

Circular From NOE**Date: 17 November 2016**

Stowaways in South Africa

North has received news of recent increases in the number of stowaways in Durban, South Africa.

Local correspondents P&I Associates (Pty) Ltd in Durban have reportedly been inundated with stowaway incidents in recent months. There is concern that these numbers may increase further as the Christmas period approaches and people attempt to travel back to their home countries. The South African authorities are understood to be taking a robust approach to this problem and it is therefore very important that vessels have effective measures in place to prevent unauthorised access on board.

P&I Associates (Pty) Ltd have issued a bulletin which provides further details on this issue and can be read [here](#).

Some key points as below for your reference.

The current ruling in South Africa is as follows:

Should any unlawful person gain access onto a ship in a South African port, the person will automatically be deemed to be a stowaway unless the vessel can provide photographic, video or 3rd party evidence (terminal security) that the stowaway attempted to board the vessel in Durban.

The ship owner will be liable for the full costs of repatriating the stowaway. It is essential therefore that the stowaway does not gain access onto the ship in any way.

We are now approaching Christmas and we believe that the rise in stowaway cases will increase as individuals look for free passage home.

We understand that ship owners are battling in the current economic conditions and do not wish to use private security and rely on the crew to police the ship.

Stowaway attacks occur as follows:

- Late at night or early hours of the morning
- Clothing easily blends-in with Stevedore Gangs wearing stevedore clothing hardhats and reflective jackets.
- Colours not easily seen at night
- Generally climb up berthing ropes, gangways and hide in empty containers and log-ships
- Many personnel working on vessel enables stowaway to blend in

- They bribe terminal security to enable them to get aboard vessel
- Carry provisions for part of the journey

We recommend the following measures:

- The owner should try and employ private security to patrol the quayside. One security guard should be positioned on the forward mooring lines and one on the stern lines. Security on board is ineffective as the guards tend to fall asleep on board.
- Ideally a crew member must stand at the bottom of the gangway and check that every person boarding the vessel is in possession of a TNPA port permit.
- They must not allow anyone on board the ship who does not have a port permit.
- Every visitor should have ISPS clearance. All visitors should surrender their port permit to security and they should collect the same when they leave the ship.
- If anyone does not have a port permit, they must call the terminal/berth security in order to identify the individual and ascertain who is the individual and why does the individual not have a TNPA port permit. The visitor should be in possession of photographic identification.
- They must not allow any individuals to push past them on the gangway. We have had repeated cases where individuals have run past security at the top of the gangway. This is too late and the local authorities will deem the individual as being a stowaway.
- Where possible raise the gangway and only lower it and allow the visitor on board after a crew member has got to the bottom of the gangway and verified who the visitor is as outlined above.

Source of Information: North of England P&I Club