



MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

Issued by the Merchant Shipping Division, Sri Lanka

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NOTICE TO SHIP OWNERS, MANAGERS, OPERATORS, RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS,
SHIPPING AGENTS, TRAINING INSTITUTES, MASTERS, OFFICERS AND RATINGS

Interim guidance on use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships.

Interim guidance on the employment of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships transiting the high-risk piracy area off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean was approved by IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), which met at the Organization's London Headquarters for its 89th session from 11 to 20 May 2011.

The MSC approved Interim Recommendations for flag States regarding the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships in the High Risk Area (MSC.1/Circ.1406) and Interim Guidance to shipowners, ship operators, and shipmasters on the use of privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) on board ships in the High Risk Area (MSC.1/Circ.1405). Both sets of guidance are aimed at addressing the complex issue of the employment of private, armed security on board ships.

The guidance to shipowners notes that flag State jurisdiction and any laws and regulations imposed by the flag State concerning the use of private security companies apply to their vessels. Port and coastal States' laws may also apply to such vessels.

The guidance notes that the use of privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) should not be considered as an alternative to the Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and in the Arabian Sea area (BMP) and other protective measures. Placing armed guards on board as a means to secure and protect the vessel and its crew should only be considered after a risk assessment has been carried out. It is also important to involve the Master in the decision making process. The guidance includes sections on risk assessment, selection criteria, insurance cover, command and control, management and use of weapons and ammunition at all times when on board and rules for the use of force as agreed between the shipowner, the private maritime security company and the Master.

The recommendations are not intended to endorse or institutionalize the use of PCASP and do not address all the legal issues that might be associated with their use onboard ships.

Sri Lankan ship owners are free to use the services of PSASP as required.

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