



Technical Circular

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To whomsoever it may concern

Subject: Maritime security exercise - tabletop.

- Company Security Officers are required to participate in maritime security exercises at appropriate intervals, to ensure effective co-ordination and implementation of the ship security plans (Section 13 of Part A of ISPS Code).
- Maritime security exercise is an activity involving extensive training in which various aspects of the Plan are practised. Communication, coordination, availability of resources and reactions should be rehearsed and tested. The exercise may be full scale or live; or may be a tabletop simulation. In many instances, a tabletop simulation is organised by the Company.
- In a recent Port State Control (PSC) inspection of a classed ship, concern has been raised by the PSC regarding conduct of a tabletop exercise. This Circular is intended to provide guidance to Company Security Officers for organizing a tabletop exercise.
- Tabletop exercise is a discussion based session where team members meet in an informal, classroom setting to discuss their roles in an emergency and their responses to a particular emergency situation. In addition to testing communications, other aspects of the Plan are also rehearsed. A facilitator guides participants through a discussion of one or more scenarios. A basic tabletop exercise should include the following:
 1. Planning
 - Objectives – the first task is to establish the aims and objectives of the exercise, so it is clear on what is to be achieved. Inputs for objectives may be obtained from Ship Security Plan, changing threats, new factors and/or lessons learnt from previous exercises.
 - Scenario – the setting for an exercise should describe a maritime security situation that will set the scene and focus all participants on the event. Based on the objectives of the exercise, a muster list of events may be prepared, which may be initiated during the exercise that can be expected the participants to respond in a manner that will generate a learning point.
 - Communications – various communication means will be required to plan and conduct the exercise. Responsibility for communication during the exercise may be specifically assigned.
 - Logistics – availability of planning room, control room, map covering the geographical area of responsibility, communication facilities, etc. may be considered.

2. Conduct of the exercise

- Briefings – participants should be briefed on the aims, objectives, organization and arrangements for the exercise. Where relevant, lessons learnt from previous exercises may also be reviewed at the briefing.
- Scenario initiation – should provide the background events leading to the situation at the commencement of the exercise and provide the measures set in place. Master events list may be used to commence the exercise. Narratives are provided by the exercise control to describe the situation at any stage in the exercise. They are usually provided to initiate the exercise and to advance the scenario to a next stage. Events may be introduced during the exercise to develop the scenario that would lead to insight or lessons on aspects of the operation of the plan.
- Command, Control and communications – when different agencies are involved, areas of responsibility need to be clearly demarcated. Where participation of agencies is simulated, it is a good practice to include their contact details in the simulated communication.
- Termination – tabletop exercises should normally end when the operations plan developed during the planning phase has been played out.

3. Debrief – each operating group or participants should give their feedback. The lessons learnt, areas of improvement and recommendations from the conduct of the exercise should be consolidated in debrief.

4. Reports – written report to top management should follow the conduct of an exercise. The report should focus on the lessons learnt from the exercise and recommendations for follow-up action and serves as a record of the event.

5. Records – should be maintained as evidence of compliance.

It may be noted that maritime security exercises do not have to involve each ship within a fleet. If an exercise is carried out on board and/or involves one or more company ships then, as a minimum, the exercise details and lessons learnt can be circulated throughout the fleet. (paragraph 4.8.19 of Guide to Maritime Security and the ISPS Code)

- Companies are requested to be guided by above.

Enclosure:

1. Nil

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