



Ship Type: All Trade Area: Jeddah

Bulletin 386 - 10/04 - Stowaway repatriation from Jeddah - Saudi Arabia

Once a stowaway is found on board any ship the Club recommends that the Member reports the discovery to the Club as soon as possible. This will allow a plan of action to be agreed and a local P&I correspondent to be appointed to assist as appropriate.

In Saudi Arabia the Member, through his local agent, must report to the Coast Guard (CG) at least 24 hours before arrival that a vessel has stowaways on board, with as much information as possible being provided, i.e. where they boarded, name, nationality, date of birth, birthplace, address etc.

When the vessel arrives the CG will board the vessel to interview the stowaway(s), take photos and fingerprints. These details will be sent to the CG head office in Riyadh, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the office of the Jeddah Governor. The above offices will then check the information and if in order confirm that repatriation may be possible. These enquiries may take up to 4 working days.

Once the 'official' formalities are sorted out, the stowaway(s) will be interviewed by officials from their local consulate, who will also take photographs and fingerprints which will be sent to the authorities of the county in question for confirmation of nationality, and confirmation that emergency travel documents can be issued. These enquiries can take up to four working days.

Assuming that all is in order, appropriate emergency travel documents will be issued for the stowaway(s). Once travel documents are issued, permission must be obtained from the Governor's office to disembark the stowaways in Jeddah. If permission is given, the stowaway(s) are taken from the vessel by the CG to the deportation camp for further checks relating to their now established identity.

Once finally cleared by the authorities, the stowaways will be escorted to the airport and repatriated back to the country of domicile. A copy of their travel documents with the Saudi Arabian immigration exit stamp then has to be given to the Ministry of Foreign affairs and the Jeddah Governor so they can close their files.

As can be seen the above arrangements are complicated and time consuming, and would normally take a minimum of 7-10 working days. However in practice, for north bound vessels, it is possible to have emergency travel documents issued at Jeddah in less than five working days, and with these documents, arrange for the stowaways to be taken off whilst the vessel is transiting the Suez Canal. Obviously for stowaways arriving with valid travel documents, the official procedure is shortened.

Note: Fines may be applied against ships arriving at Jeddah with stowaways on board

We have been advised that all ships arriving at Jeddah with stowaways on board will be fined a sum of approximately US\$ 1,333 per stowaway, this fine being imposed by the Immigration Department.

If prior notification of stowaways on board is not provided to the local agents before the ships arrival, the fine will be doubled to US\$ 2,666 per stowaway.

Source of information: Capt. LC Heron
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