

## **Ship Security Alert Systems (SSAS) Update:**

### **Activation postponement**

Inmarsat decided to postpone activation of all CN 137 SSAS compliant terminals (independent of terminal manufacture) as of December 22 2003. The decision has been made due to an unforeseen delay in the completion of the Change Note (CN) 137 SSAS infrastructure. The delay is a result of member states of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) reconsidering the implications of the SSAS routing requirement in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Regulation XI-2/6 and in IMO Circulars MSC/Circ.1072 and MSC/Circ.1073.

The Inmarsat CN 137 assumes that primary routing will always be Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) associated with the land earth station receiving the alert, as is also the practise for Global Maritime Distress Safety Services (GMDSS) distress today. However some flag state administrations have argued that the procedures for handling CN 137 covert alerts are not yet in place and thus have refused to receive CN 137 covert alerts until such procedures are in place.

To resolve the procedures for routing CN 137 covert alerts, Inmarsat has submitted a thorough description of the problem to the IMO COMSAR 8 sub-Committee in order to recommend routing of the covert alert to the MRCC associated with the Inmarsat C LES. This description will be put forward at the upcoming COMSAR 8 meeting 16-20 February 2004 in London.

The Inmarsat C terminals and network will remain ready to support CN 137 as soon as the routing issue as resolved and Inmarsat remains committed to ensuring that CN 137 will become operational before the IMO defined SSAS deadline of July 1st 2004.

### **Inmarsat recommended SSAS solution**

Inmarsat has recommended their Inmarsat C manufacturing partners to implement a covert alert messaging capability op top of the above-mentioned CN 137 functionality, as the combination of the Inmarsat C CN 137 covert alert reliability and Inmarsat C messaging flexibility will provide the seafarers with the best Ship Security Alert Solution.

The messaging capability will allow for sending a pre-formatted covert alert message to any destination as defined by the administration or ship owner, whether it being fax, telex, email, GSM SMS or a pager, whereas the CN 137 covert alerting functionality will ensure that the Inmarsat land earth station associated MRCC is always notified in case of an piracy or terror

incident on board the vessel. In short, the recommended Ship Security Alert Solution will offer the flexible routing required by some flag state administrations (i.e. allows the recipient to be the ship owner) and take advantage of the CN 137 functionality by sending Inmarsat Priority Three covert alerts (the same priority as GMDSS distress).

It is important to underline that the covert alert messaging capability alone can fulfil the SOLAS Regulation XI-2/6. Therefore Inmarsat C or mini-C terminals offering covert alert messaging and CN 137 functionality will be allowed Inmarsat activation, irrespective of potential further delays in implementing the CN 137 routing procedures. However it should be made clear that only the covert alert messaging capability will operate until agreement is reached by IMO Member States on the CN 137 routing but the CN137 changes will not be operational until such time as fully agreed by the Member States of the IMO.

Inmarsat priority P3 alerts are free of charge when delivered to RCCs, as already agreed by IMO Assembly Resolution A.707(17). Covert alert messaging is not covered by IMO Assembly Resolution A.707(17) and standard Inmarsat C air-time charges will apply.

The Inmarsat C and Mini-C terminals providing covert alert messaging and/or CN 137 functionality can all offer more than what is required by the IMO Regulation XI-2/6 regarding SSAS; vessel tracking, for example.

Inmarsat C has been a cornerstone of the GMDSS for more than a decade and Inmarsat is fully committed, through its Public Service Obligations, to support the Inmarsat C network.

## **ISPS and SSAS Deadlines**

For most vessels, the latest possible implementation date for SSAS is by the first Safety Radio Survey after 1 July 2004. Some countries, most notably the USA, have stated that ships will not be permitted to enter their waters unless they are in full compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code by the 1 July 2004 deadline.

In order to obtain an ISPS, ships will have to have a SSAS either in place or at least be able to show proof that one has been ordered for fitting by the IMO deadline.

Inmarsat is not an authority on the ISPS Code and details about ISPS implementation should therefore be obtained from National Administrations

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