

Circular 262/2022

To: Vessel Owners, Managers, Masters, Officers, Deputy Registrars and other Interested Parties

Subject: SOLAS Security Level increase - ISPS Code for Cook Islands vessels moored or at anchorage or scheduled or operating in the Ukrainian EEZ/Black Sea/Azov Sea.

Date: 1st March 2022

Summary:

Due to the GEOPOLITICAL CONFLICT IN THE UKRAINE, the Cook Islands Administration requires all Cook Islands vessels navigating or operating in the EEZ (economic exclusive zone) of the Russian Federation and the Ukrainian Republic in the Black Sea and Azov Sea, to set their ISPS Ship Security Level to Level III:

· For the navigation in the Black Sea, commercial vessels are required to pay maximum attention and continue to check the Navtex updates. It is recommended that Masters obtain the relevant [NAVAREA III](#) warnings relating to mined areas and to contact the local port authorities and ships agents for additional information.

· Commercial vessels should not attempt to enter the Azov Sea; vessels currently in the Azov Sea should exit immediately.

Ships intending to call at a port/port facility in the areas specified above must ensure that security measures equivalent to **Ship Security Level III** are implemented as per the Ship Security Plan.

If cargo operations at Russian ports in the Black Sea are to be performed, a Declaration of Security (DOS) should first be carried out with the Port Facility Security Officer (PFSO).

Ships currently located at Ukrainian ports must follow the instructions from Ukrainian Authorities. Security measures equivalent to Security Level III must be implemented while held at port. Crew should not attempt to disembark the ship unless instructed to do so by the Ukrainian authorities.

GUIDANCE

- Commercial vessels are advised to avoid any transit or operation within the EEZ of Ukraine or Russia within the Black Sea. Access to the Sea of Azov through the Kerch Strait is currently blocked by Russian forces.
- All Ukrainian ports have been closed by the Ukrainian military. Commercial ships may not enter or leave port at this time.
- Access to the northwest Black Sea, **north of 45° 21' is restricted by the Russian Navy.**

- Commercial operations within the EEZ of Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania are currently unaffected.
- Vessels must ensure the automatic identification system (AIS) is always transmitting (except when the master believes that continuing to operate AIS might compromise the safety or security of the ship or when a security incident is imminent), consistent with provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), and monitor VHF Channel 16.
- Any vessels hailed by military vessels should comply fully with instructions.
- Armed security personnel are not to be embarked while operating in the Black Sea.

REPORTING:

In the event of any incident or suspicious activity, Cook Islands-flagged vessels should notify the Flag at sos-alert@maritimecookislands.com and activate the Ship Security Alert System.

Suspected or confirmed cyber security/electronic interference incidents must be reported to the Flag.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Sos-alert@maritimecookislands.com

The instructions and information provided in this circular are temporary and subject to change as the situation progresses.

Maritime Cook Islands recommends ship operators and masters trading to ports in the Black Sea region make frequent checks with local sources of information, e.g. vessel's agent, local correspondent, etc., to obtain the most up-to-date and reliable security information available at any given time.

Maritime Cook Islands would also inform all interested parties that Ukrainian and Russian waters in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov have been included in the latest revision to the list of Hull War, Piracy, Terrorism, and Related Perils Listed Areas (JWLA-028) by the Joint War Committee (JWC). Owners are advised to get in touch with their war risk insurers when calling any port falling within the above-mentioned region.

For further enquiries, please contact Maritime Cook Islands at
technical@maritimecookislands.com