

March 24, 2008

**OP'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-09-2008**

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

**SUBJECT: Temporary Reduction in the Number of Available Transit Booking Slots and Measures to Reduce Backlog**

As stated in OP's Advisory to Shipping No. A-08-2008, during the past few weeks the Panama Canal has been experiencing an increased backlog due to the high number of arrivals for transiting the Canal. In response to the maritime industry's concerns regarding the segment of customers not normally benefiting from the Transit Reservation System, and who are currently being subjected to extended waiting periods, additional measures will be implemented.

As such, in order to facilitate the efficient operation of the Transit Reservation System and pursuant to its governing rules [OP's Notice to Shipping No. N-7-2008 (Rev. 1)], a temporary suspension of two (2) booking slots for supers and one (1) booking slot for regulars, as described in OP's Advisories to Shipping No. A-32-2007 and A-02-2008, will be in effect beginning at 0001 hours, **March 28, 2008**, as follows:

- During this period there will be a total of fifteen (15) slots available for supers and eight (8) slots for regulars.
- No more than nine (9) supers may be booked for transit in the southbound direction, and of these, no more than seven (7) with "full daylight-hour" restriction. Similarly, no more than eight (8) supers may be booked for transit in the northbound direction, and of these, no more than six (6) with "full daylight-hour" restriction.
- The total number of "full daylight-hour" restricted supers shall not exceed ten (10) vessels per day.
- No more than five (5) regular vessels may be booked for transit in the same direction.
- Of the total number of slots available for regular vessels, no more than two (2) may be allocated to regular vessels transiting under restrictions.

Applications for reserved transits under these terms will be received commencing at 0900 hours, March 25, 2008. The booking slot available through the Auction Process, as well as the slots available for vessels less than 300 feet in length, will continue to be offered during this period.

At no additional charge to our customers, the following special operational measures are currently in effect:

- Suspension of all routine maintenance works at the locks;
- Additional crews at the locks, including personnel for tie-up locomotives;
- Additional tugboats and tugboats crews in service to assist shipping, including assistance to most vessels during their approach to all locks;
- Assignment of additional locomotives and cables to deeply laden bulk carriers and tankers at all locks;
- Scheduling of non-commercial handlines to transit every other day, limited to a maximum of three per day per direction.

The Canal continues to monitor the situation to insure operational efficiency and the best service to our customers.

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

Manuel E. Benítez  
Executive Vice President of Operations