



Guidance for the Employment of Private Maritime Security Companies

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Issued by the

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The Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF)

Founded in 1970, the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) is a voluntary association of oil companies having an interest in the shipment and terminalling of crude oil, oil products, petrochemicals and gas, and includes companies engaged in offshore marine operations supporting oil and gas exploration, development and production.

Our vision is a global marine industry that causes no harm to people or the environment.

Our mission is to lead the global marine industry in the promotion of safe and environmentally responsible transportation of crude oil, oil products, petrochemicals and gas, and to drive the same values in the management of related offshore marine operations. We do this by developing best practices in the design, construction and safe operation of tankers, barges and offshore vessels and their interfaces with terminals and considering human factors in everything we do.

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Glossary

Best practice OCIMF views this as a method of working or procedure to aspire to as part of continuous improvement.

Guidance Provision of advice or information by OCIMF.

Recommendations OCIMF supports and endorses a particular method of working or procedure.

Abbreviations

AOO	Area of Operations
BIMCO	Baltic and International Maritime Council
BMP	Best Management Practice
CRB	Criminal Record Bureau
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HNF	Host Nation Forces
ICOCA	International Code of Conduct Association
ISPS Code	International Ship and Port Facility Security Code
MFCC	Maritime Firearms Competency Course
MOC	Management of Change
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSO	Maritime Security Operative
OCIMF	Oil Companies International Maritime Forum
OVID	Offshore Vessel Inspection Database
PAST	Private Armed Security Team
PMSC	Private Maritime Security Company
RUF	Rules on the Use of Force
SeMS	Security Management System
SEV	Security Escort Vessel
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
STCW	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
TL	Team Leader
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea
VPSHR	The Voluntary Principles on Security & Human Rights
WAF	West Africa

References

- A.1091(28) Guidelines on Preservation and Collection of Evidence following an Allegation of a Serious Crime having Taken Place on board a Ship or Following a Report of a Missing Person from a Ship, and Pastoral and Medical Care of Persons Affected* (IMO)
- MSC.1/Circ.1405/Rev.2 Revised Interim Guidance to Shipowners, Ship Operators and Shipmasters on The Use of Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel on Board Ships in the High Risk Area* (IMO)
- MSC.1/Circ.1443 Interim Guidance to Private Maritime Security Companies Providing Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel on Board Ships in The High Risk Area* (IMO)
- MSC.1/Circ.1406/Rev.3 Revised Interim Recommendations for Flag States regarding the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships in the High Risk Area* (IMO)
- BMP5 – Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea* (OCIMF)
- BMP West Africa – Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security off the Coast of West Africa including the Gulf of Guinea* (OCIMF)
- Global Counter Piracy Guidance for Companies, Masters and Seafarers* (BIMCO, ICS, IFSMA, IGP&I, INTERTANKO, INTERCARGO, INTERMANAGER and OCIMF)
- Guidelines to Harden Vessels* (OCIMF)
- Bridge Vulnerability Study* (OCIMF)
- Ship Security – Hull Vulnerability Study* (OCIMF)
- The OCIMF Human Factors Approach* (OCIMF)
- Maritime Global Security Website: www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org
- GUARDCON – Standard Contract for the Employment of Security Guards on Vessels* (BIMCO)
- The 100 Series Rules for the Use of Force*
- International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (ICOC-PSSP)*
- The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights* (www.voluntaryprinciples.org)
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- MGN 520 (M): Human Element Guidance Part 2. The Deadly Dozen – 12 Significant People Factors in Maritime Safety* (Maritime & Coastguard Agency)
- The Human Element: A Guide to Human Behaviour in the Shipping Industry* (Maritime & Coastguard Agency)
- Handbook on the Use of Force by Private Security Companies, Annex B to Maritime Crime: A Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners* (Global Maritime Crime Programme)
- Summary of Laws Regulating Floating Armouries and their Operations, Annex A to Maritime Crime: A Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners* (Global Maritime Crime Programme)
- ISPS Code Part B 4.5.6 – Demonstration of Ability to Maintain Appropriate Measures to Avoid Unauthorized Disclosure of, or Access to, Security Sensitive Material* (IMO)

1 Introduction

The general use of Private Maritime Security Companies (PMSCs) onboard merchant ships is widely accepted as a measure to keep seafarers safe from harm and to protect vessels operating in areas of increased threat. It should be noted that industry best management practice (BMP) does not recommend or endorse the employment of PMSCs and any decision to do so rests with the individual ship operator where allowed and authorised by the Ship's Flag. Any company employing a PMSC should consider the Voluntary Principals on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR), which promotes a set of principles to guide companies on how to conduct their security operations while respecting human rights.

However, the use of experienced and competent PMSCs either onboard the vessels, where legally permitted, or on a security escort vessel, can be a valuable protective measure.

