



**PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY**  
**MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-230**

PanCanal Building  
Albrook, Panama City  
Republic of Panama  
Tel: (507) 501-5355  
[mmc@amp.gob.pa](mailto:mmc@amp.gob.pa)

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**To:** Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates and Recognized Organizations (ROs).

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**Subject:** High Risk Areas (HRA)

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**Reference:** MMC-208  
MMC-228  
MMC-231

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1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to inform about the recently amendment of the High Risk Area (HRA) description in Section 2 of BMP4 that will be effective from 1 December 2015.

2. For the purpose of BMP the High Risk Area is an area bounded by:

In the Red Sea northern limit	Latitude 15° N
In the Gulf of Oman northern limit	Latitude 22° N
Eastern limit:	Longitude 065° E
Southern Limit:	Latitude 5° S

3. The current HRA should be reduced in area to reflect the recent experience of ships in the Indian Ocean as well as available data provided by military headquarters.

4. The High Risk Area (HRA) is an area within the UKMTO designated as the Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) where it is considered there is a higher risk of piracy and within which self-protective measures are most likely to be required. Please refer to the [Annex](#) information.

5. According to the Merchant Marine Circular MMC-228, the Panama Maritime Authority defined HRA in point 4.1 ***“An area as defined in the BMP unless otherwise defined by the Flag State”***.

6. For this reason and taking in consideration the last incidents reports of the Panamanian flagged vessels, the following areas are considered to continue to suffer attacks and robberies. Given the aforementioned, this Administration will also consider the following, as High Risk Areas:

**S.E. ASIA AND THE INDIAN SUB CONTINENT**

Indonesia: Belawan, Dumai, Karimun Kecil/Besar, Pulau Nipah, Pulau Takong Kecil, Jakarta/Tanjung Priok, Muara Berau, Pulau Bintan

Malacca Strait

Malaysia: Tanjung Piai

Philippines: Batangas

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		Page 1 of 4

Singapore Straits  
Thailand  
South China Sea  
Vietnam: Vung Tau  
Bangladesh: Chittagong  
India: Kandla, Kochi, Visakhapatnam

### **AFRICA AND RED SEA**

Somalia waters –Eastern and Northeastern Coast.  
Ghana  
Angola  
Guinea  
Cameroon  
Egypt  
Benin  
Gulf of Aden  
Gabon  
Ivory Coast  
Conakry  
Sierra Leone  
Kenya  
Liberia  
Mozambique  
Nigeria: Lagos  
Red Sea  
The Congo: Pointe Noire and Northern Somali Coast in the Gulf of Aden and Southern Red Sea in  
The Bab El Mandeb  
Togo: Lome

### **SOUTH, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WATERS**

Colombia  
Haiti  
Jamaica  
Venezuela  
Brazil  
Guyana  
Peru  
Dominican Republic Ports  
Ecuadorian Ports

7. All the Panamanian Flagged Vessels transiting through any of the above mentioned areas have to raise their Security Level according to their Ship Security Plan.

8. In this sense, we remind all our users that MMC 195 and 197, states that all Panamanian flagged vessels, under SOLAS V/19-1 regulations are required to comply with LRIT requirement. The LRIT System must work properly as the ships are transiting High Risk Areas. This ensures the possibility to track vessels and will allow detecting any unexpected change of course or any other suspicious situation.

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		Page 2 of 4

9. The Panama Maritime Authority encourages all our Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels to have as a First Option, the use of the Best Management Practices (BMP), and the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC); MMC No.208.

10. All Panamanian flagged vessels are requested prior to transit, or leaving a port within the region, to follow the latest Best Management Practices (BMP) and to contact the local information centers for up to date instructions or transit and reporting.

11. The use of PCASP should not be considered as an alternative to Best Management Practices (BMP) and other protective measures. It is recommended that BMP be applied throughout the High Risk Area (HRA) and in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) and be considered as the first, minimum, preventative option. Placing armed guards on board as a means to secure and protect the ship and its crew should only be considered after a risk assessment has been carried out.

12. Panama flagged vessels operating within the World Food Program in the Gulf of Aden (GoA) and Somali Basin shall implement as far practicable the BMP.

13. The goal of the Panama Maritime Authority is to give the Panamanian Flagged vessels and the Maritime Industry the certainty of our interest in achieving a safer transit through these High Risk Areas.

The contact details are as follows:

### **PIRACY REPORTING CENTRE**

#### **PANAMA**

Phone: +507 301 5748, Fax +507 301 5749      Email: [activations@absolutemaritime.com](mailto:activations@absolutemaritime.com)  
+507 501 5037, Fax + 507 501 4202      Email: [threat@amp.gob.pa](mailto:threat@amp.gob.pa)

#### **UKMTO**

Phone: +971 50 552 3215 Email: [UKMTO@aim.ae](mailto:UKMTO@aim.ae)

#### **MSCHOA**

Phone: +44 (0) 1923 958545, Fax: +44 (0) 1923 958520,      Email: [postmaster@mschoa.org](mailto:postmaster@mschoa.org)

Website: [www.mschoa.org](http://www.mschoa.org)

#### **NATO SHIPPING CENTRE**

Phone: +44 1923 956574, Fax: +44 1923 956575      Email: [info@ahipping.nato.int](mailto:info@ahipping.nato.int)

#### **MARLO**

Phone: +973 3940 1395 +973 1785 3925, Fax: +973 1785 3930      Email: [marlo.bahrain@me.navy.mil](mailto:marlo.bahrain@me.navy.mil)

Website: [www.cusnc.navy.mil/marlo/](http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/marlo/)

#### **INTERPOL**

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		Page 3 of 4

Phone: +33 472 44 76 76

Email: [os-ccc@interpol.int](mailto:os-ccc@interpol.int)

Website: [www.interpol.int](http://www.interpol.int)

## IMB

Phone: +60 3 2031 0014, Fax: +60 3 2078 5769 Telex: MA34199 IMBPC1

Email: [piracy@icc-ccs.org](mailto:piracy@icc-ccs.org) / [IMBKL@icc-ccs.org](mailto:IMBKL@icc-ccs.org)

**May, 2016** – Correction in Africa and Red Sea places.

**December, 2015**- Inclusion of new paragraphs

**Agust, 2014** – changes all throughout the circular

**April, 2012** – Update of emails

**February, 2012** – inclusion of new paragraph (point 2)

**September, 2011**

**Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular or any request should be directed to:  
Maritime Ships Security Department**

**Directorate General of Merchant Marine**

**Panama Maritime Authority**

**Phone: (507) 501-4224 / 5037**

**Fax: (507) 501-5401**

**Email: [nardila@amp.gob.pa](mailto:nardila@amp.gob.pa)  
[taranda@amp.gob.pa](mailto:taranda@amp.gob.pa)**

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		Page 4 of 4