



COMDTINST 3120.3
MAR 1 2004

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 3120.3

Subj: GUIDANCE FOR THE SHIP SECURITY ALERT SYSTEM (SSAS)

- Ref:
- (a) Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), Chapter XI-2/6.
 - (b) International Maritime Organization MSC Circulars 622, 623, and 1073.
 - (c) Guidance for Verification of Vessel Security Plans on Domestic Vessels in Accordance with the Regulations Mandated by the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) of 2002 and the International Ship & Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, COMDTPUB P16700.4, NVIC No. 04-03.

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction provides guidance for the development of doctrine and policy for the receipt and response to Ship Security Alert Systems (SSAS).
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders and indicated Headquarters Office Chiefs shall ensure compliance with the contents of this Instruction. Internet release authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None.
4. BACKGROUND. Reference (a) mandates carriage of shipboard equipment for sending covert alerts to shore for incidents involving acts of violence (such as piracy or terrorism) for new passenger and cargo ships of at least 500 gross tons not later than July 1, 2004. Existing passenger vessels and cargo vessels must have the equipment installed prior to the first radio survey after July 1, 2004, or July 1, 2006, in accordance with reference (a). The Circulars mentioned in reference (b) provide additional guidance for governments, ships and maritime rescue coordination centers (MRCCs), respectively. Other types of vessels may carry and use ship security alerting systems (SSASs) voluntarily. Since required equipment may be operational before the mandated July 1, 2004, phase in date, the Coast Guard must be prepared to receive and handle such alerts as soon as practicable.

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5. DISCUSSION. The SSAS transmits a security alert to the Coast Guard either directly or via a communications service provider (CSP) indicating the security of the ship is under threat or has been compromised. The shipboard portion of the system is required to have a minimum of two activation points, one of which is on the navigation bridge, and is intended to allow covert activation without raising the alarm onboard or with other ships. According to IMO standards, flag states, upon receiving a ship security alert, must notify the coastal state in whose vicinity the ship is operating and authorities of other nations. Therefore, the Coast Guard must be prepared to receive security alerts directly from a shipboard SSAS, or indirectly via designated competent authorities, CSP's, or authorities of other states, and relay alerts to other international contacts. To facilitate the exchange of ship and port security information, the IMO is developing a list of Administration points of contact as required by Regulation XI-2/13. As indicated in reference (c), the contact for the U.S. will be the Pacific Area Command Center (RCC Alameda). Security alerts from ships may be routed via CSPs, such as Inmarsat or Cospas/Sarsat. These will also be forwarded to the Pacific Area Command Center for action or disposition. There are four primary ways for alerts to be transmitted to the U.S. Coast Guard.
 - a. Cospas-Sarsat. (Automatic forwarding.)
 - b. Inmarsat. (Automatic forwarding.)
 - c. Other CSP. (Automatic or immediate manual forwarding.)
 - d. Other Flag States. In accordance with SOLAS XI/2 Regulation 6, when an Administration receives a security alert from one of its own flagged vessels, that administration shall immediately notify the state in which the ship is currently operating. Therefore, the U.S. must also be prepared to receive these notifications.
6. TASKING.
 - a. The Commander, Pacific Area shall work with the Commander, Atlantic Area to develop general operational doctrine and procedures for appropriate units responding to ship security alerts, including guidance for working with other authorities or organizations that may have potential response roles. The Office of Search and Rescue, Commandant (G-OPR), the Headquarters Program Manager for Command Centers, shall coordinate the Area's efforts and promulgate guidance to command centers for receipt and response to SSAS alerts. These shall be submitted to the Assistant Commandant for Operations (G-O) and Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Environmental Protection (G-M) prior to 1 April 2004 to allow publication prior to 1 July 2004.
 - b. The Office of Port and Vessel Security, Commandant (G-MPS), is the lead office for SSAS issues. The Office of Compliance, Commandant (G-MOC), will assist with SSAS implementation guidance and is the lead office for SSAS equipment inspection issues. The Office of Design and Engineering Standards, Commandant (G-MSE), will assist with SSAS technical guidance.
 - c. The Office of Systems Engineering, Commandant (G-MSE), working with the Marine Safety Center, shall be responsible for issues related to equipment approval and certifications or testing

requirements intended for compulsory or voluntary SSAS installations aboard U.S. vessels. Additionally, G-MSE will work with the Marine Safety Center during the security plan review process to determine if the CSP listed in a vessel's security plan meets the requirements of SOLAS Chapter XI-2/6 and any other applicable instruction.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of this Instruction and have been determined to be not applicable.
8. FORMS AND REPORTS. None.

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