

Guidelines for anti piracy measures to be implemented on Indian Ships

M.S. Notice 01 of 2011

No:44-NT(6)/2010

Dated: 14.01.2011

Subject: Guidelines for anti piracy measures to be implemented on Indian Ships

1. Introduction:

1.1 Attention of the ship Owners / Managers / Masters is invited to the increasing number of pirate attacks on merchant ships transiting the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. It has been observed in the past two years that the attacks have also occurring further off the east coast of Somalia.

1.2 Various measures to prevent a pirate attack have been promulgated by the issuance of Circulars / Notices by the Directorate General of Shipping, IMO and the shipping industry.

1.3 Recently, during the 88th Maritime Safety Committee, a MSC circular No. [MSC.1/Circ.1390 dated 09-12-2010](#) (copy enclosed for ready reference), has been issued on the subject of Guidance for Company security officers - Preparation of a company and the crew for the contingency of hijack by pirates in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. This circular takes into account the Best management Practices (BMP version 3) developed by the shipping industry.

1.4 BMP3, which was circulated to Industry in July 2010 and is available on DG website, highlights following anti-piracy measures that a merchant ship should undertake while transiting through the piracy infested region:

- i. Enhanced vigilance during watch-keeping including use of dummy 'look out'
- ii. Control of access points and Close circuit television monitoring of vulnerable boarding points by pirates
- iii. Evasive manoeuvres
- iv. Alarms
- v. Upper deck lighting
- vi. Deny use of ship's tools and equipment
- vii. Enhanced bridge protection
- viii. Physical barriers such as barbed wires, 'anti-climb' paint, 'dummy' signs for electrification of barbed wires etc.
- ix. Use of Water spray, foam monitors and trailing wires
- x. Safe house

1.5 One of the important component of counter-piracy measures is the concept of "Safe House" where, in case when boarding by pirates seems imminent despite all other anti-piracy measures being in place, the crew could muster and lock themselves, out of the reach of pirates and are able to guide the naval forces to undertake a rescue operation.

2. Safe House Concept

2.1 The concept of 'safe house' for vessels is based on the fact that seizure of crew members is one of the main means of pirates gaining control over the ship. Therefore prevention of seizure of crew members by intruders will be a key to foil a pirate attack. The crew can stave off a pirate attack by mustering in a secure compartment or 'safe house' so that safety of those on board is ensured until the rescue forces can arrive.

2.2 The design of safe house is based on the fact that initial evasive measures were employed by the vessel and pirates have been able to board the vessel evading these measures. However these measures have been able to delay the time taken by pirates to board the vessel.

2.3 Location of safe house:

The 'safe house' should be sturdy enough to resist the attempts by the pirates to break into it. The safe house should be located at an imperceptible location so that it is difficult for the pirates to locate it onboard. However it is important that all crew members are well versed with the location and routes to reach the safe house so that the time taken by the crew members to muster inside the safe house is minimized.

2.3 Pirate alarm:

As soon as it is appreciated that boarding of the vessel by pirates is inevitable despite the use of all the evasive measures, a 'pirate alarm' should be sounded which will not only alert the crew that pirates have boarded but also instruct them to muster in the pre-defined 'safe house'.

2.4 Once all the members of the crew have assembled inside the safe house, the engines would be immobilized and entire ship would be blackened out. Immobilization of the engines is recommended, since all piracy is done in the high seas away from hazards of navigation. However, in a recent case, it was observed that the crew had the control of steering compartment alongwith the engine room as 'safe house' and therefore were able to steer the ship in general direction, away from known navigational dangers. The decision, therefore, to 'shut off' the ship's engine would need to be ship specific and upto the ship's command.

2.5 Further, International law does not permit international military forces to protect ships attacked in Yemeni territorial waters. A ship that cannot be operated under its own power is unlikely to be taken into territorial waters of Yemen or Somalia. Immobilization is therefore an effective passive measure that does not involve confrontation with pirates. Ships Emergency Generator would also be cut off remotely from the safe house. A pirate unfamiliar with the ship would find it almost impossible to navigate in blackened out ship and it would not be feasible for them to locate the safe house.

2.6 The safe house would also be provided with communication equipment. The crew would immediately inform the position and information about the attack to the security forces, using available means of communication. The security forces would be informed that no hostages have been taken and rescue efforts / military action can be taken against the pirates without any harm to the ship's crew. In order that the communication is effective, a proper communication protocol would need to be developed by the company security officer in consultation with security agencies and Directorate General of Shipping.