Any decision to engage the services of a PMSC may consider:

- Normal company screening due diligence.
- The current threat and risk environment.
- The output of the company risk assessment.
- Voyage plan requirements.
- Ship speed.
- Freeboard.
- Type of operations, e.g. seismic survey or cable laying.
- Levels of protection provided by navies, coastguards, and maritime police.
- Flag States approval – some Flag States do not allow the deployment of PMSC.
- Littoral States approval – some Littoral States do not allow the deployment of PMSC in territorial waters.
- The quality of the chosen PMSC.

The use of contracted security personnel onboard merchant vessels or the deployment of Security Escort Vessels (SEVs) should only be considered after a detailed threat and risk assessment and robust screening process have been completed.

In addition to the basic “know your company” checks above, the focus should be on the following: Details of certification, General Trade Control Licenses, weapon export licenses, weapon serial numbers and dates of certification/endorsements and approvals should be recorded within the review process. The review process should be conducted at the chosen provider's head office.

The person carrying out the review should be suitably qualified as a lead auditor and be familiar with ISO 9001, 28007 & 18788.

This guidance, along with the example and expectations checklist items at the Appendices, is intended to help owners/operators with pre-selection considerations prior to entering into any agreement with a PMSC.

2 Experience

The following questions might be a useful starting point when choosing a PMSC:

- How long has the PMSC been established in the private security sector?
- Are any testimonials/references from previous maritime security assignments available?
- Can the PMSC demonstrate sound understanding of the relevant sections of the following international conventions:
 - UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea)
 - SUA (Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of the Maritime Navigation)
 - SOLAS (International Convention for the Safety of Life At Sea) including International Code for the Security of Ships and of Port Facilities (ISPS)
 - VPSHR (Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights)
 - ICOC-PSSP (the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers)

A PMSC should be able to demonstrate knowledge of industry standards/guidelines applicable to maritime security requirements for the deployment of security mitigation measures within the area of operations.

3 Organisational structure

Any company offering maritime security services should be well organised and have a clear mission statement outlining the company's long-term aspirations. This should be signed by a senior manager and reviewed on an annual basis. Its policies should reflect the company's position on safety, health, employment, alcohol, drugs, training, compliance, ethics, protection of personnel and preservation of life. The company should be able to show that its operating procedures are in line with the stated policies, are periodically reviewed and comply with legal requirements. Each level of operation should:

1. Define ownership and registration of the organisation.
2. Identify and document top management, their history and relevant experience.
3. Define and document that the organisation is registered as a legal entity or part of a legal entity, and where appropriate, the relationship between the organisation and other parts of that same legal entity.
4. Define and document any subordinate bodies, regional offices, joint venture partners and their places of incorporation and relationship to the overall management structure.
5. Define and document any operational bases, logistics or storage facilities used in support of the operations of the organisation and the jurisdiction that applies and/or whether they are on the high seas.

The PMSC should have a valid business registration certificate which matches the address of the company office(s) and complies with the requirements of the jurisdiction where operations are conducted. The hallmarks of good business might include:

- Owners and/or shareholders are clearly stated and not affiliated with any national governments.
- Annual accounts/bank references are available to support claims of financial stability.
- There is good interaction between PMSC senior management and ship owner or operator related with security operational matters.
- Access to competent maritime legal advice (e.g. in-house counsel or external legal advisors) at all times.

A PMSC may employ sub-contractors and if so, there should be clearly defined circumstances under which sub-contractors are used. The following should be considered:

- Has the sub-contractor a valid business registration certificate which corresponds with the address of the company office(s)?
- Are the owners or shareholders clearly stated and not affiliated with any national governments?
- Does the organisation have a clearly defined process for subcontracting or outsourcing activities, functions and operations?
- Does the contracting company document, communicate and monitor compliance with specific terms of reference and codes of conduct to its subcontractors and outsource partners with regards to security operations and respect for human rights?
- Does the contracting company have documented agreements covering:
 - Commitment by subcontractors to abide by the same legal, ethical, and human rights commitments.
 - The process for reporting risks, as well as the occurrence of and response to undesirable and disruptive events.
 - Confidentiality and conflict of interest agreements.
 - Clear definition and documentation of the services to be provided.
 - Command and control scope and limitations.
 - Clear definition of the relationship between the contractor and the subcontractor.

