

UK P&I CLUB



LP Bulletin

Friday 25th June 2010

Bulletin 703 - 06/10 - Security Personnel Embarkation/Disembarkation with weapons - South Africa

The following information has just been received from the Club's legal correspondents in Durban:-

"It has become common practice for vessels sailing up the East Coast of Africa, into the Gulf of Aden or via the Suez Canal, to call at South African ports to take on/disembark security personnel with weapons, alternatively with security personnel and weapons on board the vessel.

The South African authorities are taking an extremely hard line on weapons on board vessels and a number of vessels and/or personnel have been detained or arrested in South African ports. The potential fines and consequences, including imprisonment of personnel, are draconian.

This notice is to alert all ship owners and operators that have vessels calling at, or, off South African ports that they **MUST** ensure the necessary procedures have been followed if there are any weapons on board such vessels, failing which there is a very real possibility of the vessel being detained, weaponry confiscated and personnel arrested.

The exact procedures that should be followed are a little contentious. There is some confusion between what is stated in statute, compared to practice in terms of guidelines and the ISPS Port plans.

It is essential that, if weapons are to be loaded on or removed from a vessel, the procedures required in terms of the South African Customs & Excise Act and requirements for the necessary permits from the South African Police Services are complied with in full. The Port Safety Officer for the relevant port must also be notified. This is a fairly complicated and time consuming procedure.

If vessels having any weapons on board are simply visiting the ports then there is, nevertheless, still a list of requirements that need to be followed regarding the reporting, storage in a lock-up safe and inspection of such weapons by the authorities when a vessel reaches the port."

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