

## **Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Coast of Somalia Version 2 dated August 09**

This information includes the Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Coast of Somalia Version 2 dated August 09, but also contains additional operational analysis from MSC(HOA).

**Note: the content is advisory only and vessels should comply with their Owners or Operators instructions and ships contingency plan.**

- The purpose of this document is to provide Best Management Practices (BMP) to assist companies and ships in avoiding piracy attacks, deterring attacks and delaying successful attacks in the Gulf of Aden (GoA) and off the Coast of Somalia. The organisations consulted on this document represent the vast majority of ship owners and operators transiting the region.
- These organizations will encourage their members to utilise these BMP and will endeavour to promulgate these to other shipping interests as BMP for combating piracy in the region. This document complements guidance provided in the IMO MSC Circular MSC.1/Circ.1334

### **Typical Attack Profiles and Lessons Learnt:**

1. During 2008, and the first half of 2009, an increase in the number of pirate attacks on merchant ships occurred throughout the GoA and off the coast of Somalia and within the wider North West Indian Ocean. The majority of attacks were initially clustered around the northern side of the GoA but attacks have occurred further off the east coast of Somalia.
2. Analysis of successful attacks indicates that the following common vulnerabilities are exploited by the pirates:
  - a. Low speed
  - b. Low freeboard (Although slow, low freeboard vessels are more vulnerable, successful attacks have been made on higher freeboard - up to 8m - and faster vessels)
  - c. Inadequate planning and procedures
  - d. Visibly low state of alert and/or evident self protective measures
  - e. Where a slow response by the ship is evident
3. Commonly two or more small high speed (up to 25 knots) open boats/ "skiffs" are used in attacks often approaching from the port quarter and/or stern.
4. The use of a pirate "mother ship", which is a larger ship carrying personnel, equipment, supplies and smaller attack craft, has enabled attacks to be successfully undertaken at a greater range from the shore.
5. Vigilance should be highest at first light and last light, as the majority of the attacks have taken place during these periods.

6. Higher speed vessels (15 knots and above) should not presume to be safe from attack but speed is an effective form of defence. The use of small arms fire, Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG), in an effort to intimidate Masters of vessels to reduce speed has occurred within the area. Maintaining full sea speed in such circumstances has been shown to be effective.
7. The majority of attempted hijacks have been repelled by ship's crew who have planned and trained in advance of the passage and employed passive counter measures to good effect.
8. Prevailing weather and sea state conditions also greatly influence attackers' ability to operate. Wind strengths in excess of 18 knots and wave heights above 2 metres are considered sufficient to provide protection for all but the most vulnerable vessels, particularly where Masters are taking full account of Best Management Practices.

### **Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC)**

Masters are requested to inform the MSC, via the Register Vessel Movement form, when their vessel's ETA and ETD at points Pt A 11° 50'N - 045° 00'E (SW Gulf of Aden) and Pt B 14° 28'N - 053° 00'E (North of Socotra Island) are due to occur

The Commander of the U.S. Naval Central Command coordinating CTF 150 established a Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) on 22nd August 2008 in support of an International Maritime Organisation (IMO) call for international assistance to discourage attacks on commercial vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden (GoA).

The MSPA is a geographic area in the GoA, not marked or defined by navigational marks. A 'transit corridor' has been established through the MSPA to permit easier protection of merchant vessels.

**Masters are advised to navigate within the 'transit corridor' when transiting the GoA where it is safe and appropriate to do so.**

The coordinates of the 'transit corridor' are:

Waypoint: 12 00N 45E

Waypoint: 14 30N 53E

Waypoint: 11 55N 45E

Waypoint: 14 25N 53E

Waypoint: 11 53N 45E

Waypoint: 14 23N 53E

Waypoint: 11 48N 45E

Waypoint: 14 18N 53E

### **Gulf of Aden Group Transits**

Vessels are encouraged to conduct their passage through the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in groups based on their transit speed. Known as Gulf of Aden Group Transits (GOA GT), participating vessels should pass through the

east and west extremities of the IRTC (Points Alpha and Bravo) at the times prescribed below and transit the IRTC at the published speed. Ships are not to wait for other MVs or warships. The number of MVs in your transit will depend on the number of vessels conducting a crossing on any given day.

