

04 February 2009

To: All CSO of HK registered ships

Dear Sir / Madam,

Chinese Naval Vessels Escort Arrangement – Update

Following the issue of our first circular letter on the subject on 29 December 2008 that promulgated the initial reporting arrangement for Hong Kong registered ships seeking assistance from Chinese naval vessels when transiting the Gulf of Aden (copy attached), the first escorted passage was commenced on 6 January 2009. So far 14 convoys have been carried out successfully. Based on the experience gained, some fine-tuning of arrangements are considered necessary, which are elaborated below:

Participation in convoy and communication with Chinese naval vessels in case of piracy attack

Experience learnt from the recent convoys is that the convoy speed is usually around 10 to 12 knots. The Chinese Navy will mainly target ships with higher risks (i.e. ships with lower speed or low freeboard) to join the convoy. Ships like container vessels with speed of over 20 knots should preferably proceed at maximum speed and are thus not appropriate to be included in the convoy. Such types of vessels will however be put into the tracking system of China MRCC. In case of any piracy attack incident and upon receiving notification on the case, the China MRCC will immediately coordinate with the Chinese Navy in the Gulf of Aden to render assistance to the ship. Alternatively the ship can also contact the Chinese naval vessels in the area directly through VHF Channel 16 should the situation warrant.

Revised Reporting Form

The “Ship Movement Reporting Form” has been revised to include a confirmation tag at the end of the report to indicate whether the ship intends to join the convoy or not. Such information can facilitate the China MRCC to focus on those ships more eligible to join the convoy. The revised Ship movement report form – version 20090203 is attached herewith and should be used for reporting with immediate effect.

Convoy Schedules

The China MRCC has provided the following convoy schedules in February for your information and planning purposes:

Eastbound convoy	Westbound convoy
Rendezvous position: 12 N 044 E	Rendezvous position: 14-20 N 053 E
09 Feb 2200 UTC	07 Feb 0600 UTC
15 Feb 2200 UTC	13 Feb 0600 UTC
22 Feb 2200 UTC	20 Feb 0600 UTC
	26 Feb 0600 UTC

Please contact us if you have any further questions.

Security & Quality Assurance Section
Hong Kong Marine Department