

MEMBER ALERT



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MARITIME SECURITY: UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR VESSELS OPERATING IN THE ARABIAN GULF, GULF OF OMAN, GULF OF ADEN AND RED SEA

Reference is made to the recently reported event of a limpet mine having been found attached to the hull of a tanker engaged in a ship-to-ship transfer operation in the Arabian Gulf. Thankfully, the mine was discovered in time to avoid any injuries or damage to the vessel.

As a result of this incident, a joint industry group has released further maritime security related guidance, [Industry Update Following Incident in the Persian Gulf](#), recommending that vessel operators should consider sending the following guidance to vessels operating in the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. The guidance recommends that operators should:

- undertake a new ship- and voyage-specific threat risk assessment before entering any region where there has been an incident, or the threat has changed and, after the risk assessment, review the Ship's Security Plan;
- review section 2 of the latest [Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea \(BMP5\)](#), which outlines non-piracy threats;
- maintain a full and vigilant bridge watch; note: at night, slow, small boats with no wake are difficult to spot on radar;
- maintain a strict communications watch and establish communication with all vessels coming close. Do not allow small boats to approach or to come alongside. Use a searchlight for identification at night;
- ensure strict boarding controls are in place;
- only lower accommodation gangways or ladders when necessary;
- rig outboard lighting where possible, provided they do not interfere with keeping a safe lookout, particularly over the stern, and rig/use searchlights if available;
- report any suspicious activity or objects immediately to both the port and the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) at +44 239 222 2060;
- monitor relevant VHF and other communication channels;
- check and ensure that all fire-fighting equipment is available for immediate use. Make sure the emergency fire pump is available if any maintenance is being undertaken;

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- keep the Automatic Identification System (AIS) on. There is no need to complete the field stating the last or next port of call;
- particular attention should be made to check the ship's hull by:
 - undertaking a visual search from the deck, and all around the vessel to check for anything attached to the hull. Special attention should be paid to the hull at the waterline; and
 - conducting regular rounds and searching of the upper deck;
- if a vessel detects anything unusual attached to the hull, then the master should contact the UKMTO and flag state immediately. All crew should be evacuated from the immediate area and mustered in a safe place. No attempt should be made to remove it; and
- vessels should follow the advice of the military authorities.

If alerted to suspicious activity whilst the vessel is at anchor, vessel operators should also consider:

- rotating the propeller continuously or at short, irregular intervals;
- operating bow and stern thrusters at zero (0) thrust at irregular intervals;
- turning the rudder at frequent intervals; and
- switching the echo sounder to transmit counter/combat swimmer/diver threat.

The industry group producing this guidance included the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO), International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO), International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO), and the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF).

Members are encouraged to take the guidance into consideration in circumstances where their vessels may be exposed to such security risks.