Following the Group Transit protocol will enhance mutual protection, optimise coordination of military assets in support and facilitate merchant vessels in avoiding the higher risk piracy areas during the most vulnerable time of the day. Military assets (Naval with Air support) will be strategically deployed within the area to best provide protection and support to merchant vessels.

Daily GOA GT schedule:

<b>Speed (Kts)</b>	<b>Time to enter corridor eastbound (Z) (Point A)</b>	<b>Time to enter corridor eastbound (Local) (Point A)</b>	<b>Time to enter corridor westbound (Z) (Point B)</b>	<b>Time to enter corridor westbound (Local) (Point B)</b>
10	0100	0400	1500	1800
12	0530	0830	2100	0001
14	0830	1130	0100	0400
16	1100	1400	0530	0830
18	1300	1600	0700	1000

When transiting the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) it is recommended that eastbound traffic navigate to the south of the transit corridor and westbound traffic navigate to the north. Notwithstanding this recommendation all vessels should at all times comply with the International Rules for Prevention of Collision at Sea

## **Recommended Best Management Practices**

### **1. Introduction**

- a. Whilst recognising the absolute discretion of the Master at all times to adopt appropriate measures to avoid, deter or delay piracy attacks in this region, this document of best practices is provided for ship owners and ship operators, Masters and their crews.
- b. Not all measures discussed in this document may be applicable for each ship. Therefore, as part of the risk analysis, an assessment is recommended to determine which of the BMP will be most suitable for the ship. The following have, however, generally proved effective:

### **2. Prior to Transit – General Planning**

#### **a. General**

- i. UKMTO Dubai is the first point of contact for ships in the region. The day-to-

day interface between Masters and the military is provided by UKMTO Dubai, who talk to the ships and liaise directly with MSCHOA and the naval commanders at sea. UKMTO Dubai require regular updates on the position and intended movements of ships. They use this information to help the naval units maintain an accurate picture of shipping. (See Glossary at Annex A for further details.)

ii. The Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), is the planning and coordination authority for EU forces (EU NAVFOR) in the Gulf of Aden and the area off the Coast of Somalia. (See Glossary at Annex A.)

iii. The Marine Liaison Office (MARLO) operates as a conduit for information exchange between the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and the commercial shipping community within the region. (See Glossary at Annex A.)

iv. Prior to transiting the high risk area, the owner and Master should carry out their own risk assessment to assess the likelihood and consequences of piracy attacks on the ship, based on the latest available information. The outcome of this risk assessment should identify measures for prevention, mitigation and recovery and will mean combining statutory requirements with supplementary measures to combat piracy.

v. Company crisis management procedures should consider appropriate measures to meet the threat of piracy by adopting IMO and other industry recommended practices as appropriate to the particular circumstances and ship type.

#### **b. Company Planning:**

It is strongly recommended that managers and/or the operations department register for access to the restricted sections of the MSCHOA website (Registration Form) review the information contained therein and share this as appropriate within their fleet.

i. 4-5 days before the vessel enters the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC), or area bound by 12 degrees North or 58 degrees East or 10 degrees South, ensure that a Vessel Movement Registration submission has been logged with MSCHOA (on line, email or fax) . Note: This can be done by either the ship or the company.

ii. Review the Ship Security Assessment (SSA) and implementation of the Ship Security Plan (SSP) as required by the International Ship and Port Facility Code (ISPS) to counter the piracy threat.

iii. The Company Security Officer (CSO) is encouraged to see that a contingency plan for the high risk passage is in place, exercised, briefed and discussed with the Master and the Ship Security Officer (SSO).

