

SEMINAR
PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPPING:
To Prevent, Deter, Protect and Fight against an ACTUAL Threat
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Key points by Mr Alfons Guinier (ECSA)

Whilst commending EU NAVFOR for the work done with limited resources ECSA advised that there was still a lot to be done. Particular attention was drawn to the necessity of organising convoys/escorts for merchant ships by preference separately for slow and higher speed ships.

Taking into account that there are a high number on non-EU naval forces in the area coordination with them is essential. This will improve the coverage of the large area where piracy is taking place. It is hoped that the UN Piracy Contact Group can assist in this respect. Experience has proven that interventions with helicopters and planes have had good results. Therefore combined aero-naval action is recommended.

ECSA has recommended its membership to register on the EU NAVFOR website and register movements of ships. Many have done so but there is uncertainty on the follow up and the monitoring. Some feedback would be helpful. It would also help if there is one contact point.

Though difficult and long term, it is essential that the international community helps to restore law and order in Somalia.

With regards to ship self defence/own measures against the threat of piracy reference was made to the Best Management Practices of which some points were highlighted. Particular attention was drawn to the danger of having private armed guards on board. European shipowners are against such a measure since it could result in an escalation of violence with disastrous consequences for the safety of seafarers and passengers. Boarding by military naval people – e.g. in cases of close escorts – is a different issue subject to discussions with the flag states and the master.

Best Management Practices (BMP)

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide **Best Management Practices (BMP)** that will assist vessels in avoiding piracy attacks, and deterring attacks and delaying successful attacks in the Gulf of Aden and other waters near the Horn of Africa. The organizations consulted on this document represent the vast majority of ship owners and operators transiting the impacted region. These organizations will encourage their members to utilize these best management practices and will endeavour to promulgate these to other shipping as BMPs in combating piracy in the impacted region.

II. Somalia Pirate Practices and Lessons Learned:

- Pirate attacks on commercial merchant vessels appear to be clustered around the northern side of the Gulf of Aden as vessels increasingly use the UKMTO transit corridor; while other attacks have occurred in the Indian Ocean.
- The use of a pirate “mother ship”, which is a larger vessel carrying personnel, equipment and smaller assault craft, has facilitated a significant extension of operational range.
- Vigilance should be highest at first and last light as the majority of the attacks take place during this period.
- Vessel owners and operators should be aware that just over one-third of attempted attacks in the Gulf of Aden have been successful.
- A number of attempted hijacks have been repelled by ship’s crews who have employed passive counter measures to good effect.

III. Recommended Best Management Practices:

To avoid, deter, and delay piracy attacks in the impacted region, while recognizing the absolute discretion of the Master at all times to adopt appropriate measures, the following BMPs have proved effective:

- Establish and follow company procedures in the Ship Security Plan, adopting IMO and other industry recommended practices
- Be aware of the sea areas and ports affected by piracy and armed robbery.
- Ensure a contingency plan is available and conduct a drill prior to arrival in the area. Review plan if necessary and brief all personnel on their duties. Ensure all crew are familiar with the Alarm system and sound.
- 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 tel. nos. of MSCHOA, IMB, PRC, CSO.]

- Prior to entering high risk areas the Master should thoroughly brief his crew as to the risks and dangers associated with the passage and exactly what he would expect of his crew during the transit.
- Wherever practicable, vessels transiting to ports outside of East Africa should consider navigating to the east of Madagascar or (for guidance) maintain a distance of more than 450 nautical miles from the coastline.
- Use the UKMTO transit corridor which lies within the Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA).
- Plan to pass the most dangerous areas during hours of darkness.
- Vessels should comply with the International Rules for Prevention of Collision at Sea at all times; navigation lights should not be turned off at night. Follow the guidance given by Flag State Authority (e.g. for UK vessels Marine Guidance Notice 298).
- Proceed at or near “full speed.” Critical machinery should be fully operational and any maintenance completed before entering the area.
- Keeping in mind the minimum manning levels on ships today the Master should ensure that ship routines are adjusted sufficiently in advance to ensure that he has well rested and well briefed crew on watch at all times.
- Keep a good lookout for suspicious craft, especially from astern. [Most attacks to date have occurred from the port quarter.]
- Use light, alarm bells and crew activity to alert suspected pirates that they have been detected.
- Whilst measures should be taken to prevent Pirates boarding, the safety of crew and passengers is paramount.
- Provide maximum available deck lighting consistent with safe navigation.
- Identify a safe area for crew members to muster if attacked (Locked down accommodation / engine room).
- Report to UKMTO before entering the area (operations departments to register passage prior to transit with Maritime Security Center Horn of Africa (<http://www.mschoa.org>)).
- Follow transit course and speed advice/instructions of UKMTO/MSCHOA for best protection.
- Minimise external communications (radios, handsets and AIS information) to essential safety and security related communication and SOLAS information only during transit of high risk areas
- No work should occur outside the accommodation unless essential.