2.7 In addition to above provisions the ship may also be fitted with a Pirate Warning System. This system could be activated from the safe house and would warn the pirates that security forces are on their way for help. The system would also create masked crew noise from different locations on the ship and thereby disorienting the attackers onboard the vessel. The safe house would be provided with facilities for the crew to survive till the time the help arrives and once the vessel is free from pirates, the crew can be intimidated through agreed communication protocol communication to vacate the safe house.

2.8 Based on these facts two options for design of safe house have evolved. The safe house can be an exclusive compartment, purpose built into the ship Or in order to avoid major alterations to the ship's layout, an existing compartment such as an engine room, steering gear room, or any other compartment considered suitable based on vessel's design and risk assessment by the Company, may as an alternative option be used as a safe house. Such alternate compartment shall be suitably reinforced for use as a safe house.

2.9 The salient features for a safe house design are as follows:

- i. 2.9.1 Construction: The water tight doors, frames and surrounding bulkheads of the safe house should be constructed of steel. The material would be resistant to repeated hits by bullets, sledge hammer, grenades and cutting charges. It would also be difficult to make access to the safe house by undertaking oxy acetylene cutting of the bulkheads / doors. Internal cross-bars would be provided for additional security and rigidity and to avoid the dependence on locks / hinges. Steel covers with internal cross bars and securing arrangements from inside shall be provided for all openings in the safe house. These steel covers shall be of similar construction as the adjoining bulkhead.
- ii. The area shall be capable of being sealed off so that CO₂ gas cannot be released into the area, the area cannot be flooded with water from outside, and explosives such as hand grenades cannot be thrown into the area. These considerations would define the location of the safe house onboard a vessel. Exact location of the safe house will largely depend on the type and size of the ship.
- iii. Size: Size of the safe house would depend on the size of the vessel and number of crew on board. The safe house would be designed to accommodate the crew for at least 3 days, which is the maximum time security forces are expected to locate the vessel and neutralize the pirates.
- iv. Equipment / Facilities: The safe house should be provided with the following equipment/facilities for the crew to survive and safely undertake the various activities required for communicating with the security forces and during the operations by security forces:
 1. VHF communication equipment
 2. Satellite phone
 3. Few bunks / chairs for crew to rest
 4. Automatic Identification System (AIS)
 5. Hand held GPS
 6. Local control for immobilizing the main engines and blackening out the ship
 7. CCTV display of boarding points, upper decks / bridge etc.
 8. Emergency power supply for operating lights, ventilation (as far as practicable), communication equipment etc. only within safe house
 9. Toilet facilities
 10. Tinned food and water for the entire crew to survive for 03 days
 11. Provision for forced and natural ventilation

2.9.4 The Company, in consultation with Indian Navy, should develop a communication protocol for informing the security agencies and The Directorate General of Shipping (Dgcomm) in case a pirate attack is imminent. This protocol should as a minimum address communication to be sent from the ship when:

- i. pirates are chasing the ship (Stage 1)
- ii. in spite of all evasive measures, pirates are boarding / have boarded the ship (Stage 2)
- iii. all crew has taken refuge in the safe house and (no) crew is left outside (Stage 3)

2.9.5 Anti-Piracy Drill: The operational readiness of the 'safe hose' procedure should be exercised with the security agencies. In addition, it is recommended that safe house entry procedure is rehearsed well before vessel's expected entry into the high risk area. The drill among other things should also test the sealing, communication and shutting down procedures.

2.9.6 It is feasible for the ship's crew to evade a pirate attack, by locking themselves inside a safe house with necessary communication and survival facilities till the time rescue forces can reach and engage the pirates. The whole concept of safe house is lost if any crew member is left outside before it is secured.

3. Implementation: It is strongly recommended that all Indian ships transiting the piracy infested waters should at the earliest implement the anti-piracy measures outlined above including the concept of 'safe house' and ship-owners are advised to submit the progress of implementation of these measures to the Directorate General of Shipping within 3 months of date of issue of this notice.

4. This is issued with the approval of Director General of Shipping & Ex-officio Addl. Secretary to Govt. of India.

Sd/-

(Capt. Harish Khatri)

Dy. Director General of Shipping (Tech)

Encl: as above.