

Best practices to prevent drug smuggling in high risk trades

The guidelines to prevent smuggling of drugs are a continuously on-going process with the goal to eliminate the use of our ships for drug trafficking. It involves raising the awareness of the crew on board the ships, ensure commercial people make thorough investigations of customers as well as arranging technical equipment to support the crew and on-shore personnel to prevent smuggling of drugs. Below follows an itemized list with suggestions of how to approach prevention of smuggling of drugs.

Raising crew awareness

Awareness by the crew of smuggling of drugs needs to be increased and continuously maintained. Measures involve, but are not limited to:

- Crew conferences
- Briefing by crewing agencies before joining ships
- Guidance notes to all vessels of measures of how to prevent drug smuggling
- Information leaflets on board of how to prevent drug smuggling and what may happen if crew is involved in drug business
- Posters stating the Owner and crew fully cooperate with authorities to prevent drug smuggling
- Guidance how to perform efficient search of the ship and containers including list of areas to be inspected and signature by responsible officer (as per Sea Carrier Initiative Agreement)

The drug policy issued by the Owner/Manager should be countersigned by each crewmember.

Booking of cargo – investigation of new customers

All persons involved in commercial arrangements with customers need to be aware of potential smuggling of drugs on specialized reefers and in containers. Trade Managers must continuously follow-up on existing customers, especially if there are changes in their trading pattern. New customers need to be thoroughly investigated and their track record checked.

When Shipper or Receiver are unknown or have wrong or no references, when the number of pallets is less than 48 or only 1 container and/or when any special stickering or packaging is required, the Agent does not accept the booking, but informs the Trade Manager.

Assigning of at least one person in the office with a special drug enforcement function is recommended. This person should be informed when a suspicious booking is made, when an inquiry is received from an unknown party about the whereabouts of a container and/or in case of any other incidents. The Trade Manager and/or this person should then report to and seek assistance from the local drug enforcement authorities in the loading and discharging areas.

Planning the voyage

In port all security measures should be taken appropriate to the risk in the port up to ISPS level 2. The Operations Manager should check regularly with the P&I club or local correspondent for up to date port information and send instructions to the Master and point out if special attention is needed in certain ports.

Terminals, stevedores and container depots in the supply chain should be appropriately certified, such as BASC or AEO.

A Closed Circuit TV, CCTV, system installed on deck that records faces of persons boarding the ship, and activities in vital areas on deck, will deter potential smugglers. The CCTV will also assist authorities to identify persons that have been on board, should drugs be detected on board the ship. It is recommended constant recording with a data storage capacity of more than four weeks is available.

On board the ship the Master ensures the following:

- Checks the proper functioning of the CCTV system
- Secures accesses to the accommodation
- Instructs the crew in security and carries out a pre-arrival security briefing in high risk areas
- Secures and seals areas not being continuously used

The Voyage

During loading

- Arrange watchmen at the gangway and near hatches with constant radio contact with the duty officer
- Arrange watchmen at the off-quay side of the ship to note unusual activities in and on the water
- Identify authorized visitors by suitable means
- Stevedores should provide a list of stevedores working on board the vessel so that they can be tallied on and off.
- Painting gangs or other contractors should be avoided
- Inform crew not to rely on local security guards as they potentially cooperate with smugglers
- Search all bags and other carry-on items of visitors, stevedores and crew returning from shore-leave
- Illuminate deck and hatches to avoid dark areas
- Search and secure areas not being worked in
- Raise the gangway when the vessel is not working cargo
- Close observation of potentially strange cargo, persons and/or unusual activities
- Search and secure cargo holds and adjacent areas by antinarcotics authorities with dogs during loading and on completion of loading
- Stevedore/Tally Clerks to provide a list of all containers loaded with seals numbers and positively confirm that they are in good order
- Verify and record seals are in place
- Arrange underwater inspection of the hull and sea chests

During the voyage

- Observe, report and take action against unusual activities on board or markings
- Observe unusual behavioral pattern of crew, such as nervousness, large sums of cash, expensive articles or clothing, contacting unknown persons in high risk trades, presence in areas of the ship not being part of the normal areas for work etc.
- Masters Inspection of all crew accommodation and storerooms to be followed including random inspection of crew lockers/drawers

Just before and during discharging

- Arrange watchmen at the gangway and near hatches with constant radio contact with the duty officer
- Identify authorized visitors by suitable means
- Check hatch seals are in place prior to arrival/discharge
- Stevedores to provide list of stevedores working on board the vessel and to be tallied on and off by stevedore foreman. Stevedores to wear photo identification
- Search all bags and other carry-on items of visitors, stevedores and crew going ashore
- Illuminate deck and hatches to avoid dark areas
- Search and secure areas not being worked in
- Raise the gangway when the vessel is not working cargo
- Observe and report suspect persons and/or unusual activities on board