



**REPUBLIC OF  
THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**

**MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR**

**Marine Guideline**

**No. 2-11-12**

**Rev. 7/15**

**TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

**SUBJECT: Guidance for Company Security Officers on Preparing a Company and Crew for the Contingency of a Hijacking by Pirates (Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden)**

- References:**
- (a) IMO [MSC.1/Circ. 1390](#), *Guidance for Company Security Officers (CSOs) – Preparation of a Company and Crew for the Contingency of Hijacking by Pirates in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden*, dated 9 December 2010
  - (b) RMI Marine Notice [2-011-39](#), *Piracy, Armed Robbery, and the Use of Armed Security*

**PURPOSE:**

This guidance is directed toward Company Security Officers (CSOs) to assist them in developing procedures to prepare crews for the contingency of their vessel being hijacked when transiting the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) or Gulf of Aden (GoA). It also addresses necessary actions of the Company in fulfilling its responsibility to the crew and highlights the need to prepare a crisis management plan that is designed specifically to handle hijacking and its effects on the crew.

This Guideline supersedes the original issue of 1/11 and reflects the updating of Reference (b) above and the hyperlinking of referenced documents where possible.

**APPLICABILITY:**

This Guideline applies to the CSOs of Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) flagged vessels that intend to transit through the WIO and the GoA.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**1.0 General**

- 1.1 The considerations provided in the guidance that follows are in addition to any requirements contained in RMI Marine Notice [2-011-39](#), *Piracy, Armed Robbery, and the Use of Armed Security* (reference (b) above).

## **2.0 Part I- Preparation of Crew**

2.1 When preparing crews of ships that are to travel through the WIO or GoA, it is recommended that the CSO give careful consideration to the following:

### **2.1.1 Training Requirements**

Consider any contractual, national/flag/training or preparation requirements for the crew.

### **2.1.2 Seafarers and Others on Board the Vessel**

- .1 Consider the rights of seafarers and what constitutes reasonable grounds with respect to requests for disembarkation and repatriation prior to entering the WIO or GoA; this might have to be done on a case-by-case basis.
- .2 Review the presence of seafarers and others (e.g., partners, children) on board and their safety during the transit of the WIO or GoA.

### **2.1.3 Accurate Crew Records**

- .1 Ensure that the personal details of crew members are up-to-date including:
  - Contact details for next of kin (telephone number and e-mail address);
  - Any medical conditions of crew members and medication required; and
  - Clothing sizes for each crew member (to enable replacement clothing to be provided).

### **2.1.4 Company Commitment**

- .1 Ensure, when possible, that crews are made fully aware in advance of the voyage route of the ship including projected dates and times of transiting the WIO or GoA.
- .2 Ensure crews are reassured of their rights and what constitutes reasonable grounds with respect to disembarking prior to entering the WIO or GoA.
- .3 Ensure crews are aware of the Company's commitment to their health and safety.

### **2.1.5 Crew Awareness of the Hijack Environment**

- .1 Ensure that the crew are aware of the "shock of capture" and that the greatest anxiety is usually experienced in the hours after the initial hijack incident. Feeling depressed, helpless and humiliated are emotions that many hostages experience during captivity. The crew should be encouraged to focus on surviving the ordeal.
- .2 Ensure that the crew understand the importance of being cooperative with the demands of the pirates without appearing either servile or antagonistic.

