

Department of Transportation and Communications
PUNONGHIMPILAN TANOD BAYBAYIN NG PILIPINAS
(Headquarters Philippine Coast Guard)
139 25th Street, Port Area
1018 Manila



HPCG/CG-8

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR)
:
NUMBER 01-09)

05 FEB 2009

GUIDELINES ON MOVEMENT OF VESSELS DURING HEAVY WEATHER

I. **AUTHORITY:**

RA 5173 as amended by PD 601

II. **PURPOSE:**

To prescribe policies and procedures in order to enhance maritime safety during the occurrence of tropical depression, storm or typhoon in the Philippine area of responsibility.

III. **APPLICATION:**

This circular shall apply to all vessels operating within the territorial jurisdiction of the Republic of the Philippines.

IV. **EXEMPTIONS:**

- A. Tugboats purposely used in assisting vessels in docking or undocking to or from berthing piers or wharves;
- B. Government-operated vessels used for non-commercial purposes; and
- C. Vessels called upon by the PCG to assist in a specific search and rescue operation.

V. **DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

- A. Heavy Weather – refers to the violent atmospheric conditions of wind and sea such as the occurrence of tropical depression, storm or typhoon.
- B. MARINA – Maritime Industry Authority

- C. PAGASA - Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration
- D. PCG – Philippine Coast Guard
- E. PPA – Philippine Ports Authority
- F. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Nr 1 - declared if winds of 30-60 kph (approximately 16 – 32 knots) are expected in the locality in at least 36 hours.
- G. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Nr 2 - raised if winds of greater than 60 kph up to 100 kph (approximately 33-54 knots) are expected in the locality in at least 24 hours.
- H. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Nr 3 - raised if winds of greater than 100 kph up to 185 kph (approximately 54-100 knots) are expected in the locality in at least 18 hours.
- I. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Nr 4 - raised if winds of greater than 185 kph (approximately 100 knots and above) are expected in the locality in at least 12 hours.
- J. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Sector – refers to areas covered by PSWS Nr. 1 or PSWS Nr. 2 and higher which are shown with corresponding color codes, as provided in PAGASA website.
- K. Route – as used in this circular, is defined as a way or course, taken or planned to be taken, in navigating from a point of origin to a point of destination, as differentiated from the word “route” used in MARINA issued franchises.
- L. Vessel – under this circular, refers to any ship, watercraft or other conveyances used or capable of being used as means of transportation.

VI. POLICIES:

- A. Vessels of 1,000 gross tons or below shall not sail, except to take shelter, when PSWS number 1 is hoisted within its point of origin or route or point of destination.
- B. Movement of vessels above 1,000 gross tons is left to the discretion and responsibility of the ship owner and master when PSWS number 1 is hoisted within its point of origin or route or point of destination.
- C. Vessels of any tonnage shall not sail, except to take shelter, when PSWS number 2 or higher is hoisted within its point of origin or route or point of destination.
- D. Masters and ship owners of vessels above 1,000 gross tons who, based on the intent of this Circular, are given or left with the discretion to sail during a storm shall exercise extra precautionary measures and carefully study the possible effect of a storm to the vessel's voyage with due regard to the forecasted track, wind force and radius of the storm in reference to weather bulletins and Tropical Cyclone Warning for Shipping issued by PAGASA every 0500H, 1100H, 1700H and 2300H.

- E. Vessels sailing for the purpose of taking shelter shall depart without passengers. Cargoes already loaded onboard the vessel may be permitted to remain onboard provided that maximum precautionary measures shall be observed by ensuring that proper lashing and stowage are strictly followed.
- F. It is the decision and responsibility of the Master and ship owner of the vessel to ensure the safety of the ship and crew whenever they decide to take shelter.
- G. Vessels shall not sail when its point of origin or route or point of destination is within an applicable PSWS Sector where it is not allowed to sail (as provided in paragraphs A and C) based on the latest PAGASA weather bulletin.
- H. In no way shall ship owners and Masters of vessels depart from the intent of this circular by violating the objective of the provision hereof on taking shelter.
- I. Ship owners and Masters shall exercise extra-ordinary diligence required by law for common carriers in ensuring the safety of life and property at sea.

