

OP NOTICE TO SHIPPING N-4-2025

Illegal Activities
on Transiting
Vessels



January 1, 2025

OP NOTICE TO SHIPPING N-4-2025

To: Shipping Agents, Owners and Operators

Subject: Illegal Activities on Transiting Vessels

1. This Notice is effective on the date of issue and cancels OP Notice to Shipping N-4-2024. A revised Notice will be issued in January of each year or when otherwise required.
2. The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) is aware that over the years there have been reports of drug and merchandise peddling, and pilferage of cargo on board vessels in the maritime industry. This is a matter of serious concern, and the Authority is doing everything possible to curb these activities in the Canal. In addition, the Authority requires that employees comply with the *Ethics and Conduct Regulations of the Panama Canal Authority*, which establishes that, with minor exceptions, they will not accept gifts from persons doing business with the Authority. This is particularly important in cases in which determining the legitimacy of said gifts is difficult. The cooperation and support of officers and crew of transiting vessels is essential to succeed in these efforts.
3. The most effective shipboard measures are:
 - a. To refrain from presenting gifts to Canal employees;
 - b. To control access to living, office, shop, storage and cargo spaces; and,
 - c. To report any incident immediately and identify violators.
4. The following procedures are recommended for implementation by shipboard personnel:
 - a. Linehandlers may move between workstations and the ship's deck solely to request sanitary facilities and drinking water. These movements must be authorized by the Linehandler Leader, who will request a ship's officer to escort the personnel during these movements.
 - b. If the master suspects any illegal activity by Authority personnel, he or an officer representative should immediately notify Maritime Traffic Control Unit through the pilot, if aboard, to request an investigation and, if deemed necessary, should conduct a search before the employee(s) disembark.

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c. The master or a ship's officer must order shipboard searches, and they should be conducted with appropriate witnesses, including the Canal pilot or other responsible Authority personnel, if possible. These searches serve to deter potential offenders.

5. Whenever there is an incident involving a Canal employee, Maritime Traffic Control Unit should be notified immediately through the pilot. It will be required to submit a concise report of the incident, including statements by all witnesses and pictures if available for positive identification.

6. Canal employees are not authorized to have any kind of transactions onboard vessels and should not be permitted.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Boris Moreno Vasquez
Vice President for Operations