

JAPAN P&I NEWS

No.746-15/7/13

To the Members

Dear Sirs,

Suez Canal – Submission of commitment letter regarding weapons on board

The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) has issued the attached notice dated 6 July 2015 about submission of a commitment letter regarding weapons on board.

According to the notice, the Master of a vessel transiting the Canal is required to submit through the local agents a signed and stamped commitment letter declaring that the vessel has no weapons on board. The requirements came into force on 8 July, 2015.

In the meantime, the Association has received the following information and advice from Eldib Pandi, our correspondents in Egypt, on the treatment of weapons when a vessel transits the Canal.

- The regulations applying to the carriage of weapons and armed guards through the Canal remains as previously stated. Northbound vessels coming from the south to commence their Canal transit from Suez or vessels calling at any of the Red Sea Ports have to declare the presence of weapons on board and notify Safaga naval base (through their local agents) at least 72 hours prior to the vessel's arrival, specifying the number, types and nature of weapons on board. Such weapons will be then landed and stored at Safaga naval base. There is no limit for how long the weapons can be stored, as long as storage fees are paid regularly. The weapons are to be collected later, on the vessel's way back to the Red Sea. This requirement does not interfere with the purpose of having weapons or armed guards on board in the first place, namely counter-piracy activities in the Gulf of Aden area. There is no need for such measures in the Mediterranean Sea.
- For southbound vessels (vessels commencing their transit from Port Said), the situation also remains as previously stated. Vessels carrying weapons have to notify (through their local agents) the SCA and the relevant authorities of the presence of weapons on board. Numbers and specifications of the said weapons must be expressly stated. The vessel's agents will liaise with the Port Police and the Military Police to arrange for the landing of the weapons at Port Said outer anchorage, prior to the commencement of the vessel's southbound Canal transit. The weapons will then be transported to Suez after necessary procedures have been finalised with the customs (as those weapons will be treated as

cargoes in transit).

- In most cases, the agents' delegate will be accompanied by a police escort during the journey from Port Said to Suez. The number and ranks of the Port Police and Military Police escorts will depend on the quantity and nature of the weapons. The weapons will be handed back to the vessel at Suez on completion of the vessel's Canal transit.
- In light of the above, this new requirement does not add much from a procedural perspective but it mainly emphasizes the point that vessels with weapons on board are not allowed to transit the Canal and that any firearm even a small side-arm for personal use must be declared to the SCA and the local authorities prior to the vessel's transit as it will be dealt with procedurally as if the ship were carrying armed guards or multiple weapons.

In short, the vessel has to be free of any weapon on board during the transit through the Canal. The submission of a commitment letter is to ensure compliance with the already existing regulations.

In order to avoid being involved in any trouble and possible delay in the vessel's schedule, Members are recommended to instruct the Master to understand the regulation and to comply with the necessary requirements.

Yours faithfully,

The Japan Ship Owners' Mutual Protection & Indemnity Association

Attachment: Notice dated 6 July 2015 by SCA

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY

WWW.suezcanal.gov.eg

Port Said on 06/07/2015

Dept.: Traffic Dept.

File Nr 1242

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Mr. Chairman of Port Said Chamber of Shipping

Greetings,

Kindly inform all shipping agencies to present a signed and stamped commitment letter by the master of the transiting vessel that the vessel is not having any weapons onboard, as a part of her pre arrival documents in order not to be liable for any delay. Any vessel shall not be allowed to transit unless the mentioned commitment letter by the master is presented.

This shall be in action starting from the date 08/07/2015

Best regard,

Chief of Port Said Traffic Dept.

Master/ Essam Mohamed Abdel Reheem Dawood

PORT:

DATE:

VESSEL :

FLAG:

UNDERTAKING

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, THE UNDERSIGNED CAPTAIN _____, AS MASTER OF _____, DO HEREBY ATTEST THAT MY VESSEL IS DEVOID OF ANY PERSONAL WEAPONS OR SECURITY WEAPONS WHILST TRANSITING THE SUEZ CANAL.

I UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE OF COMPLYING WITH THE FOREGOING CAN RESULT IN A LEGAL ACTION AGAINST MY VESSEL, ME AND/OR OWNERS/OPERATORS.

MASTER'S SIGNATURE & SHIP'S STAMP