- Fire pumps should be set running and hoses pressurized with water spray discharged overboard in highest risk quarters.
- Endeavour to have operational/running redundant auxiliary machinery, including where applicable generators and steering motors
- Increase lookouts / bridge manning.
- Man the Engine Room.
- Secure and control access to bridge, engine room, steering gear room, and crew quarters.
- In case of emergency warships can be contacted on VHF Ch. 16. [Backup CH08].
- Ensure all ladders including pilot ladders are stowed on deck
- Consider razor wire/physical barriers around stern / lowest points of access, commensurate with crew safety and escape
- Consider extending width of gunwales to prevent grappling ladders and hooks providing access

Additional commercially available measures:

A variety of defensive non-lethal measures is available; these should be assessed by companies on their merits and on the particular characteristics of the vessel concerned.

If attacked by pirates:

- Follow contingency plan.
- Activate the ship security alert system, which will alert your Company Security Officer and flag state
- IF the Master has opted to turn off the Automatic Identification System (AIS) during transit of the piracy area, this should be turned on in the event that the vessel comes under pirate attack.
- Sound emergency alarm and make a PA announcement 'Pirate attack'. as per the Ship's emergency plan which should be specified and all crew made aware of prior to entering the area of high risk
- Muster all crew in a safe area inside the accommodation ideally away from external bulkheads and portholes
- Carry out small zigzag maneuver, not more that 7-10 degrees rate of turn to maintain speed. Avoid creating a lee for the pirates; if possible increase their exposure to the wind / waves. Use the bow wave and stern wash to make it

difficult for small attack craft to approach and fire upon the vessel. 'Mayday' call on VHF Ch 16 [and backup Ch 8, which is monitored by military vessels]. Send a distress message via the DSC (Digital Selective Calling) system and Inmarsat-C as applicable.

- Maximise vessel speed. [Evidence to date from failed attacks is that the pirates will give up if unable to board within 30 - 45 minutes.]
- Turn on fire hoses, if not already running.
- The Master should try and 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 Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) and the 24 hour manned Piracy Reporting Centre. Emergency contact details located on the Contact Us page within the Registered User area.
- Activate Emergency Communication Plan / Call in order of priority *
 - The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Dubai.
 - The Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)
 - The International Maritime Bureau.

[Emergency contact details located on the Contact Us page within the Registered User area www.MSCHOA.eu]

- Contact details and pre prepared messages should be established as part of anti piracy measures.

[Ideally either a single reporting point should be established or a call to one of the reporting options will be relayed without delay to all appropriate authorities]*

If boarded by Pirates

- Offer no resistance otherwise this could lead to unnecessary violence and harm to crew.
- Before pirates gain access to bridge inform the Maritime Security Centre and if time permits the company.
- If the bridge/engine room is to be evacuated, then the main engine should be stopped, all way taken off if possible and the vessel navigated clear of other vessels.
- Remain calm and co-operate fully with the pirates.
- Ensure all crew, other than bridge team, stay together in one location

- If in a locked down “citadel” ensure internal protection/cover is available if pirates attempt to force entry and keep clear of entry point/doors and portholes/windows – do not resist entry.

In the event of Military Action

- In the event that military personnel take action onboard the vessel, all personnel should keep low to the deck, cover their head with both hands (always ensuring that hands are visible and not holding anything) and make no sudden movements unless directed to by friendly forces. Be prepared to answer questions on identity and status onboard.
- Crew should be advised NOT to use cameras with flash at any time when any military action is underway.
- [NOTE: Military personnel should be aware that English is not always the working language on a ship]

IV. Updating Best Management Practices:

It is anticipated that these Best Management Practices will be periodically updated based upon operational experience and lessons learned. The organizations, previously consulted, will endeavor to meet regularly to update these best management practices and circulate revisions to members and other interested organizations.