4 Recruitment and management of office personnel

The PMSC should be able to show the quality of service provided and should have an established procedure for the selection, recruitment, and training of all office-based staff. Employee selection and employment processes should be clearly documented. The minimum standards may include the following:

- Medical fitness requirements met by personnel at the time of their appointment and on an ongoing basis.
- Identity and criminal record background checks.
- Defined competency requirements for technical education, training, skills and experience for key roles.
- Competent verification personnel are employed.
- Documented continuation training requirements, records of attendance at courses, seminars and conferences.
- An appraisal system and set criteria for promotion.
- Maintenance of personnel records, qualifications, experience and training.
- Promotion of personnel continuity, with an emphasis on retaining and developing people in key roles (a suggested calculation method for retention of personnel is in the glossary).
- If operating SEVs, sufficient personnel are employed to provide effective oversight of vessels in the fleet.
- Full documentation of any time and employment between leaving the military, coast guard or police and joining the PMSC.

5 Recruitment, management and wellbeing of Private Armed Security Team contractors

5.1 General

Those employed as part of a Private Armed Security Team (PAST) fulfil a very specialised role, potentially carrying firearms, and their background and employment history should be scrutinised. Areas to focus on may include the following:

- Does the PMSC selection and recruitment process outline:
 - whether the company defines and documents who has responsibility for all aspects of manning?
 - If a PAST manpower provider is used, does the company demonstrate responsibility for oversight of the recruitment process, authenticate certificates and maintain records of these checks?

5.2 Recruitment

Specific requirements for Maritime Security Operatives and Team Leaders may include:

- Identity and criminal record background checks.
- Previous employment references.
- Military, coastguard or police and law enforcement background check, including operational experience assignments and qualifications attained during service.
- Physical fitness including D&A test, screening of sound mental health, aptitude, and psychological test.
- Valid and authentic certificates of competency.
- Where appropriate, take additional steps to determine the competency of PAST and the accuracy of their pre-employment records.
- Medical requirements are met by PAST at the time of their appointment and on an ongoing basis.
- Pre-employment records are accurate and highlight continued competence.
- Ensuring mandatory, company specific and individual training requirements are identified and records of personnel attending courses, seminars and conferences are kept.
- Confirmation that the working hours of all personnel are accurately planned, recorded and management monitors the records to ensure adequate periods of rest.

5.3 Management

The company promotes and monitors the retention of PAST by offering, for example:

- Enough resources to meet the conditions of employment for PAST, including personal and wellbeing requirements.
- Determining and clearly stating the working language to be used onboard vessels and ensuring all vessel personnel can communicate in this language.
- Promoting cultural awareness and teamwork.
- Ensuring PAST are aware of legal understanding on the use of force and firearms.
- Providing mandatory training such as:
 - Maritime Firearms Competency Course (MFCC).
 - STCW.
 - CRB.
 - Level 3 First Aid course (including a section on trauma care).
 - PMSC Induction and Refresher Training which includes ISPS and SSP awareness.

- Providing continuation training such as:
 - Shipboard familiarisation training prior to embarking a merchant vessel.
 - Pirate Action Group operations, tactics, and behaviours.
 - Other threats and associated actors.
 - Industry Best Management Practices, with emphasis on Ship Self Protection Measures.
 - Relevant provisions of the ISPS Code especially the Shipboard Security Plan and differing security levels.
 - Vessels Emergency Procedures and Contingency Plans.
- Providing enhanced training for team leaders, which may include:
 - An introduction to company philosophy and structure.
 - An outline of expectations and defined responsibilities.
 - A defined and appropriate level of final approval.
 - Final interviews conducted by head office.
 - A probationary period.
- Providing specialist medical and mental health support.

6 Security management planning

6.1 General

A PMSC should operate a security management system such as ISO 28007 for embarked PAST or ISO 18788 when utilising Host Nation Forces (HNF) or similar. The company should be able to demonstrate:

- A security management policy.
- An ability to comply with all applicable international, national, and regulatory legal requirements.
- A risk management approach to business planning.
- A commitment to protect security sensitive data, both digital and hard copy, e.g. demonstrate GDPR compliance when applicable.

Security objectives should exist to:

- Manage risk.
- Minimise the effects of incidents.
- Mitigate the consequences by adequate preparation and resilience.
- Identify the relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

6.2 Planning for deployment – general

Before the employment/deployment of a PAST onboard a vessel there are several important planning considerations.

6.2.1 Command and control

The company has identified and documented a command and control procedure that provides:

- A clear statement recognising that the Master remains in command at all times, and an agreed procedure in the event of the Master being unavailable.
- A clearly documented set of ship and voyage-specific governance procedures including procedures for the conduct of exercises and response to real incidents.
- A documented list of duties, expected conduct and behaviour.
- Documentation of PAST actions on board a vessel.
- Clear communication, coordination and cooperation between the shipowner, charterer, PAST, PMSC and the ship's master, officers and crew throughout deployment.

6.2.2 Rules on the Use of Force

The PMSC should provide clearly documented procedures giving guidance on the decision-making process followed prior to using any force. As a minimum, this guidance should contain:

- Threat analysis.
- Staged and proportionate response for non-lethal options.
- The use of force option other than lethal force.
- Use of lethal force.

