

MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE (MSC)
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Agenda item 4

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MEASURES TO ENHANCE MARITIME SECURITY

Access to ports and vessels by ship suppliers

Submitted by ISSA

SUMMARY

Executive summary: Difficulties experienced by ship suppliers globally in accessing ports and vessels to deliver stores due to questionable ISPS Code restrictions

Strategic direction, if applicable: 5

Output: Not applicable

Action to be taken: Paragraph 14

Related documents: None

1 The International Shippers & Services Association (ISSA) represents a significant proportion of the world's ship suppliers, with members located in 95 countries and over 550 ports worldwide.

2 As mentioned before to the Committee, ISSA's members continue to experience unwarranted delay, obstruction and unfair charges when they wish to enter ports to deliver stores to ships.

3 When the ISPS Code was devised and passed into the IMO law, ISSA worked hard to ensure that the role of the ship supplier was highlighted, recognized and incorporated into the legislation.

4 Supplies to ships are governed and driven by the shipowners and ship managers. Full documentation is required and is to be found with every ship supply delivery made to a vessel. Ship suppliers do not just arrive at the dock gate without clear orders and documentation.

5 When the legislation was updated in 2016, ISSA produced a detailed booklet highlighting the agreed operational parameters within which ship suppliers would operate to ensure both the spirit and letter of the law were observed during ship supply operations.

6 ISSA respectfully draws the Committee's attention to the lack of cooperation by port authorities in many places with ship suppliers. Our members, and we are sure non-members also suffer similar obstruction, daily encounter unwarranted delays, unworkable time slots for stores deliveries and absurdly high charges by some ports simply to allow a stores truck to enter and go about its lawful business.

7 ISSA would like to quote three recent examples to illustrate the difficulties:

- .1 One South Asian port refused entry to an ISSA member on the basis that all ship supplies had to go through the ship's agent and could not be undertaken directly by the ship supply company. This made no sense and, upon further investigation, it was found a particular ship's agent had come to a private deal with a corrupt port official to introduce this impossible barrier to proper ship supply. ISSA took the matter up with the relevant High Commissioner in London who, in turn, referred the matter to the relevant Ministry and our member was able to meet with the proper officials in an effort to reverse the shady practice. We await confirmation this has been achieved.
- .2 In one particular European port, it is not unusual for our members' trucks serving that port to wait outside the gate for five hours and more before being allowed inside to deliver urgent technical supplies to vessels anxiously awaiting vital spare parts. No explanation is forthcoming from the port authority for these delays. Remonstrations have been made to the port to no avail.
- .3 A chemical terminal in one particular port of United States allows only those concerned in the loading and discharge of cargo inside the terminal. No stores can be delivered to vessels at all. Equally the crew cannot come ashore under any circumstance. The terminal claims all of these draconian rules are down to safety measures in place.

8 Detailed examination of these port rules shows that they fly in the face of what is set out in the ISPS Code.

9 In addition they are having an adverse impact on ship operations because, trite though the phrase might be, ships cannot sail without stores.

10 ISSA much appreciates the previous messages sent to Member States reminding them of the need for port operations to be conducted in accordance with the ISPS Code and reminding them that ship supply forms an integral part of port operations globally and should not be impeded unnecessarily.

11 ISSA has copies available here of our booklet on guidance issued so far as ship supply and the ISPS Code are concerned, and distinguished delegates are most welcome to take a copy to pass to the relevant department in their home countries.

12 ISSA would respectfully ask that another reminder is sent to Member States that ship supply has to be treated properly as our members have a right to go about their business serving the global fleet within the terms set out in the ISPS Code.

13 Furthermore, we ask that Member States remind their relevant departments that the ISPS Code is not to be considered as a money-making venture but a coordinated legal framework which has very successfully protected ports and ships globally from any harm as a result of security breaches.

Action requested of the Committee

14 The Committee is invited to note the information given and take action as appropriate.
