



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

31 March 2017

Department
MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
Number 2017-002

**ESTABLISHMENT OF RECOMMENDED TRANSIT CORRIDOR
AT MORO GULF AND BASILAN STRAIT**

I. AUTHORITY:

- a. R.A. 9993 (The Philippine Coast Guard of 2009)
- b. Rule 3(K) of the Implementing Rules and Regulation of RA 9993
- c. Section 2 (iii) of Memorandum Order No 4, s. 2016

II. REFERENCES:

- a. Philippine Coast Pilot, 6th Edition 1995.
- b. Regulation V/8 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974/1978
- c. Convention on the International Regulation for preventing Collision at Sea, 1972 as amended
- d. IMO SN.1/Circ.281 dated 03 August 2009
- e. UNCLOS 82
- f. SUA Convention

III. PURPOSE:

This circular aims to address the increasing threats to shipping in the areas of Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait by providing a recommended transit corridor and measures to prevent or suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships transiting said maritime areas.

IV. SCOPE:

This circular shall apply to all vessels including fishing boats, sailing vessels, and motorized bancas, transiting Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait, except government vessels utilized for maritime law enforcement.

V. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

- A. Recommended Transit Corridor – a route which has been designated for transiting of vessels to reduce the risk of collision, provide a measure of traffic separation, and minimize threats such as piracy/ armed robbery.
- B. Transit Lane - an area within defined limits in which one-way traffic is established.

- C. Recommended Track - a route, which has been specially examined to ensure as far as possible that it is free of dangers and along which are advised to navigate.
- D. Precautionary Area - an area within defined limits where ships must navigate with particular caution.
- E. High Risk Area – an area within defined limits in which enemies and lawless elements proliferate and which should be avoided by all ships.
- F. Established Direction of traffic flow - A traffic pattern indicating the directional movement of traffic as established within a traffic separation scheme.
- G. Armed robbery against ships – means any unlawful act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against any persons or property on board such a ship, within a State's internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea.
- H. Piracy at sea - any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a ship.

VI. CONCEPT:

- A. The Recommended Transit Corridor (RTC) is not a Traffic Separation Scheme, nor is it marked with navigational aids that vessels are to comply with the requirements of the International Regulations for the Preventions of Collisions at Sea at all times. The premise behind the RTC is to provide PCG and other law enforcement units' awareness over the operating environment in and around areas of Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait by designating transit areas where vessels can be easily monitored and law enforcement units are deployed nearby.
- B. The RTC shall be reflected on the NAMRIA Chart 4511 and Chart 4708.
- C. The corridor includes the creation of separate inbound and outbound transit lanes. Each lane will be 1 nm wide and will be separated by a 0.50 nm buffer zone.
- D. The Inbound Transit Lane of the Basilan Strait and Moro Gulf shall be established by connecting the following geographical position:

INBOUND TRANSIT LANE:

Point (A)	Lat 6° 51' 2.00"N	Long 122° 12' 54.51"E
Point (B)	Lat 6° 42' 5.93"N	Long 122° 23' 54.15"E
Point (C)	Lat 5° 54' 46.76"N	Long 124° 29' 42.18"E
Point (D)	Lat 5° 54' 2.54"N	Long 124° 29' 19.18"E
Point (E)	Lat 6° 41' 15.56"N	Long 122° 23' 34.72"E

Point (F) Lat 6° 50' 32.79"N Long 122° 12' 10.27"E

- E. The Outbound Transit Lane of the Basilan Strait and Moro Gulf shall be established by connecting the following geographical position:

OUTBOUND TRANSIT LANE:

Point (G)	Lat 6° 50' 17.18"N	Long 122° 11' 44.76"E
Point (H)	Lat 6° 40' 42.56"N	Long 122° 23' 31.19"E
Point (I)	Lat 5° 53' 39.11"N	Long 124° 29' 6.46"E
Point (J)	Lat 5° 52' 58.10"N	Long 124° 28' 42.20"E
Point (K)	Lat 6° 39' 54.05"N	Long 122° 23' 15.07"E
Point (L)	Lat 6° 49' 44.95"N	Long 122° 10' 56.47"E

VII. RULES OF PASSAGE:

A vessel navigating in the Recommended Transit Corridor (RTC) shall:

1. Notify the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) thru radio communications at least six (6) hours before entering the RTC (See Annex 1 for the reporting format).
2. Proceed within the appropriate transit lane in the general established direction of traffic flow for that lane;
3. Keep clear of the buffer zone;
4. Not engage in fishing or other recreational activities;
5. Not impede the passage of any vessel following the traffic lane;
6. Switch on the Automatic Identification System (AIS) onboard for monitoring.
7. Acknowledge the Radio challenges by authorities.
8. Report all observed suspicious activities to the authorities and to other vessels transiting the area.
9. If less than 20 meters in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the safe passage of a power driven following the traffic lane;
10. If restricted her ability to maneuver and engaged in the maintenance of safety of navigation in the TSS, be exempted from complying with this rule to the extent necessary to carry out the operation;
11. If restricted in her ability to maneuver and engaged in laying, servicing, or picking up of a submarine cable within the TSS, be exempted from complying with this rule to the extent necessary to

carry out the operation upon giving report or prior notice to PCG monitoring the TSS.

