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## **Avoiding and deterring piratical attacks**

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Piracy is a growing threat world-wide, but particularly in waters in the vicinity of Somalia. There are, though, a variety of measures that can be undertaken by owners, operators, and masters to reduce the risk of piratical attacks and to deter or defeat such an attack if it occurs.

Following are some resources that may be useful in this regard. The documents may be accessed by clicking on the highlighted text.

The US National Security Council issued a document entitled: [Countering Piracy off the Horn of Africa: Partnership & Action Plan](#) (December 2008) providing an overview of the problem and efforts underway to address it.

Various stakeholders, including government agencies and shipping associations, developed an agreed set of [Best Management Practices](#) to deter piracy (February 2009). It provides useful guidance on what to do and what not to do so as to decrease the risk of suffering a piratical attack.

The IMO issued [MSC/Circ.623/Rev.3](#) (29 May 2002) providing guidance to shipowners and ship operators, shipmasters and crews on preventing and suppressing acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships.

General guidance addressing piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia may be found in [MSC.1/Circ.1302](#) (16 April 2009).

Guidance issued by the US Coast Guard identifying what that agency expects of US-flag vessels operating in waters that are at high risk of piratical attack may be found in [Port Security Advisory 2-09](#) (May 22, 2009). Among other things, this advisory incorporates an amended version of the Best Management Practices cited above. [Port Security Advisory 3-09](#) (June 18, 2009) provides guidance on self-defense in the context of a piratical attack. [Port Security Advisory 4-09, Rev. 1](#) (June 19, 2009) provides guidance to US-flag vessels regarding the procedures required to bring weapons and ammunition on board the ship. [Port Security Advisory 5-09](#) (June 18, 2009) establishes minimum guidelines for contracted security services on board US-flag vessels operating in high-risk waters.

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Naval patrols in waters off the coast of Somalia, as well as in the Gulf of Aden, have been established by a growing number of nations. Some patrol vessels operate on an independent basis, while others work within unified command structures. The three principal naval patrol groups are:

Operation Atalanta, conducted by the European Union through its [Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa](#).

Operation Allied Protector, conducted by the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization \(NATO\) Shipping Centre](#).

[Combined Task Force \(CTF\) 151](#), conducted by a multinational force under the leadership of the US Fifth Fleet.

The US Maritime Administration (MARAD) issues guidance to US-flag vessels on a variety of issues. Guidance relative to US-flag vessels operating off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden includes the following:

[Advisory 2009-02](#) Gulf of Aden/East Coast of Somalia Anti-Piracy  
Distress Calling Procedures

[Advisory 2009-04](#) Gulf of Aden and Somalia Basin Transit

[Advisory 2009-05](#) East Coast of Somalia and Gulf of Aden Transit

[Advisory 2009-06](#) Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and Indian Ocean Transit