

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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SHIP SECURITY ADVISORY No. #11-16

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Company Security Officers, Recognized Security Organizations

Subject: ADVANCE NOTICE OF POLICY CHANGE - HANDLING OF SHIP SECURITY ALERT SYSTEM TRANSMISSIONS

Date: 16 September 2016

In accordance with International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Regulation XI-2/6, activation of the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) shall initiate and transmit a ship-to-shore security alert to the designated Competent Authority, indicating that the security of the ship is under threat or has been compromised. The Competent Authority is also responsible for receiving SSAS test messages and investigating whether the alert is real¹, test², or false³. The Competent Authority is defined as the recipient of the SSAS transmissions.

This Advisory serves as advance notice that, effective 01 April 2017, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the "Administrator") will no longer receive SSAS alerts directly from any vessel. The Administrator's new policy will instead provide for the Company⁴ or a Company-appointed, qualified third party to serve as the Competent Authority to receive and verify SSAS transmissions.

This policy change will allow the Company or the Company-appointed, qualified third party to acknowledge and respond to all test messages directly, ensuring the proper functioning of SSAS equipment and verifying the accuracy of the transmitted data without the need for acknowledgement of receipt by the Administrator.

This reserves Administrator involvement to only those SSAS transmissions that are real alerts or unresolved alerts⁵, which are to be immediately forwarded by the Competent Authority to the Administrator at: dutyofficer@register-iri.com.

See Flowchart in [Appendix I](#)

¹ *Real Alert* shall mean an unplanned alert transmitted during an actual security incident, threat, or perceived threat.

² *Test Alert* shall mean a planned alert transmitted to ensure that the SSAS equipment is functional and properly programmed (e.g. initial installation, International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) audits, security exercises and drills, or prior to entering a high risk area).

³ *False Alert* shall mean an unplanned alert transmitted by accident.

⁴ *Company* shall mean the owner of the ship or any other organization or person, such as the manager, or the bareboat charterer, who has assumed the responsibility for operation of the ship from the owner of the ship and who, on assuming such responsibility, has agreed to take over all the duties and responsibilities imposed by the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.

⁵ *Unresolved Alert* shall mean an alert received by a Competent Authority that is still unable to determine whether it is a real alert, test alert, or false alert after a period of three (3) hours.

This SSA expires one (1) year after its issuance, unless otherwise noted, extended, superseded, or revoked.

REQUIRED CHANGES

1.0 Designation of a Competent Authority

Companies will be required to designate either an internal appointee (preferably the Company Security Officer (CSO) or Alternate Company Security Officer (ACSO) or an external, qualified third party to serve as the Competent Authority to receive all SSAS alerts and take appropriate action.

- .1 A Competent Authority must:
 - a. Be available at all times (on a 24/7 basis) to receive and act upon SSAS alerts;
 - b. Be able to accurately identify and react to “real”, “false”, and “test” alerts;
 - c. Understand the SSAS requirements (Part A) and recommendations (Part B) of the ISPS Code and the Administrator’s SSAS requirements contained in RMI Marine Notice [2-011-18](#);
 - d. Maintain a current contact list of relevant authorities (Administrator, Maritime Rescue Coordination Centers, Coastal State Authorities, Information Sharing Centers) to be used in the event of an actual alert;
 - e. Participate in drills or exercises involving tests of the SSAS.

2.0 Reprogramming of the SSAS Unit

Companies must ensure that the SSAS unit is reprogrammed so that alerts are only transmitted to the designated Competent Authority. This means that the Administrator’s email address (“Y6Z...@register-iri.com”) must be removed from the unit’s program and replaced with that of the internal appointee and/or external third party service.

- .1 Other than the deletion of the Administrator’s contact information from the programmed alert, all other information in the SSAS alert remains the same as listed below:
 - a. The vessel name;
 - b. The IMO Ship Identification Number;
 - c. The Call Sign;
 - d. The Maritime Mobile Service Identity;
 - e. Date and time;
 - f. Position;

- g. Course and speed;
- h. Name of CSO and 24/7 phone number; and
- i. Name of Alternate CSO and 24/7 phone number.

It is recommended that the vessel's radio service provider is contacted so that reprogramming of the SSAS unit can be scheduled at a convenient time, possibly along with other routine service, rather than waiting until 01 April 2017, the date for this policy change.

All SSAS transmissions are to be transmitted only to the Competent Authority and the CSO.

3.0 Revisions to the Ship Security Plan

Companies must ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that real alerts and unresolved alerts are immediately forwarded to the Administrator (dutyofficer@register-iri.com) by the Competent Authority, so the Administrator may fulfill its duties required by SOLAS Regulation XI-2/6.

Revisions to the Ship's Security Plan (SSP) should be made as may be required. It should be noted that changes to the SSP resulting from this change in policy will not require special approval action by the Recognized Security Organization (RSO). Initial testing of the new SSAS settings is to be conducted successfully with the Company-designated Competent Authority and documented for the RSO's review during the next scheduled ISPS audit.

SCHEDULE TO IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY CHANGE

The Administrator is currently in the process of revising all affected RMI publications to reflect this policy change. Vessel operators may implement this changed procedure at any time prior to the official implementation date of 01 April 2017.

Please direct any questions or concerns to shipsecurity@register-iri.com.

APPENDIX I