12. Steer toward safe area and out of RTC and display the necessary lights during night time and shapes during daytime if the vessel encounters defective propulsion, defective steering, inoperative navigation running lights, impaired maneuverability, defective navigational equipment and other similar condition, that may impair its navigation, reduce its capabilities or affect the safety of other vessels.
13. Proceed at full or maximum speed while navigating along the RTC or as recommended by PCG authorities.
14. Secure all access doors to avoid entry of armed robbers or pirates.

VIII. PROTOCOL IN THE RTC IN CASES OF EMERGENCY:

A. In cases of piracy or armed robbery following are the recommended actions:

1. Suspicious Vessel in the Vicinity:

- a) If not in full speed, increase to maximum speed to open the Closest Point of Approach (CPA);
- b) Contact the PCG that an attack might be about to take place; and
- c) Alert other ships in the vicinity

2. Approach Stage:

- a) Sound the general alarm and make a "Pirate Attack" announcement;
- b) Report the attack to the PCG;
- c) Activate the Ship Security Alarm System;
- d) Send a distress message via DSC and INMARSAT C as applicable to alert other ships in the vicinity;
- e) Ensure AIS is switched ON;
- f) Muster the crew except those that are required on the bridge or engine room, at either the Safe Muster Point or in the Citadel (if available);
- g) If possible, alter course to open the CPA. Consider a course to increase the effect of the wind or waves on the approaching vessel;
- h) Activate self-defensive measures; and
- i) Ensure all external doors are fully secured

3. Attack Stage:

- a) Reconfirm all personnel are in a position of safety;
- b) Manuever as practicable with small helm alteration to make it difficult for the pirates/armed robbers to board; and

- c) Activate fire hoses and water cannons to deflect the pirates/armed robbers.

4. Pirates/Armed Robbers on Board:

- a) Try to maintain calm;
- b) Before pirates/armed robbers reach the bridge, inform the PCG, ensure that Ship Security Alert System has been activated and AIS turned ON;
- c) Offer no resistance to the pirates once they reach the bridge;
- d) Leave the CCTV running; and
- e) If the bridge/engine is to be evacuated, the main engine should be stopped. All remaining crew should proceed to the designated Safe Muster Point with their hands visible

5. If PCG Law Enforcers or Military Forces Intervene:

- a) All personnel should keep low to the deck and cover their heads with both hands and ensure hands are clearly visible. Make no movements that could be interpreted as being aggressive;
- b) Do not use flash photography;
- c) Be prepared to prove your identity;
- d) Cooperate fully during PCG/military action onboard

B. In case of engine or machinery breakdown, immediately notify the nearest PCG stations or the Coast Guard Action Center.

IX. RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Master of the vessel shall:

- 1. Ensure the safety and security of the crew and vessel;
- 2. Conduct regular security drills and exercise at least once in every 3 months;
- 3. Ensure that all crew members are aware of the ship security plans or emergency response procedures;
- 4. Ensure that the ship to shore communication methods are tested and report to the PCG prior entering the high risk area;
- 5. Double up bridge watches, look outs and maintain vigilance when entering RTC; and
- 6. Undertake evasive manoeuvre or initiate other response procedures in case of piracy or armed robbery attack.

B. Ship owner shall:

- 1. Report attempted, piracy or armed robbery attacks to the PCG; and
- 2. Provide ship security plan and written procedures on how to prevent or suppress attacks of pirates and armed robbers.

C. Commander, Coast Guard District South Western Mindanao (CGDSWM) and Commander, Coast Guard District South Eastern Mindanao (CGDSEM) shall:

1. Dispatch PCG vessels for constant maritime patrol in the RTC;
2. Immediately inform Headquarters PCG of any piracy attacks/ armed robbery or attempts of piracy/ armed robbery;
3. Coordinate with other law enforcement agency for security augmentation in the area; and
4. Investigate all piracy and armed robbery incidents and submit necessary reports and recommendations.

D. Station Commanders under CGDSWM shall:

1. Monitor movement of vessels and maintain constant communication to the Master of the vessel while transiting the RTC;
2. Immediately inform Commander, CGDSWM of any of piracy attacks or attempts of piracy;
3. Provide security and maritime patrol within the RTC;
4. Alert all substations in case of piracy attacks or any unusual incidents; and
5. Immediately respond to any reported piracy or armed robbery attacks.

E. Deputy Chief of Coast Guard Staff for Operations, CG-3/Coast Guard Action Center (CGAC) shall:

1. Inform and update the Secretary of Department of Transportation (SOTr) of any piracy and armed robbery attacks;
2. Alert all available PCG air and floating assets for dispatch; and
3. Coordinate with the other law enforcement agencies.

X. EFFECTIVITY:

This circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation and upon filing of three (3) certified copies thereof with the University of the Philippines Law Center.

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Secretary, DOTr



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