6.2.3 Weapon handling

The PMSC should have documented procedures outlining the requirements for the management of firearms including the upkeep of weapons, transportation to and from the vessel, storage in approved containers and storage arrangements when held on board a merchant vessel. These procedures should also include guidance on the use of force including specific detail on when firearms can be released from storage, loaded and “made ready” for use.

6.2.4 Licensing and procurement

Documents on the procurement, ownership and registration of firearms from the issuing authority should be available for review.

6.3 Provision of security off West Africa

Vessels operating off West Africa face additional challenges when using PMSCs because they are often there to trade, rather than just passing through the region. Tankers go to offshore or shore-based terminals, which requires careful liaison between any vessel-based security, regulated by the Flag state, and country-based security, including armed forces, regulated by the state. When considering the use of PMSCs onboard vessels in this region, the following should be considered:

6.3.1 Host nation force Memorandum of Understanding

There should be evidence of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with an accommodating host nation force. This document should set out the expectations of the host nation force and the operating requirements expected of the PMSC.

6.3.2 Human rights

Security services off West Africa may involve close working with personnel from regional states. In addition to VPSHR, does the PMSC:

- Consider lack of familiarity of the host nation language a risk factor?
- Understand the potential and actual human rights impacts on both internal and external rights holders?
- Have a process to effectively communicate grievance and complaints processes?

6.3.3 Chain of authority

There should be guidance on the chain of authority onboard a Security Escort Vessel, which may have both national navy and PAST personnel, and liaison between the SEV and merchant vessel. This may include:

- The command arrangements and associated responsibilities between the ship-owner/operator, Master, ship’s officers and security team leader and other security personnel. These should be clearly defined and documented (such as an organigram or responsibility flow chart) with the client before embarkation.
- The organisation should establish with the client when the Master and crew will be fully briefed about the security personnel’s role, their responsibilities and concept of operations.

6.3.4 Command and control

Documented command and control procedure and structure should also provide:

- Documented procedures and guidance on chain of authority on the SEV and liaison between SEV and merchant vessel.
- A clearly documented set of ship and voyage-specific governance procedures, inter alia, covering procedures for the conduct of exercises and real incidents.
- A documented list of duties, expected conduct, behaviour and record keeping requirements of Vessel Liaison Officer (VLO) actions on board.

6.3.5 Conduct by host nation forces

The conduct and authorities of embarked host nation forces should be clear and contain:

- Threat analysis.
- Staged and proportionate response for non-lethal options.
- The use of force option other than lethal force.
- Use of lethal force.
- Procedures for use of force include guidance on specific orders when firearms can be loaded and “made ready” for use.
- Procedures for the management of firearms including the upkeep of weapons, transportation to and from the vessel, storage in approved containers and storage arrangements when held on board of the SEV.

A checklist of considerations when employing a Security Escort Vessel is at Appendix B.

7 Vessel Based Armouries

Vessel Based Armouries (VBAs) provide an offshore solution for the embarkation/disembarkation of personnel, weapons and equipment. Whether the PMSC runs their own VBA or has contracted a VBA provider, they need to ensure the vessel is fit for purpose and has the right licenses in place. A checklist of requirements for a VBA is at Appendix C.

8 Human factors

Human factors are the physical, psychological and social characteristics that enhance or degrade human interaction with plant and processes. When things go wrong, they are often attributed to human involvement, however most mistakes are the result of how the workplace is designed, how well the equipment supports the task and in particular, how leaders influence culture in an organisation.

This is especially relevant in the operating environment of a PAST or those deployed to a VBA. It is important that PMSC management recognises the opportunity to reduce operational risk by addressing the systems and conditions that influence errors, actions and decisions.

The PMSC should be able to identify key human and performance influencing factors related to maritime security tasks and describe measures to manage these factors to set people up for success. These may include:

- **Skills to respond to emerging situations** People’s ability to adapt and respond well to dynamic and unplanned situations is supported by teamwork, communication and situational awareness by:
 - Conveying full and accurate information, checking understanding within and between teams, e.g. during planning and preparation or on shift handovers.
 - Understanding how different situations may affect whether a task or team interactions can be conducted in the usual way.
 - Building and sustaining the capabilities necessary for effective and safe performance.

- **Leadership and shaping the culture you want** The leadership encourages and empowers everyone to speak up to alert others to concerns or intervene to resolve situations by:
 - Listening, acting and feeding back on concerns from people at all levels.
 - Responding in a way that recognises and values learning when things go wrong instead of reacting with blame.
- **Well executed tasks and procedures** The ways in which local practice differs from expected practice or standard documented procedures is identified and the reasons are understood in order to:
 - Resolve any underlying issues such as difficulties with tasks, equipment, systems or workload to avoid workarounds that may lead to mistakes.
 - Update procedures that may be unclear, insufficient or impractical in the circumstances.
- **Fatigue and stress** Fatigue and stress are recognised as factors that affect people’s ability to carry out their duties competently and safely by impairing responsiveness, decision making and risk perception. These risks can be mitigated by:
 - Managing work to avoid excessive pressures and demands.
 - Planning tasks and shifts to ensure sufficient rest and breaks between and during work hours.