- iv. Be aware of the particular high risk sea areas that have been promulgated.
- v. Offer their ship's Master guidance with regard to the preferred and available methods of transiting the region (Group Transit, Escorted Group Transit, National Convoy, etc.).
- vi. Conduct periodic crew training sessions.
- vii. The use of additional private security guards is at the discretion of the company but the use of armed guards is not recommended.
- viii. Consider additional resources to enhance watch-keeping numbers.
- ix. Consider the outfitting of ships with Self Protection Measures (SPM) prior to transiting high risk areas.

**c. Ship's Master Planning:**

- i. Communication of "Initial Report" to UKMTO Dubai and MARLO (email or fax) when entering the reporting area between Suez, and 78 degrees East 10 degrees South, see Anti-Piracy Planning chart Q6099.
- ii. 4-5 days before entering the IRTC, or the area within 12 degrees North, 58 degrees East or 10 Degrees South, ensure that a Vessel Movement Registration submission has been logged with MSCHOA (on line, email or fax). Note: This can be done by either the ship or the company. If it is completed by the company, Masters should satisfy themselves with their companies that their details are correctly registered with MSCHOA.
- iii. Prior to transit of the region it is recommended that the crew should be thoroughly briefed.
- iv. The anti-piracy contingency plan has been shown to be most effective when implemented in advance. A drill is conducted prior to arrival in the area, the plan reviewed and all personnel briefed on their duties, including familiarity with the alarm signal signifying a piracy attack.
- v. Masters are advised to also prepare an emergency communication plan, to include all essential emergency contact numbers and pre-prepared messages, which should be ready at hand or permanently displayed near the communications panel (e.g. telephone numbers of MSCHOA,IMB PRC, CSO etc – see Contact List at Annex B).

vi. Define the ship's AIS policy: SOLAS permits the Master the discretion to switch off AIS if he believes that its use increases the ship's vulnerability. However, in order to provide naval forces with tracking information within the GoA it is recommended that AIS transmission is continued but restricted to ship's identity, position, course, speed, navigational status and safety-related information. Off the coast of Somalia the decision is again left to the Master's discretion, but current Naval advice is to turn it off completely. If in doubt this can be verified with MSCHOA.

### **3. Prior to Transit - Voyage Planning**

a. Vessels are encouraged to report their noon position, course, speed, estimated and actual arrival times to UKMTO Dubai and MARLO whilst operating in the region.

b. Vessels are also encouraged to increase the frequency of such reports when navigating in known high risk/piracy areas and further report upon passing Point A or B in the GoA, as shown on Anti-Piracy Chart Q6099.

#### **c. Inside the GoA:**

i. EUNAVFOR strongly recommends that ships conduct their passage within the IRTC. Westbound ships should bias themselves to the northern portion of the corridor, and eastbound ships to the southern portion. Group Transit (GT) guidance within the GoA for times and speeds are on the MSCHOA web site, if a GT is contemplated.

ii. Ships should avoid entering Yemeni Territorial Waters (YTWs) while on transit. This is for reasons of customary international law, as it is not possible for international military forces (non-Yemeni) to protect ships that are attacked inside Yemeni TTW.

iii. Ships may be asked to make adjustments to passage plans to conform to MSCHOA routing advice.

iv. During GTs ships should not expect to be permanently in the company of a warship. But all warships in the GoA, whether part of EUNAVFOR or coordinating with them, will be aware of the GoA GTs and will have access to the full details of vulnerable shipping.

v. MSCHOA strongly recommends Masters make every effort to plan transit periods of highest risk areas of the GoA for night passage (MSCHOA will advise ships). Very few successful attacks have occurred at night.

