

PIRACY ON THE HIGH SEAS

INTRODUCTION:

In recent years the shipping industry has had to cope with a number of important issues ranging from the high cost of bunkers to an old nemesis, piracy.



Today's pirates are more sophisticated with satellite communications, high speed boats, mother ships and lethal weapons. Piracy on the world's seas has reached a five-year low, with 297 ships attacked in 2012, compared with 439 in 2011. Somali, East Africa and West Africa remain the worst areas, with 150 attacks. The Gulf of Guinea saw 58 attacks

in 2012, and 207 crew members taken hostage representing 35% of all hostages taken. In 2012 around the world, 28 vessels were taken and 174 were boarded resulting in 6 crew members being killed and 585 crew members being kidnapped. This is down from 802 kidnapped in the prior year. While the numbers are down somewhat, the threat remains real and continuing for tankers and will likely be a problem for the foreseeable future.

COMBATING PIRACY:

A well planned and layered defense system is the best protection against piracy. *The first step is to get the latest intelligence.* The Commercial Crime Service (CCS), the anti-crime arm of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), is one of the best places to get the latest intelligence: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/>. The CCS has live piracy reports and a live piracy map showing areas of concern as well as incident reports and links to the International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC). The IMB PRC, a division of the ICC, has more services such as advice to ship masters, the latest news on piracy, a 24 hour maritime security hotline and a piracy prone warnings

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reporting service. The IMB PRC broadcasts incidents of piracy and armed robbery to all ships in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the Atlantic Ocean Region (AOR) via InMARSAT Safety Net System.



The second step is be prepared when traveling through high risk areas and have an anti-piracy plan in place that is practiced and known by the crew. Additionally, an around the clock anti-piracy watch is recommended because in most incidents, as soon as the pirates / armed robbers know that they have been spotted or feel the vessel has been secured and authorities alerted, they will abandon the attack.

The third step is to follow the advice of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other organizations below.

1. All methanol ships should have a practiced and well thought out ship security plan. Crew should always follow those ship specific security procedures.
2. Advice in IMO circular Maritime Safety Committee (MSC).1/Circ.1334 (23 June 2009) is very useful. It ranges from safe rooms and special communications gear to armed guards. Each owner and producer must elevate the threat in their area and come up with their own effective anti-piracy procedures.
3. Procedures given in Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy, Version 4 (BMP4) while transiting high risk areas of Somali piracy should also be considered.
4. Always report all incidents of piracy and armed robbery (actual, attempted or suspicious) to the 24 hour manned IMB PRC. This first step is crucial in the response procedures as well as promulgating the threat to all vessels in the region.