Refer to *The OCIMF Human Factors Approach: A framework to materially reduce marine risk* (2020) for more information.

9 Incident reporting, investigation and analysis

The PMSC should recognise that incidents, criminal acts (Ref A.1091(28)) and near misses present a crucial opportunity to observe where our system does not operate as intended. There should be procedures and processes in place to support a strong reporting and learning culture. Consideration should be given to:

- Identifying who is responsible for reporting an incident, authorising and conducting the investigation and initiating corrective actions.
- Guidance on the classification of all incidents.
- Providing incident investigation training to nominated personnel.
- Identifying the root causes and factors contributing to an incident and taking steps to prevent recurrence.
- Determining the actions needed to reduce the risk of related incidents.
- Retaining and analysing incident and accident investigation findings to determine where improvements to the SMS, standards, procedures or practices are required.
- Lessons learned from an incident or near miss investigation should be shared across the company.

Examples of reports may include notifications to:

- A contracting company.
- A Regional Maritime Security Reporting Center.
- A Coastal Authority and/or Port State.

10 Emergency and contingency planning

The PMSC should be able to demonstrate emergency response plans cover all credible maritime security scenarios. Supporting evidence may include:

- Staff and equipment contingency plans.
- Regular tabletop exercises reflecting areas of operation, SSPs and differing threats.
- Internal drills to test 24/7 response.
- Regular communications tests both internally and with deployed employees.
- A dedicated media spokesperson.
- Business Continuity Plans.

11 Insurances and contractual agreements

The PMSC should provide and maintain public and employer's liability insurance to a level expected by the ship owner and maintain insurance covering personal accident, medical expenses, hospitalisation, and repatriation of employees.

Appendices

A. Private Maritime Security Contractor – example checklist.

B. Security Escort Vessels – example checklist.

C. Vessel Based Armouries – example of Requirements to Operate.

Appendix A: Private Maritime Security Contractor

The use of Private Maritime Security Contractors (PMSC) onboard merchant vessels should only be considered following completion of a detailed risk assessment process and completion of a robust and clearly documented pre-selection due-diligence (screening) process, both of which should be stewarded by a detailed Management of Change and reflected in the SSP. This checklist is intended to assist companies/ship owners/operators with pre-selection due-diligence work prior to entering into any service agreement with a PMSC.

As part of the due-diligence process appropriate verification documentation must be provided or sighted on a random sampling basis to ensure validation of stated requirements and expectations. Details of certification, registered numbers and dates of certification/endorsements and approvals should be recorded within the review process.

PMSC name		Registered address	
PMSC website		Number of permanent employees	Established since

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes
General	1.1	The structure of the PMSC is clearly stated.	Yes ☐ No ☐
	1.2	The PMSC has a clearly stated mission or vision statement which outlines high level and long-term aspirations of the company.	Yes ☐ No ☐
	1.3	The PMSC policies reflect their position with regard to safety, health, employment, alcohol, drugs, training, compliance, ethics, data protection, protection of persons and preservation of life.	Yes ☐ No ☐
	1.4	The PMSC can demonstrate that procedures and instructions are aligned with the stated policies and these are reviewed on a periodic basis.	Yes ☐ No ☐
	1.5	The PMSC has a valid business registration certificate which corresponds with the address of their company office(s).	Yes ☐ No ☐
	1.6	The PMSC has valid licence from their home country to trade as a security contractor.	Yes ☐ No ☐
	1.7	The ownership of the PMSC has been verified. Owner(s) or shareholders are clearly stated and are not affiliated with any national governments.	Yes ☐ No ☐

