



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Guidance Relating to the Provision and Use of Ship Security Alert System

To : Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators and Classification Societies

Summary

This Note provides guidance relating to the provision and use of the ship security alert system (SSAS) that will come into force internationally on 1 July 2004 under SOLAS regulation XI-2/6.

1. According to Regulation XI-2/6, ships constructed on or after 1 July 2004 are required to be fitted with a SSAS. For existing vessels, including passenger ships, tankers, bulk carriers and cargo high speed craft, SSAS should be fitted not later than the first survey of radio installation after 1 July 2004 with the remaining cargo ships not later than the first survey of radio installation after the 1 July 2006.
2. The SSAS fitted on board Hong Kong registered ships should comply with the performance standards adopted by IMO resolution MSC.136(76). Systems that have been approved by Recognized Security Organizations authorized by the Marine Department to undertake statutory certification work under the ISPS Code on behalf of Hong Kong would in principle be accepted for installation on board Hong Kong registered ships. Queries regarding SSAS can be directed to Senior Surveyor, Security and Quality Assurance Section, Tel. (852) 2852 4503.
3. As stated in HKMSIN 27/2003, the Hong Kong Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (HK MRCC) is designated as the competent authority to receive security alert from Hong Kong registered ships. According to SOLAS Regulation XI-2/6, the HKSAR Administration has the obligation to notify the States in the vicinity of which the ship is operating upon receipt of a notification of a ship security alert. Arrangements are already in place to ensure that the necessary response actions will be initiated upon receipt of a ship security alert from a Hong Kong registered ship.

4. Masters of Hong Kong registered ships should note that, if activated, the SSAS is designed to send out a covert alarm which will not be noticed nor capable of being de-activated by those on board the vessel. The purpose of the covert alarm is to deny those posing the threat or making an attack the knowledge that an alert has been made. Upon receipt of a covert alarm, HK MRCC and the shipowner should make no attempt to contact the Master, other persons on board, or ships in the vicinity unless directed by the Security Forces responding to the incident. Once triggered, it is expected that the vessel would be boarded by security forces responding to the incident at the earliest opportunity. Delay would be unavoidable when the vessel reaches a port even it has subsequently been confirmed that the alert is in fact a false alarm either triggered inadvertently or due to system malfunction.

5. To avoid false alarm due to testing, ship operators are reminded that testing of the SSAS should only be conducted strictly according to the instructions of the service provider and prior arrangements must first be made with the Senior Surveyor, Security and Quality Assurance Section if the test involves the HK MRCC.

Marine Department
Multi-lateral Policy Division

7 June 2004