VII. PROCEDURES:

- A. Every Master or any person in charge of a vessel, including the ship owner/ operator shall consider the safety of life at sea to take precedence at all times.
- B. The Master or any person in charge of a vessel, including the ship owner/ operator shall ensure that the latest weather bulletin is obtained and the track of the typhoon and the PSWS Sectors are plotted on the weather chart aboard ship and at the company operations center or office.
- C. When an applicable PSWS number (as provided by Section VI of this circular) is hoisted in the port where a vessel is located or along its route or point of destination, the Master or Patron, when based on his judgment, there is probable danger due to a typhoon, shall prior to the vessel's departure, inform the nearest PCG unit in writing (as may be applicable), of his decision to take shelter in a safer place or to avoid the path of the storm, attesting therein that the decision to leave port is his, in consultation with the ship owner.
- D. The Master or Patron shall disembark passengers and institute maximum precautionary measures to properly stow and secure cargoes, as prescribed by MARINA, that are already onboard before leaving port to take shelter at a safer place. Cargo watches who are tasked to ensure the safe condition of cargoes during the entire voyage/ sheltering shall be posted.
- E. If already underway when an applicable PSWS number (as provided by Section VI of this circular) is hoisted in its immediate vicinity, or along its route or destination, the Master or Patron shall take no other option except to avoid the path of the storm and take shelter and promptly inform the ship owner and the nearest Coast Guard unit. Ship owners/ operators shall ensure that Masters maintain continuous communication with them and

shall immediately report to the Coast Guard the ship's compliance to this circular.

- F. It is the responsibility of the master or patron of the vessel to take all the necessary precautions to avoid danger to his ship and injury to his crew and passengers.
- G. Communication between the vessel and the ship owner/ operator shall be maintained at all times during the entire voyage, including vessels that are taking shelter. Communication checks between the vessel and the shipowner/ operator shall be conducted at an interval of at least every 30 minutes. Any failure of communication with the vessel shall be reported immediately by the ship owner/ operator to the nearest Coast Guard unit through any available means.

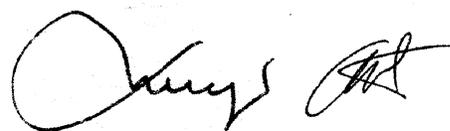
VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Director, PCG Action Center/ Command Duty Officer:

1. Coordinate with PAGASA on the availability of weather bulletin every 0500H, 1100H, 1700H and 2300H or whenever weather updates from PAGASA are available and immediately disseminate same through fastest means of communications to all PCG units, prioritizing the areas directly affected or may be affected by the typhoon.
2. Plot in the weather chart the track, forecast position of the typhoon and PSWS Sectors in reference to paragraph 1 hereof.
3. Immediately advise the Commandant, PCG of any major maritime incident.
4. Continuously monitor all PCG units and take appropriate action on all reported maritime incidents. Recommend to the Chief, CG Staff the activation of the Crisis Management Committee in case of major incidents.
5. Perform other tasks as the Commandant, PCG may direct.

B. PCG District Commanders:

1. Monitor and promptly obtain the latest weather bulletin through HPCG or PAGASA.
2. Plot in the weather chart the track, forecast position of the typhoon and PSWS Sectors in reference to paragraph 1 hereof.
3. Promptly disseminate the latest weather bulletin to all subordinate units.



4. Render situation report (SITREP) to HPCG at intervals as indicated:
 - a. every 6 hours if signal number 1 and 2 are hoisted
 - b. every 3 hours if signal number 3 is hoisted
 - c. every hour if signal number 4 is hoisted

(Note: SITREP to include weather and Maritime Traffic Condition.)

5. Monitor distress frequencies (VHF-Channel 16 [156.8 Mhz] and HF 2182 Khz H3E [AM] transmission) particularly during adverse/heavy weather condition.
6. Perform other duties as the Commandant, PCG may direct.