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes	
General (cont.)	1.8	The PMSC has contracts with any national governments.	Yes ☐ No ☐	If yes, please list:
	1.9	The security PMSC appears to be financially secure and annual accounts/bank references are available to support claims of financial stability.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.10	The PMSC has provision for 24-hour emergency support to cover any potential occurrences.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.11	Members of the PMSC senior management have been involved in face-to-face discussions with ship owner/operator representative(s).	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.12	The PMSC has access to competent maritime legal advice (e.g in-house counsel/ external legal advisors) on a 24/7 basis.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.13	Does the PMSC have a documented policy that is used to implement the relevant guidance contained in the following generic Codes for the Security Industry: • ICOC-PSSP (International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers) • The Voluntary Principles • UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force & Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990)	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Experience and knowledge	2.1	Is the PMSC established in the private security sector?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	2.2	If the PMSC has been established in the maritime private security sector for a period of less than 2 year as a “stand-alone” entity, proof of past experience has been reviewed.	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐	
	2.3	The senior management of the PMSC have relevant experience and knowledge of the maritime security sector.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	2.4	Appropriate written testimonials/references relating to previously undertaken maritime security assignments have been reviewed.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	2.5	The PMSC is able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the current threats posed to merchant vessels in recognised high-risk areas and has established systems which allow them to maintain this understanding.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	2.6	Does the PMSC demonstrate a sound understanding of the relevant sections of the following International Conventions: • UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) • SUA (Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation) • SOLAS including ISPS Code	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	2.7	The PMSC is able to demonstrate its knowledge and understanding of Industry standards/guidelines applicable to maritime security requirements for deployment of armed personnel on merchant vessels.	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes	
PMSC procedures	3.1	Documented procedures relating to vessel protection and reporting embrace the provisions outlined in the most recent version of Best Management Practices.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.2	Documented procedures include guidance on chain of authority and change of PMSC command whenever a security team are embarked onboard a merchant vessel?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.3	Documented procedure for the notification of Flag State when armed security team is deployed onboard a merchant vessel. (See section 7 for further checks regarding Flag State approval processes)	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.4	Documented procedures provide clear guidance on the decision-making process to be followed (rules of for the use of force) prior to taking any decision to use force. These should contain: • Threat analysis • Stage-wise response: – Non-lethal options – Use of force options other than lethal force – Use of lethal force	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.5	Documented procedures for the “use of force” include documented procedures giving guidance on specific orders when firearms can be loaded and “made ready” for use.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.6	The PMSC can provide details of rationale for selected firearms deployed.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.7	PMSC documented procedures provide clear requirements relating to the procurement, ownership, and registration of firearms. Evidence of such documentation should be available for review.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.8	PMSC documented procedures provide clear requirements relating to the management of firearms including upkeep of weapons, transportation to and from a vessel, storage in approved containers and storage arrangements when held onboard a merchant vessel.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.9	Responsibilities for lifesaving duties during vessel protection assignments have been clearly identified.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.10	PMSC documented procedures give due account toward preserving a non-hazardous environment onboard vessel types which seek to maintain intrinsically safe operations.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.11	PMSC documented procedures provide details of the incident record keeping and reporting protocols to be followed for each instance when the PMSC or the vessel’s Master considered the vessel security to have been threatened.	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes	
Procedures (cont.)	3.12	- The PMSC has clearly stated incident investigation procedures and records which support detailed route analysis and a process for capturing lessons learnt. - Incident investigation examples should contain clear account of incident, witness statements, actions taken, identification of any non-compliance with procedures and supporting evidence if available.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.13	The PMSC has documented procedures/ protocols for safe custody of any arrested/ detained individuals.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.14	The PMSC has a clearly stated emergency response/communications plan including 24-hour support and clearly stated responsibilities of shore response team members. Plan accounts for emergency situations such as: medical incidents, missing persons, hijacking/kidnapping, emergency repatriation.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.15	The PMSC has documented presentations for Ship's Master and crew on anti-piracy measures associated with the deployment of PMSC personnel to merchant vessel and expected roles and responsibilities of ship's Master and crew in a security incident.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.16	The PMSC follows a documented process which provides the shipping company with a detailed post-deployment report. The report should contain full details of the deployment, operational matters, any training and/or ship hardening provided by the PMSC team and any advice as to any further security enhancements which may be considered.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Employee screening	4.1	The PMSC's employee selection and employment process is clearly documented with relevant minimum standards/ expectations detailed.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	4.2	- The PMSC employee selection process includes minimum expectations which are required prior to any person being designated as a team leader. - Such team leader expectations may include demonstration of detailed understanding of vessel vulnerability, security risk assessments and man management.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	A robust PMSC pre-employment process for each new employee includes:			
	4.3	Appropriate identity and criminal record background checks to security company's home country legal obligations.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	4.4	Verification of previous employment references and employment history, including review of documented references and testimonials.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	4.5	Verification of experience and certification regarding the use and carriage of firearm types which would be deployed onboard merchant vessels.	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes	
