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**30 June 2020**

To: All Masters, Ship Security Officers, Company Security Officers of Hong Kong registered ships, Hong Kong Shipowners, Hong Kong Ship Managers and Hong Kong Operators

## **Ship Operators Security and Quality Advisory No. 60**

### **Stowaway Incidents Reported by Hong Kong Registered Ships**

In year 2018, 2019 and first half of 2020, there had been nine (9), seven (7) & four (4) stowaway incidents reported by Hong Kong registered ships. Among these twenty (20) reported cases, the location and distribution of stowaway embarkation were reported as follow: six (6) in South Africa, nine (9) in West Africa, one (1) in East Africa, one (1) in North Africa, one (1) in Middle East and three (3) in Europe.

Summarizing the incident reports, stowaway have boarded the ships and avoided being discovered in a number of ways, which includes:

- Climbing up over the side of vessel by using mooring ropes or poles;
- Disguising as stevedores.
- Gaining access to and hiding in rudder trunks on deep draft ships.
- Hiding in an unattended area, such as chain locker, void space, cranes, lifeboat, empty containers, etc.

This circular serves as a reminder for companies and masters to take appropriate measures to reduce risks of unauthorized persons boarding ships and to ensure the security arrangement to be implemented in prevention of stowaway boarding the vessels by the control of access as laid down in the Ship Security Plan (SSP).

The security arrangements shall be put into effect with the appropriate preventive measures in the control of access and restricted areas, especially when calling at ports, during stay in ports and departing from ports where there is a higher risk of stowaway embarkation. Companies and masters are reminded to ensure that adequate security arrangements are in place at those ports. It is also suggested that fumigation or sealing should only be carried out when a thorough search on those area is performed to ensure that no stowaways are present.

No matter how effective port and ship security measures are, it is recognized that there will still be occasions when stowaways gain access to vessels, either secreted in the cargo or by surreptitious boarding.

In the event stowaways are found on board, the ship master shall determine immediately the details of the stowaway, including the port of embarkation, nationality and the right of residence. A statement containing all available information regarding the stowaway shall be prepared and reported to the public authorities of the port of embarkation, the flag state (i.e. the Hong Kong Marine Department) and subsequent ports of call (if necessary). The stowaway shall be treated humanely, such that appropriate means should be taken to ensure the security, general health, welfare and safety until disembarkation.

Detailed guidelines on the same topic can be found in the IMO Resolution FAL.13(42) Annex 1 "Revised Guidelines on the prevention of access by stowaways and the allocation of responsibilities to seek the successful resolution of stowaway cases"(The Guidelines) with the reporting form/statement attached at the Appendix. It is available on the IMO website: <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Facilitation/Stowaways/PublishingImages/Pages/Default/RESOLUTION%20FAL.13%2842%29.pdf>

An investigation report, including root cause analysis and any corrective and preventive actions taken by the ship/company, shall be handed in promptly. In addition to the corrective and preventive actions to be implemented for prevention of reoccurrence of similar incidents, the security arrangement in SSP shall also be reviewed in order to determine if any weaknesses exist and make appropriate corrections accordingly.

For stowaway incident reporting to flag state, please contact the Mercantile Marine Office of the Marine Department (Email: [mmo\\_mdd@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:mmo_mdd@mardep.gov.hk)) with copy to ~~Security and Quality Assurance~~ <sup>Cargo Ships Safety\*</sup> section of the Marine Department (Email: ~~[sqa@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:sqa@mardep.gov.hk)~~). [mms@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:mms@mardep.gov.hk)\*

For investigation report submission, please contact ~~Security and Quality Assurance~~ <sup>Cargo Ships Safety\*</sup> section of the Marine Department (Email: ~~[sqa@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:sqa@mardep.gov.hk)~~) [mms@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:mms@mardep.gov.hk)\*

Yours faithfully,

*No signature on website copy*

(Eric W.C. LEE)  
Senior Surveyor of Ships/  
Security & Quality Assurance Section  
*for* Director of Marine

\* With effect from 1 April 2021, [mms@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:mms@mardep.gov.hk) will be the only e-mail address for Marine Department to handle ISM and ISPS issues on Hong Kong registered ships. The previous e-mail addresses, [ssism@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:ssism@mardep.gov.hk) and [sqa@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:sqa@mardep.gov.hk), will be discontinued.