

June 15, 2004

**MR'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-31-2004**

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

**SUBJECT: Implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) at the Panama Canal**

1. The Panama Canal Authority, conscious of the international threat of terrorism against the safety of vessels and the security of their crew and passengers, wishes to inform the international maritime community of its determination to proceed voluntarily with the adoption of security requirements, through its regulations, similar to those established by the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS), even though the Panama Canal does not fall within the definition of a Port Facility as contained in the ISPS Code.
2. Therefore, effective 1 July 2004, all vessels to which the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS 74) applies and plan to arrive at Panama Canal waters will be expected to comply with the ISPS Code and related Panama Canal Regulations. Additionally, those vessels not required to comply with the ISPS Code will be expected to provide evidence that they have implemented security measures on board comparable to those required by the ISPS Code.
3. However, vessels that are not able to fully comply with these requirements may be subject to control and compliance measures, which may include a more detailed inspection and assignment of additional resources at their own cost. These measures could also result in transit delays, or denial of transit.
4. Due to the complexities of Panama Canal operations and its resource assignment process, the ACP will not be able to provide advance notice of the names of ACP personnel that may board while the vessel remains in Canal waters. Nevertheless, the ACP advises all concerned parties that appropriate security measures shall be implemented to ensure that all persons proceeding to a vessel from an ACP facility have been properly checked and that they do not pose a security risk to the vessel or its crew. Additionally, ACP personnel will carry official identification cards and are instructed to present them to vessel's officials upon request; however, these cards will not be surrendered.
5. The Panama Canal Authority has appointed Mr. Juan Héctor Díaz, Director of the Security and Environment Department, as the Panama Canal Security Officer (PCSO). Should you have any additional concerns or questions, the following Canal Security Division points of contact are available on a 24-hour basis:

Mr. Antonio Michel, Manager

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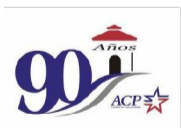
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**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

Jorge L. Quijano

Maritime Operations Director



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