**d. Outside the GoA:**

- i. Ships navigating off the east coast of Somalia should consult with MSCHOA or UKMTO Dubai in order to obtain the most recent routing advice.
- ii. Masters should still update UKMTO Dubai in the usual manner with their ship's course and details.
- e. A list of useful contact details are contained in Annex B

**4. Prior to Transit – Defensive Measures**

- a. Taking into account the manning levels, ensure that ship routines are adjusted sufficiently in advance so that well-rested and well-briefed crew are on watch and sufficient watch keepers are available. The Master and Officers of the Watch should be familiar with the impact of zig-zag manoeuvres onboard their particular ship, (in all sea conditions) and in particular the impact that these manoeuvres can have upon reducing the speed of the vessel.
- b. Consider minimising external communications (radios, handsets and AIS information) to essential safety- and security-related communication and SOLAS information only, during transit of the GoA and passing the Coast of Somalia.
- c. Increase readiness and redundancy by running additional auxiliary machinery, including generators and steering motors.
- d. Increase lookouts / bridge manning.
- e. Man the Engine Room.
- f. Secure and control access to the bridge, engine room, steering gear room, and all accommodation /internal spaces. All potential access points (doors, portholes, vents, etc.) should be risk-assessed and adequately secured, especially where the potential access point is considered large enough for an attacker to gain entry. Access to and from the accommodation and internal work spaces should be reduced to a single point of entry when transiting the high risk areas. Any measures employed should not obstruct an emergency EXIT from within the internal space, whilst remaining secure from access by pirates outside.
- g. In case of emergency, warships can be contacted on VHF Ch. 16 (Backup Ch.08).
- h. Check all ladders and outboard equipment are stowed or up on deck.
- i. Check that self-protection measures put in place in advance, remain securely fitted and function as intended. Be mindful that temporary devices may work

loose and consequently may only provide a reduced level of protection.

j. If the ship has a comparatively low freeboard, consider the possibility of extending the width of the gunwales to prevent grappling hooks from gaining hold. Examples of such measures of this are available on the Ship Protection Measures page of this site.

k. It is recommended that a piracy attack muster point or "citadel" be designated and lock-down procedures rehearsed in order to delay access to control of the ship and buy time. Ideally this should be away from external bulkheads and portholes. Due to the ongoing debate on the use of citadels and their method of employment, Masters are recommended to check regularly with MSCHOA.

l. Consider the use of dummies at the rails to simulate additional lookouts. However, if ship design creates lookout black spots and the security assessment identifies this risk, then it may have to be covered by manpower.

m. It is suggested fire pumps and/or hoses should be pressurised and ready for discharge overboard around the vessel, particularly at the most vulnerable points.

n. Consideration should also be given to creating a water curtain around the vessel to further deter boarding.

o. Consider the use of razor wire/physical barriers around stern/lowest points of access, commensurate with crew safety and escape.

p. Consider the use of passive defence equipment.

q. Consider providing night vision optics for use during the hours of darkness.

r. Operate CCTV (if fitted).

## **5. In Transit – Operations**

a. Ship's crew should not be exposed to undue risk when employing Self Protective Measures (SPM).

b. All ships inside the GoA are strongly urged to use the IRTC and follow MSCHOA GT advice and timings.

c. Attention of Mariners is also drawn to IMO circular SN.1 Circ. 281 dated 4th August 2009, "Information on Internationally Recognised Transit Corridor (IRTC) for Ships Transiting the Gulf of Aden" where advice is provided that the IRTC is subject to change by military authorities according to prevailing circumstances. Mariners are therefore urged to obtain up-to-date information from the Alerts section of our website or NAV-warnings promulgated for that area.

