

LOSS PREVENTION
STOWAWAYS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS
P&I ASSOCIATES (PTY) LTD – Durban South Africa
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Despite our previous Loss Prevention advice, stowaways continue to board vessels in South African ports far too frequently. These attacks have increased significantly over the last two months. The South African Authorities have made it abundantly clear and they will not change their attitude and therefore the ship must combat unlawful individuals boarding the ship.

The current ruling in South Africa is as follows:

Should any unlawful person gain access onto a ship in a South African port, the person will automatically be deemed to be a stowaway unless the vessel can provide photographic, video or 3rd party evidence (terminal security) that the stowaway attempted to board the vessel in all South African ports.

The ship owner will be liable for the full costs of repatriating the stowaway. It is essential therefore that the stowaway does not gain access onto the ship in any way.

We are now approaching Christmas and we believe that the rise in stowaway cases will increase as individuals look for free passage home.

We understand that ship owners are battling in the current economic conditions and do not wish to use private security and rely on the crew to police the ship.

Stowaway attacks occur as follows:

- Late at night or early hours of the morning
- Clothing easily blends-in with Stevedore Gangs wearing stevedore clothing hardhats and reflective jackets.
- Colours not easily seen at night
- Generally climb up berthing ropes, gangways and hide in empty containers and log-ships
- Many personnel working on vessel enables stowaway to blend in
- They bribe terminal security to enable them to get aboard vessel
- Carry provisions for part of the journey



Crew took pictures of the stowaway attempting to board the ship up the mooring lines

We recommend the following measures:

- The owner should try and employ private security to patrol the quayside. One security guard should be positioned on the forward mooring lines and one on the stern lines. Security on board is ineffective as the guards tend to fall asleep on board.
- Ideally a crew member must stand at the bottom of the gangway and check that every person boarding the vessel is in possession of a TNPA port permit.
- They must not allow anyone on board the ship who does not have a port permit.
- Every visitor should have ISPS clearance.
- All visitors should surrender their port permit to security and they should collect the same when they leave the ship.
- If anyone does not have a port permit, they must call the terminal/berth security in order to identify the individual and ascertain who is the individual and why does the individual not have a TNPA port permit. The visitor should be in possession of photographic identification.
- They must not allow any individuals to push past them on the gangway. We have had repeated cases where individuals have run past security at the top of the gangway. This is too late and the local authorities will deem the individual as being a stowaway.
- Where possible raise the gangway and only lower it and allow the visitor on board after a crew member has got to the bottom of the gangway and verified who the visitor is as outlined above.

Should you have any queries please contact our office for advice and assistance.

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