

MEMBER ALERT

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR VESSELS TRANSITING AND CALLING PORTS IN AREAS AFFECTED BY HURRICANES, TYPHOONS AND CYCLONES

As Members are no doubt aware, the peak season for hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones in the northern hemisphere occurs between July and October. Vessels trading in regions affected by these extreme weather events are clearly exposed to additional physical risks. They include:

1. changes in currents and tides, particularly in rivers, occurring more rapidly and unpredictably than normal;
2. increased loads on mooring lines;
3. increased risk of contact with craft, debris and other objects which may have broken loose from moorings, or otherwise become present, in rivers and ports;
4. increased risk of damage caused by storm surges; and
5. increased silting of berths creating reduced under-keel clearance.

Given these risks, vessels' masters should be advised to exercise elevated alertness, and be prepared to deploy preventive measures, including:

1. increasing the number of mooring lines deployed up river. If the leads from the vessel are suitable, additional breast lines should be used to keep the vessel against the berth;
2. ensuring brake settings are correct, and ensuring that crew members monitor ropes during ebb tides, and when other vessels pass downstream;
3. maintaining engines in a ready state to be used immediately if required;
4. ensuring that cargo cranes are centerlined, two blocked and secured;
5. ensuring that cargo ramps are stowed away from potential storm surges, and closely monitored;
6. monitoring by vessel personnel of pier sides to obviate the possibility of the vessel causing damage to piers, and to check whether pier bollards are capable of handling the higher stresses on mooring lines;
7. where possible, the taking of photographic evidence of the condition of a berth before and after storm periods;

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8. seeking advice from river and mooring pilots about any particular risk factors relevant to the characteristics of the berth to be used by the vessel, and the characteristics of local river transit;
9. corresponding with local agents to provide details of last soundings at berths to give owners/managers/masters advance information on local conditions.

Your Managers recommend that Members take note of this information and be guided accordingly. If any elaboration of the foregoing is required, your Managers will be pleased to assist.