



Office of
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of Maritime Affairs

THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA LIBERIA MARITIME AUTHORITY

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25 January 2017

Marine Advisory: 2/2017

SUBJECT: Panama Canal Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (PCSOPEP) Requirements

Ref: Panama Canal Authority (ACP) OP NOTICE TO SHIPPING No. N-12-2015

Dear Shipowner/Operator/Master:

The purpose of this Marine Advisory is to present the requirements and regulations of the Panama Canal SOPEP (PCSOPEP), which became effective January 1, 2005. The Liberian Administration after reviewing and evaluating this regulation has incorporated these guidelines to assist shipowners, operators and masters.

At all times, the ACP acts as the sole **Oil Spill Response Organization (OSRO)** for all vessels irrespective of the flag, in transit or awaiting transit of the Panama Canal.

General Overview

PCSOPEP requirements were promulgated with Agreement No. 78 of May 27, 2004 of the ACP Board of Directors and became effective on January 1, 2005. It amended Chapter IX, Section Four and Annex, of the Regulation on Navigation in Panama Canal Waters.

The PCSOPEP is a program that seeks to implement emergency preparedness strategies for Panama Canal waters. It aids the ACP in minimizing consequences of spills and emergencies by safeguarding life, reducing the impact on the environment and ensuring the continuous operation of the Canal.

All shipowners, operators and masters using the Panama Canal have the primary responsibility of implementing the PCSOPEP and participating in the response, as stated in Section Four of Chapter IX of the Regulation on Navigation in Panama Canal waters, following the procedures are obliged to comply with the provisions of the PCSOPEP as long as their vessel(s) are under the scope of applicability of this requirement. They should cooperate actively in the event of a spill and shall activate its own plan and notify the ACP.

Applicability

Commercial Vessels: The PCSOPEP program requirements apply to toll-paying vessels that transit the Panama Canal with a 400 Metric Ton (MT) or more carrying capacity of oil as cargo and/or fuel.

PCSOPEP program requirements do not apply to:

- a. Military Vessels;
- b. Auxiliary Vessels on government non-commercial service; and
- c. Local call vessels not scheduled for transit.

Plan Requirement and Authorized Person

PCSOPEP also requires that an Authorized Person be designated in the plan to act as a liaison between the vessel and the ACP to obtain and consign, on behalf of the vessel, acceptable guarantees, to the satisfaction of the ACP, to cover the costs of the responses and cleanup of oil spills in Canal waters.

The Authorized Person shall comply with the following (but are not limited to):

- Reside in the Republic of Panama
- Be fluent in either English or Spanish
- Understand the vessel's PCSOPEP
- Act as a liaison with the ACP.

Note: In addition a bond must be arranged and posted on behalf of the vessel; this bond must be accepted by the ACP. This bond must be posted for the main purpose to cover or to pay the ACP the costs the ACP may incur by reason of the oil spill response and cleanup tasks. (Copy of this bond should be onboard at all times).

PCSOPEP for a vessel under the Liberian Flag shall be developed by an organization or individual experienced in pollution prevention and response, however Liberia recommends the use of SeaNet, a company having qualified personnel with vast experience in the maritime sector that can act as the PCSOPEP Authorized Person.

For further information or questions regarding this Advisory, please contact the Registry's Panama Regional Office, Hi Tech Plaza, Floor #8, Office 8a, 52 Street and 50 Street, Obarrio, Panama, republic of Panama, Telephone: +507 263 2199 or email rcigarruista@liscr.com; Safety@liscr.com.

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