C. **PCG Station/Detachment Commanders:**

1. Promptly obtain and monitor the latest weather bulletin through the District Headquarters, HPCG or PAGASA.
2. Plot in the weather chart the track, forecast position of the typhoon and PSWS Sectors in reference to paragraph 1 hereof. Display the weather chart in a conspicuous area within the Station/ Detachment office for the benefit of those who want to be appraised of the prevailing weather condition.
3. Promptly disseminate the latest weather update to all subordinate units.
4. Render situation report to District Headquarters at intervals as indicated:
 - a. every 6 hours if PSWS Nr 1 and 2 are hoisted
 - b. every 3 hours if PSWS Nr 3 is hoisted
 - c. every hour if PSWS Nr 4 is hoisted

5. Put on record all notifications from vessels intending to seek shelter.
6. Monitor distress frequencies (VHF-Channel 16 [156.8 Mhz] and HF 2182 Khz H3E [AM] transmission) particularly during adverse/heavy weather condition.
7. Perform other tasks as the District Commander and/or the Commandant, PCG may direct.

D. **Ship Owners/ Operators:**

1. Ensure that all vessels are properly informed of weather updates that are promptly obtained from PAGASA or other available sources, to include the PSWS Sectors where typhoon signals are hoisted or may be hoisted.
2. Install weather fax and other weather monitoring equipment as prescribed by MARINA.

3. Disallow Master or Patron from having the vessel depart from port, except for sheltering purposes, when typhoon signal wherein his vessel is not allowed to sail is hoisted or expected to be hoisted within the area of origin or along the route or destination of the vessel.
4. Monitor and maintain communication with their vessel from the time it departed the port until its arrival at the port of destination.
5. When the vessel is already en route to its destination and once an applicable PSWS number, per this circular, is hoisted in its immediate vicinity or along its route or point of destination, order the Master or Patron to seek shelter. Ensure that the Master or Patron maintain continuous communication with the shipowner/ operator and notify the PCG of the vessel's action to take shelter.
6. Keep track of all weather bulletins or reports for dissemination purposes as well as monitor all their vessels' situation or movement until the typhoon leaves Philippine AOR.
7. Should typhoon signal be lifted by PAGASA, order the Master or Patron to inform the nearest PCG unit of its intent to proceed or continue with her voyage to her destination.
8. Inform the PCG immediately of any unusual incident, such as their vessel being involved in a maritime incident or is missing or has lost contact or developed engine derangement.
9. Direct Masters to institute maximum precautionary measures to ensure proper stowage and lashing of cargoes, as prescribed by MARINA, before departure and cause the posting of watches to ensure the safe condition of cargoes during the entire voyage/ sheltering.
10. Require Masters, Operations Officers or representatives involved in the safe operation of their ships to review/ study the Typhoon Evasion or Avoidance Doctrine.

E. Masters / Patrons:

1. Obtain and monitor the weather bulletin through PAGASA, company offices and other available sources.
2. Plot the prevailing weather condition, weather forecast and PSWS Sectors on the weather chart.
3. Inform the nearest PCG unit of his decision to depart to seek shelter as may be necessary.
4. Ensure that there are no passengers onboard when departing from port to seek shelter.
5. Take no other option except to take shelter and immediately inform the ship owner if a PSWS Nr., where his vessel is not allowed to sail as per this circular, is raised while underway. Ensure that they

maintain continuous communication with ship owners/ operators.
Notify the PCG of said action.

6. Institute maximum precautionary measures to ensure proper stowage and lashing of cargoes, as prescribed by MARINA, before departure and cause the posting of watches to ensure the safe condition of cargoes during the entire voyage/ sheltering.
7. Review/ study the Typhoon Evasion or Avoidance Doctrine.
8. The overall responsibility of ensuring the safety of the ship, its passengers and crew rests with the Master/Patron at all times.

IX. RESCISSION CLAUSE:

This Memorandum Circular rescinds MC Number 06-08 dated 30 June 2008.

X. EFFECTIVITY:

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.


WILFREDO D TAMAYO
VADM **PCG**
Commandant, PCG

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