SSAS malfunctioning authorization through the E-Segumar platform in the following website http://certificates.amp.gob.pa/certificates and the case will be evaluated and processed by the Maritime Ships Security Department main office or by any international Segumar offices that the client decides to approach to.

4.5.2 When the vessel has been requested an SSAS Malfunction authorization it will be necessary to schedule a new SSAS TEST, through the SSAS platform in order to verify that the SSAS is working properly and the master should send us the technical report at the following email: isps@amp.gob.pa

4.6. Special instructions in HRA

4.6.1 The Panama Maritime Authority (PMA) recommends that all Panama Flag vessels with or without armed or unarmed security personnel, and that prior to the entry into the High Risk Area (HRA), the crew should be fully briefed on the preparations and also a piracy drill shall be conducted as well. The security drill should be reviewed and all personnel briefed on their duties, including familiarization with the alarm used to identify a piracy attack.

4.6.2 These drills must to schedule through the SSAS platform in following link: https://polestarglobal.force.com/SSAS/login, indicating that it is a "Piracy Drill" or "SSAS Test", at the same time the Panama Flag vessels are requested to verify that the SSAS equipment have been correctly set-up and is working properly.

4.6.3 These measures should be taken to ensure that the security procedures are working properly along with the recommendations stated in the Best Management Practices BMP (last version) and the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) established in the MMC-230.

4.6.4 In case that the message received indicates the words SSAS ALERT or SECURITY, the PMA will require a confirmation on the status of the ship and the crew.

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4.7. Exclusion of SSAS equipment

4.7.1 The following vessels are excluded of the present Circular:

- Vessels that have been granted a SSAS Exemption Certificate.
- Vessels out of service during a calendar year and have a Lay-up Certificate.
- Registry of Laid-Up.

4.8. Non-compliance

4.8.1 In cases of noncompliance with the Panama Maritime Authority Regulations may impose the following sanctions:

- If the SSAS annual test is not carried out successfully, the International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC) will not be issued.

- Additional audits of the ISPS Code may be authorized to vessels that demonstrate non-compliance with the provisions of this Circular.

For further assistance, please review the contact points below.

September, 2024 - Modification of paragraph 4.3.2.
October, 2023 – Inclusion of purpose and scope. Supersedes and compiles MMC-371. The paragraph order number was updated.
March, 2021 – Inclusion of point 4 in paragraph 13.1
December, 2020 - Change of PMA phone numbers.
October, 2019 - Inclusion of paragraphs 12.
June, 2019 - Refers in paragraph 1 to Maritime Security link, ISPS Regulations, SSAS.
January, 2019 - Modification of paragraphs from 1, 2, 3, 4 and 12, inclusion of paragraphs from 5 to 11 and exclusion of paragraphs 9 to 21 and posted in MMC-125.
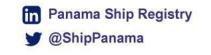*November, 2018 - Modification of paragraphs NEW REGULATIONS FOR SSAS TEST MESSAGE AND ANNUAL SSAS TEST MESSAGE*
April, 2018 - Modification of TEST Message (Test indicators) and SSAS MALFUNCTIONING.
March, 2018 - Modification of TEST Message (Test indicators)
January, 2018 - Modification of paragraph s NEW REGULATIONS FOR SSAS TEST MESSAGE AND ANNUAL SSAS TEST MESSAGE
October, 2017 - Incorporation of paragraphs 2 and 3 in the New Regulations for SSAS TEST MESSAGE.

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Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be directed to:

Maritime Ships Security Department
Directorate General of Merchant Marine
Panama Maritime Authority

Phone: (507) 501-5085 / 5086
E-mail: isps@amp.gob.pa
Website: https://panamashipregistry.com/circulars/

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