

The use of Armed Private Maritime Security Contractors on board merchant ships

In recent years, there has been an increase in the use of privately contracted armed security personnel from private maritime security contractors on board merchant ships while transiting high risk areas. There have also been a growing number of nations which have authorised the use of privately contracted armed security personnel onboard their flagged shipping. Regulations regarding such use have varied widely among flag states.

NATO's position on the use of private armed personnel remains neutral. NATO sees any use of privately contracted armed security personnel as an addition to, not a replacement of full ship protection measures and adherence to Best Management Practices.

The NATO Shipping Centre fully supports the industry initiatives to establish training standards and protocols for privately contracted armed security personnel and recommends all concerned to follow current IMO guidelines.

We refer to the following IMO guidance's:

<http://www.imo.org/Publications/Pages/Home.aspx>

- MSC.1/Circ.1405/Rev.1, 16 September 2011: "Revised interim guidance to ship owners, ship operators, and shipmasters on the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships in the high risk area 1".
- MSC.1/Circ.1406/Rev.1, 16 September 2011: "Revised interim recommendations for flag states regarding the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships in high risk area 1".
- MSC.1/Circ.1408, 16 September 2011: "Revised interim recommendations for port and coastal states regarding the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships in high risk area 1".

For the use, or not, of armed Private Maritime Security Contractors onboard merchant vessels, we refer to chapter 8.15 in Best Management Practices 4.

<http://www.shipping.nato.int/Pages/BMP.aspx>