- .3 Ensure that the crew appreciate the importance of mutual support, teamwork and maintaining a shipboard routine both during and in the aftermath of a hijack incident.
- .4 Ensure that the crew understand the importance of trying to maintain the standard of living conditions on board for the crew.
- .5 Advise that the pirates may demand that the crew pose for photographs and muster on the upper deck. This should not be resisted as this may be to prove the well being of the crew to the owners during the negotiations for release.
- .6 Ensure crew awareness that the pirates are likely to show them disrespect during captivity and may seek to disorientate them by possible separation into small groups or being held in confined areas (e.g., bridge/engine-room).
- .7 Ensure crew awareness of personal actions to reduce opportunities for coercion and intimidation by pirates in the event of capture, for example minimizing pirates' access to crew's family contact details (e.g., mobile phone SIM cards, e-mail addresses, etc.), not being isolated from other crew members, trying to establish a single point of contact amongst the crew for communications with the pirates.
- .8 Advise the crew to treat all information given to them by the pirates with caution.
- .9 Ensure crew awareness of the use by pirates of the drug khat and its effects.
- .10 Ensure crew awareness of communication procedures to be followed during captivity by Company and crew in particular:
  - on board the ship amongst crew members;
  - between the ship and Company;
  - between the Company and crew families, (e.g., via the internet, telephone contact and face-to-face meetings); and
  - how the crew should co-operate with pirates during captivity-where possible try to establish a single contact point amongst the crew.
- .11 Advise the crew of the need to be observant (without appearing to study the captors) during captivity in their interests of recalling events clearly during the crew debrief post-incident.
- .12 Ensure that the crew and the families understand that it can take significant time to readjust after a hostage incident and that this is a normal reaction to an abnormal experience.

## 2.1.6 Crew Awareness of Company Actions

- .1 Ensure that the crew are aware of Company crisis management procedures that will be undertaken during captivity and after release, in particular:
  - Assurances that the Company will do everything practical to expedite release;
  - Assurances of the Company's commitment to its continued obligations toward the crew with respect to safety, pay, employment, replacement of personal effects, etc.;
  - Assurances that the Company will notify the next of kin in the event of an incident and establish a point of contact within the Company to provide families with ongoing information and coordinate support for families from internal and external sources as required;
  - Awareness that the negotiation can be a lengthy process and that the Company will be working hard for the crew's release; and
  - Company policy on media relations during a hijack.
- .2 Awareness of Company considerations/actions following release:
  - .1 The provision of supplies to the ship and crew as required post-incident, including:
    - Food and water;
    - Fuel;
    - Replacement clothing;
  - .2 The provision of medical assistance, including counseling, in the period commencing after release;
  - .3 The Company policy on how to handle events at the first port of call including repatriation of the crew;
  - .4 The Company policy on post-incident press relations; and
  - .5 The Company policy on post-incident debriefs and review of Crisis Management Procedures.

## 3.0 **Part 2- Company Crisis Management**

- 3.1 When preparing crisis management procedures to respond to a hijack of a ship and crew, the CSO should, as a minimum, prepare and exercise plans to address the following:
  - 3.1.1 The Company Board's designation of a head of crisis management answerable to the Board for the duration of the crisis and to lead the response effort;
  - 3.1.2 Establishment of a single point of contact within the Company for contact with the pirates;

- 3.1.3 The composition of the management team and the roles and responsibilities of the persons involved, including:
- Negotiator
  - Crew welfare (including contact with families and external source of support (e.g., welfare organizations):
  - Logistics and operations
  - Medical advice
  - Media relations
- 3.1.4 The ongoing obligations to the crew with respect to such items as wages, employment, replacement of personal effects.
- 3.1.5 Communications policy during the crisis:
- Recommendations on communications between captive crew members
  - Communications between the Company and ship
  - Communications between the Company and families of crew, including internet, telephone contact and face-to-face meetings
  - Communications with pirates
- 3.1.6 Provisions of supplies prior to transit and after release, including food, water, stores and fuel.
- 3.1.7 Choosing a first port of refuge post-release, factors are likely to include:
- The availability of relevant local resources
  - The provision of vital assets to the ship, including:
    - Counseling and/or medical assistance to the crew
    - Replacement clothing
    - Specialist Contractors/Advisors
    - Full or partial replacement of crew
    - Victuals
    - Repatriation of crew members
- 3.1.8 Provision of immediate medical assistance post-release including counseling and the potential requirement for ongoing support and assistance.
- 3.1.9 Post-release media relations.