Employee screening (cont.)	4.6	Military and law enforcement background checks. To include assignments and qualifications attained during service.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	4.7	Physical fitness testing (including tests for drug and alcohol use/misuse) – Standards such as Seafarers ENG1 Medical for UK nationals confirm employees are fit for purpose.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	4.8	The PMSC employee screening process includes confirmation that proposed candidates are assessed to be of sound mental health.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	4.9	The PMSC employee screening process includes aspects of aptitude and psychological testing.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Training	5.1	Minimum marine security contractor training expectations (e.g. STCW, MFCC, First Aid) are clearly stated within the PMSC procedures.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	The PMSC should be able to provide documentary evidence to verify adequate initial and refresher training. Such documentary evidence should confirm:			
	5.2	Basic ship-board familiarisation training prior to embarking any merchant vessel.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.3	Any additional requirements of relevant Flag State(s) (Basic sea survival, Ship Security Officer, Tanker Familiarisation, Marine Firefighting, etc.)	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.4	Training in the PMSC's specific procedures with focus on the carriage and management of firearms, onboard chain of authority and the different stages of the documented decision-making processes.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.5	Training in the use and care of the specific make and model of security equipment (Including firearms) which personnel may be expected to use/deploy. Should include: • Date of last qualification, • Weapon(s) used in qualification • Number of rounds fired (against qualification standards – Military spec preferred)	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.6	Medical training to a recognised international standard.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.7	Contained in the training syllabus are appropriate sections and instruction in legal understanding of UNCLOS, STCW, SOLAS and UN Basis Principles on the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials (1990). As outlined in <i>General Section – 1.13</i> .	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes	
Training (cont.)	5.8	Are PMSC company personnel given appropriate training and/or briefing with specific reference to the vessel type and where that vessel will be trading, including: • Pirate Action Group operations, tactics, and behaviours? • Industry Best Management Practices, in particular Ship Self Protection Measures? • The relevant provisions of the Shipboard Security Plan (SSP) and the differing Security Levels? • Vessels Emergency Procedures and Contingency Plans?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.9	The PMSC has a process in place which involves documented periodic assessments of personnel performance. In addition to assessment of performance the process considers training/career development opportunities and recommendations.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	Note: At the completion of this section, the reviewer must be satisfied that the training regime in place and the records of that training give confidence that the PMSC personnel have been provided with appropriate knowledge and skills to ensure that all PMSC personnel deployed across the Shipping Company's Fleet will receive a uniform level of professional training, attain the same high level of competencies, and provide the level of services expected by the ship's owner/operator.			
Accreditation by recognised association or industry body	6.1	The PMSC has attained relevant accreditation by a recognised security association or forum such as: Security in Complex Environments Group, International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers, British Association of Private Security Companies and the International Marine Contractors Association.	Yes ☐ No ☐	If yes, please list:
	6.2	The PMSC has been endorsed by recognised associations and/or industry bodies. Endorsement may include: Class, Flag, Ship-Owner Association, or ISO Quality Assurance Accreditations.	Yes ☐ No ☐	If yes, please list:
Flag State approval	7.1	The PMSC demonstrates sound knowledge of the various flag state approval requirements and limitations with regard to the carriage and onboard management of armed or unarmed private security contractors.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	7.2	PMSC documented examples outlining previous Flag State approvals to operate onboard merchant vessels have been reviewed.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	7.3	The PMSC is able to provide an example of a detailed plan covering proposed security team deployment to the Port/Coastal State to ensure compliance with the respective State's requirements on possession, transportation of weapons.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	Note: Most Flag States have strict requirements regarding the carriage of arms on vessel flying their flag including the individual licensing of personnel who may carry arms and the licensing of individual firearms. Some Flag States have limitations on the type of weapons that may be carried on board (e.g. some Flag States do not allow the use of fully automatic/select fire weapons). Ref: MSC.1/Circ.1406/Rev.3.			
Port and Coastal State approval	8.1	The PMSC demonstrates sound knowledge in relevant port and coastal state approval requirements and limitations with regard to the transfer of security contractors and their equipment, especially firearms.	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes	
Port and Coastal State approval (cont.)	8.2	The PMSC can provide documented evidence of recent/current agreements where they have obtained permission to embark/disembark security personnel and associated equipment (especially firearms) from/to key ports in region (Fujairah, Muscat, Salalah, Galle, Suez, Djibouti, etc.).	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	8.3	The PMSC is able to provide an example of a detailed plan covering proposed Security Team deployment to the Flag State to ensure compliance with the Flag State's requirements on possession and transportation of weapons (if so required).	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Insurance	9.1	The PMSC provides and maintains public and employer's liability insurance to a level expected by the ship owner (not expected to be less the US\$5 million).	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	The terms of the PMSC insurance must not prejudice or potentially prejudice the ship owners' insurance.			
	9.2	The PMSC provides and maintains insurance covering personal accident, medical expenses, hospitalisation and repatriation of employees.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	9.3	The PMSC ensures its personnel to carry and use firearms on the high seas and territorial waters, for accident, injury and damage arising from the use of firearms and liability for any claim that might arise from the carriage and use of firearms.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Contractual agreement	10.1	Any agreement contains a clearly worded indemnity clause removing liability for ship owner, operator, crew, and charterer for actions which may be a direct result of embarking private security contractors.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	10.2	Agreement confirms the minimum onboard security team compliment (industry guidelines state that this should be four) and that one team member will always be a qualified team medic.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	10.3	Onboard agreements re-iterate the chain of accountability and any non-disclosure agreement between PMSC personnel, the Master and the Administration in the event of damage/injury.	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Notes				
Names of person(s) conducting review			Date	