- d. If you intend to follow a Group Transit (GT) through the IRTC: Transit at the group transit speed, but remain aware of the ship's limitations. (Current advice, for example, is that if your full sea speed is 16 knots, consider joining a 14 knot GT and keep those 2 knots in reserve.)
- e. If you do not intend to follow a GT through the IRTC: Maintain full sea speed through the high risk area. (Current advice is that if the full sea speed of the ship is more than 18 knots, then do not slow down for a GT. Instead, maintain full sea speed and aim to transit as much of the high risk area in darkness as possible.)
- f. Ships should comply with the International Rules for Prevention of Collision at Sea at all times. Masters should endeavour not to impede the safe navigation of other vessels when joining and leaving the IRTC. Navigation lights should not be turned off at night. Follow the guidance given by Flag State Authority.
- g. Provide deck lighting only as required for safety. Lighting in the shadow zones around the ship's hull may extend the area of visibility for lookouts, but only where consistent with safe navigation. Where fitted, and deemed suitable, consider the immediate use of "remotely operated" ship search lights, if suspicious activity around the vessel is observed, the use of search lights may startle and deter a potential attack. (Current Naval advice is to transit with navigation lights only).
- h. Keep photographs of pirate "mother ships" on the bridge. Report immediately if sighted. Report all sightings of suspect mother ships to UKMTO Dubai and the IMB PRC.
- i. The Master should try to make as early an assessment of a threat as possible. As soon as the Master feels that a threat is developing he should immediately call the UKMTO Dubai.
- j. Keep a good lookout by all available means for suspicious craft, especially from astern and each quarter.
- k. Protect the crew from exposure to undue risk. Only essential work on deck should occur in transit of the high risk area. Masters should, in so far as possible, keep crew members clear from external deck spaces during hours of darkness, whilst being mindful of their obligation to maintain a full and proper lookout at all times.
- l. Use light, alarm bells and crew activity to alert suspected pirates that they have been detected.
- m. A variety of other additional commercially available non-lethal defensive measures are available that could be considered; however these should be

assessed by companies on their merits and on the particular characteristics and vulnerability of the ship concerned.

## **6. If Attacked by Pirates**

a. Follow the ship's pre-prepared contingency plan.

b. Activate the Emergency Communication Plan, and report the attack immediately to the single primary point of contact in the event of an attack, which is UKMTO Dubai. (MSCHOA, as the continually manned maritime security watch centre for piracy attacks in the region, will continue to function as a back-up contact point in the event of an attack).

c. Activate the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS), which will alert your Company Security Officer and flag state. Post attack reports should be communicated as quickly as possible to all relevant piracy reporting centres as explained in section 9.

d. If the Master has exercised his right to turn off the Automatic Identification System (AIS) during transit of the piracy area, this should be turned on once the ship comes under pirate attack.

e. Sound the emergency alarm and make a 'pirate attack' (PA) announcement in accordance with the ship's emergency plan.

f. Make a 'Mayday' call on VHF Ch. 16 (and backup Ch. 08, which is monitored by naval units). Send a distress message via the DSC (Digital Selective Calling) system and Inmarsat-C, as applicable. Establish telephone communication with UKMTO Dubai.

g. Prevent skiffs closing on the ship by altering course and increasing speed where possible. Pirates have great difficulty boarding a ship that is:

i. Making way at over 15 knots.

ii. Manoeuvring - it is suggested that as early as possible Masters undertake continuous small zigzag manoeuvres to further deter boarding whilst maintaining speed. Consider increasing the pirates' exposure to wind/waves and using bow wave and stern wash to restrict pirate craft coming alongside. Masters and the Officer of the Watch (OOW), should be aware of the handling and manoeuvring characteristics of the vessel. Particular attention should be given to the effects of varying helm orders and the impact these can have on the ships speed.

h. Activate fire pump defensive measures.

i. Consider turning on forward facing deck lights to draw attention to your vessel and aid positive identification by arriving military forces as a vessel under attack.

j. Muster all remaining crew in accordance with the ship's contingency plan.

## **7. If Boarded by Pirates**

a. Before pirates gain access to the bridge, inform UKMTO Dubai and, if time permits, the Company.

b. Offer no resistance; this could lead to unnecessary violence and harm to the crew.

c. If the bridge/engine room is to be evacuated, then the main engine should be stopped; all way taken off the vessel if possible and the ship navigated clear of other ships.

d. Remain calm and co-operate fully with the pirates.

e. Ensure all crew, other than the bridge team, stay together in one location.

f. Ensure all crew, other than the bridge team, stay together in one location.

g. If in a locked down "citadel" ensure internal protection/cover is available in case the pirates attempt to force entry. Keep clear of entry point/doors and portholes/windows – do not resist entry. Use citadel emergency communication methods to communicate with authorities.

h. If you can buy time until the military forces arrive, this often leads the pirates to abort their attack. This is why early registration with MSCHOA, use of Group Transit timings and updating your position with UKMTO Dubai are all essential: it gives a better probability that Naval support will be nearby if the pirates attack.

