

August 3, 2005

**MR'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-24-2005**

**TO : All Steamship Agents, Owners, and Operators**

**SUBJECT: Trial Period for Long Range Vessel Tracking**

1. The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) is exploring various ways to improve the scheduling of vessels transiting the Canal in a way that waiting time can be reduced, and that resources can be more efficiently assigned.
2. An important element of the scheduling process is the availability of accurate up-to-date estimated time of arrival (ETA) information. To improve the quality of the ETA information, the ACP is proposing to begin tracking, on a trial basis, of all vessels that have identified their intentions of transiting the Panama Canal. In some instances the ACP may contact vessel masters in order to provide them with updated scheduling information. Vessels would be tracked by polling on-board Inmarsat-C terminals through the firm Absolute Software Incorporated, which is based in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.
3. Tracking would begin on the day the vessel is scheduled to sail from the last port toward the Panama Canal, or seven days before arrival, whichever is later. Tracking would stop when the vessel arrives at the Canal. This information will remain confidential and will only be used by the ACP in order to update and validate ETAs provided by these vessels.
4. The communication costs generated by this vessel tracking trial will be absorbed entirely by the ACP during the testing period. The ACP supports IMO's initiative for a global Long Range Identification and Tracking System, however, this service is not yet available.
5. The trial period will commence August 18, 2005. Customers who do not wish that their vessels be tracked during this trial period may forward their instruction via e-mail to [mr@pancanal.com](mailto:mr@pancanal.com). Your comments and suggestions are welcomed.

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

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Maritime Operations Director

