

MEMBER ALERT



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OCTOBER 4, 2012

STOWAWAYS HIDING IN RUDDER STOCK RECESS: AN UPDATE

Members may recall that, on April 8, 2001, the Club issued a Member Alert, entitled *Stowaways Hiding In Rudder Stock Recess*, which drew attention to the problem specified in the title of the alert. This problem, it would seem, persists. This alert is to remind Members to take proper precautions in order to prevent stowaways from boarding and hiding themselves in this manner.

Our information indicates that, as previously advised, stowaways wait in port areas until after dark and then swim to the rudder stock, climbing it and hiding inside the recess. Having gained access to an external area of the vessel, they cannot then be easily found by the ship's crew.

It has been observed that most of these vessels come from Africa in ballast and, for that reason, the rudder stock recess stays above water. However, as the vessel rolls and pitches, the stowaways are exposed to the sea.

Recommendations

Members are advised to take all necessary measures as part of the Ship Security Plan (SSP) in accordance with the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code compliance requirements.

The ship's crew should make all efforts to check that stowaways are not hiding in the rudder stock recess, particularly when loading or discharging cargo at ports or terminals in Africa. In general, it is the crew's first priority to check for stowaways onboard ship. However, attention should also be paid to ensure that no stowaways have accessed the rudder stock recess.

Typically, the crew can only access the rudder trunk via a manhole cover fitted in the aft peak tank. Since this tank is normally in ballast and/or filled with freshwater, examination of the rudder stock during a pre-departure stowaway search is not always practical. If access to the rudder stock recess cannot be gained via the aft peak tank, it is recommended that the crew use a small boat, such as a small rescue boat or paint raft, to check for stowaways in the rudder stock recess area.

It is also recommended that Members consider installing medial gratings above the openings to the rudder compartment to prevent stowaways from gaining access to the recess area in the first place.