



Technical Circular

No.: 028/2015

Date: 12th October 2015

To Whomsoever it may concern

Subject: Piracy – Revision of High Risk Area

1. Please refer to the press release quoted below from industry associations of date 8 October 2015 as informed by Intercargo.

QUOTE

Vigilance still crucial as piracy High Risk Area in the Indian Ocean reduced

Organisations representing the global shipping and oil industry have announced that the size of the 'High Risk Area' for piracy in the Indian Ocean has been reduced and issued new advice to merchant ship operators.

This reduction to the High Risk Area is in response to the ongoing containment of pirate attacks in the Indian Ocean, but a group of shipping and oil industry organisations ([BIMCO](#), International Chamber of Shipping ([ICS](#)), [Intercargo](#), [INTERTANKO](#) and the Oil Companies International Marine Forum ([OCIMF](#))) stressed that a serious threat remains and that correct reporting and vigilance remains crucial.

The reduction of the High Risk Area takes full account of recent shipping industry experience, and follows extensive consultation with governments through the diplomatic Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, and military naval forces, including NATO, Combined Maritime Forces and EU NAVFOR, which continue to provide vital protection to shipping.

The new industry advice, which takes effect from 1 December, changes that currently contained in the latest edition of Best Management Practices for Protection against Somali Based Piracy ([BMP 4](#)), which is jointly produced by the industry group.

The amendment to BMP 4 that relates to this issue can be downloaded via each shipping organisations' website (as can BMP4).



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In summary:

- *The area previously classified as “high risk” now forms only a part of the area called the Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA)*
- *Ships entering the VRA must still register with the Maritime Security Centre for the Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) and report to the United Kingdom Marine Trade Operations (UKMTO) to be monitored during transit;*
- *Pre-transit risk assessments should take into account the latest information from both the Voluntary Reporting Area and High Risk Area.*

The industry associations further emphasised that in view of the continuing high risk of pirate attack, shipping companies must continue to maintain full compliance with the BMP and be vigilant in their voluntary reporting on piracy incidents, sighting of potential pirates, and any suspicious activity – as this provides crucial intelligence on risk levels in the area.

UNQUOTE

2. Owners/ Mangers may be aware of discussion at the IMO Marine Safety Committee and the work of the UN Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGCPS) to harmonise the view of littoral states and industry regarding the Indian Ocean HRA. Following an industry review of a threat assessment from military intelligence and based upon the result of the discussion with the Industry associations BMP 4 (the 4th version of “Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy”) the definition of High Risk Area has been revised as under:

The High Risk Area is now defined as being bounded by:

In the Red Sea:	Latitude 15°N
In the Gulf of Oman:	Latitude 22°N
Eastern limit:	Longitude 065°E
Southern limit:	Latitude 5°S

It is requested to disseminate the attached amendment to the definition of the High Risk Area (HRA) in BMP 4 and supporting guidance as widely and as soon as possible. Annex A to this circular provides an amendment to Section 2 of BMP 4, accompanying guidance on the revision’s impact and practical

measures for company and shipboard planning as described in sections 6 and 7 of BMP 4.

3. **The revisions will formally apply from 1 December 2015**, in order to give shipping companies and crews' time to adapt. Following has been strongly recommended by the Industry Association
 - i. The revisions be taken into account for voyages through the VRA (Voluntary Reporting Area) and HRA for which risk assessments are yet to be conducted. (Please note these changes may have implications for charter party and insurance agreements as well as ship security arrangements).
 - ii. It is not anticipated to publish a revised version of BMP 4 to incorporate these changes. It is expected that a new version of the Admiralty Chart Q6099 will be made available before the entry into force of the revisions on 1 December 2015.
 - iii. Whilst the revision re-designates the area considered to be at a high risk from Somalia-based pirate groups, the threat assessment recognised that these groups retain the ability to attack at the historical limits of their activity. As such, the three pillars of BMP 4, namely registering at MSCHOA (The Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa) , reporting to UKMTO (the UK Maritime Trade Operations) and implementing ship protection measures on the basis of a thorough risk assessment remain essential. Any lowering of guard in the region is likely to present an opportunity for a resurgence of pirate activities.

Enclosure:

1. MSC.1/Circ. 1339- Piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia.
2. Somali Pirate Activity the High Risk Area.

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