Appendix B: Security Escort Vessels (SEV)

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes	
Vessel specifications	1.1	The vessel specification makes it suitable for security tasks.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.2	The vessel has documentation of the operational capabilities required to conduct security tasks.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.3	The documentation specifies the maximum speed and endurance of the vessel.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.4	The vessel has an Emergency Response Plan to cover security related incidents.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.5	Vessel maintenance and servicing schedules are documented.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	1.6	The vessel is maintained to its operating specification.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Vessel ownership and Authority to Operate	2.1	If operating in TTW, the vessel has documentation showing that it has been registered and approved for security use and covered by a MOU between the Coastal State and Company.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	2.2	The vessel has flag state approval for the embarkation of security personnel on board.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	2.3	The vessel has a Letter of Authority from Flag State.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Vessel hardening, ballistics and ancillary equipment	3.1	The vessel is hardened or ballistically protected specifically for security duties.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.2	A Vessel Hardening Plan (VHP) has been produced, or ships records to indicate where additional protection is mounted.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.3	Vessel records show operating licenses for security related equipment (e.g. weapon mounts, ballistic helmets, body armour, night vision goggles).	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	3.4	If required (e.g. fixed weapon mounts) documentation shows any security enhancements have been approved by Class.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Crewing and training	4.1	The vessels standard operating procedures and safety equipment records reflect additional HSSE requirements when Host Nation Forces or Privately Contracted Security staff join the vessel.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	4.2	The vessels standard operating procedures and safety equipment records list safety equipment and PPE (overalls, hard hats, ear and eye protection) used.	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Item	Ref	Requirements & Expectations	Notes	
Crewing and training (cont.)	4.3	Crew training records reflect the training and seafaring competency of the crew.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	4.4	Crew training records record how often security training/refresher training occurs.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
A contractor management system which includes periodic auditing is in place	5.1	Does the contractor management system require audit of: • Floating Armoires/Accommodation vessels? • Shipyards? • Dry docks? • Third party service providers? • Training facilities?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.2	All non-conformities are tracked through to completion and records demonstrate effective close out of required corrective actions.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.3	An audit status report, including open non-conformities is reported to senior management on a quarterly basis.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.4	A procedure addresses, by exception, non-conformities that cannot be closed out within the original time frame.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
	5.5	Formal analysis of audit results is performed at least annually, and this drives continual improvement.	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Appendix C: Vessel Based Armouries

VBAAs provide an offshore solution for the embarkation/disembarkation of personnel, weapons and equipment. The operating models of VBAs may differ, for example they may be owned and run as a complete supply chain by one PMSC or they may be subcontracted by the PMSC to provide these services on their behalf.

As part of any due diligence the PMSC must be able to demonstrate a VBA has been listed as an approved armoury on their Open General Control Trade Licence – Maritime Anti-Piracy. This is usually controlled by the national authority and evidence of equivalence for local jurisdictions should be available. In addition, if the VBA is subcontracted by the PMSC it would be reasonable to ensure there is evidence the PMSC has conducted due diligence on the VBAs with a regular cadence of audits as part of their contractor management process.

Notwithstanding the operational model of the PMSC and VBA, the following is a non-exhaustive list of requirements that may form the basis of a check of a VBA as part of the due diligence process:

- Certificate of Registry
- Certificate of Class*
- Passenger Ship/Cargo Ship Safety Certificate**
- Record of Equipment for Passenger Ship Safety Certificate (Form P) or Cargo Ship Safety Certificate (Form C)
- Special Purpose Ship Safety Certificate
- Special Purpose Ship Record of Safety Equipment
- Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate
- LSA Annual Inspection Report/certificate
- Safety Radio Certificate
- Damage and fire control plans
- Protection and Indemnity (P&I) Insurance Certificate
- Hull and Machinery (H&M) Insurance Certificate
- Country of Incorporation brokering licence
- Country of Operation brokering licence
- Brokers' Country of Nationality licence
- Statement of Survey
- Document of Compliance with the special requirements for ships carrying dangerous goods
- Minimum Safe Manning Certificate (MSMC)

* Classification is not mandatory, but most Flag States and insurers insist upon it.

** Most VBAs are not classified as passenger ships but are cargo ships carrying "special personnel" or "technical personnel", as is common practice in the offshore industry, as all embarked personnel have completed the four standard STCW modules. It is therefore assumed they are better trained to escape from a foundering vessel than untrained personnel.



Our vision

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