## **8. In the Event of Military Action**

a. Crew should be advised NOT to use cameras with flash at any time when any military action is underway.

b. In the event that military personnel take action onboard the ship, all personnel should keep low to the deck, cover their head with both hands, with hands visible and empty.

c. Be prepared to answer questions on identity and status onboard.

d. Be aware that English is not the working language of all naval units in the region.

e. Military Forces may initially secure all persons encountered. This is standard practice. Brief and prepare ship's personnel to expect this and to cooperate fully

during the initial stages of military action onboard.

## **9. Post Incident Reporting**

- a. Following any piracy attack or suspicious activity, it is vital that a detailed report of the event is reported to MSCHOA, UKMTO DUBAI and the IMB.
- b. This will ensure full analysis and trends in piracy activity are established as well as enabling assessment of piracy techniques or changes in tactics, in addition to ensuring appropriate warnings can be issued to other Merchant shipping in the vicinity.
- c. Masters are therefore requested to complete the standardised piracy report form

## **Updating Best Management Practices**

1. It is anticipated that these BMP will be periodically updated based upon operational experience and lessons learned. The parties to this document will endeavour to meet regularly to update these BMP and to circulate revisions to their respective members and other interested organisations.
2. If in doubt, consult the MSCHOA where additional relevant information will always be posted (noting that this may not be endorsed by all of listed BMP supporting organisations).

## **ANNEX A: GLOSSARY**

The roles and inter-relationship of the coordinating bodies involved.

### **EUNAVFOR**

EUNAVFOR is the coordinating authority which operates the Maritime Security Centre (Horn of Africa). All information and contact details are to be found within the MSCHOA website.

### **MSC (HOA) Maritime Security Centre (Horn of Africa)**

MSCHOA was set up by the European Union (EU) as part of a European Security and Defence Policy initiative to combat piracy in the Horn of Africa. This work commenced with the establishment of EU NAVCO in September 2008. This Coordination Cell working in Brussels established links with a broad cross-section of the maritime community and provided coordination with EU forces operating in the region. In November 2008, the Council of the European Union took a major step further by setting up a naval mission – EU NAVFOR ATALANTA – to improve maritime security off the Somali coast by preventing and deterring pirate attacks and by helping to safeguard merchant shipping in the region.

### **UKMTO Dubai – (UK) Maritime Trade Operations**

The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO Dubai) office in Dubai acts as a point of contact for industry liaison with the Combined Military Forces (CMF). UKMTO Dubai also administers the Voluntary Reporting Scheme, under which merchant ships are encouraged to send daily reports, providing their position and ETA at their next port, whilst transiting the region bound by Suez, 78°E and 10°S. UKMTO Dubai subsequently tracks ships, and the positional information is passed to CMF and EU headquarters. Emerging and relevant information affecting commercial traffic can then be passed directly to ships, rather than by company offices, improving responsiveness to any incident and saving time.

For further information, or to join the Voluntary Reporting Scheme, please contact UKMTO Dubai: [UKMTO@eim.ae](mailto:UKMTO@eim.ae)

### **ANNEX B: USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS**

UKMTO Dubai

Email [UKMTO@eim.ae](mailto:UKMTO@eim.ae)

Telephone +971 50 552 3215

Cell

Fax +971 4 306 5710

Telex (51) 210473

MSCHOA

Via Website for reporting [www.mschoa.org](http://www.mschoa.org)

Telephone +44 (0) 1923 958545

Fax +44 (0) 1923 958520

Email [postmaster@mschoa.org](mailto:postmaster@mschoa.org)

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