



STOWAWAYS

The difficulty and expense of dealing with stowaways has increased sharply along with the increase in illegal immigration and associated human misery. As with any other incident, prevention is so much better than cure and the following measures are recommended to assist in the prevention of stowaways:

1. The Master should discuss with the agent the extent of risk arising from stowaways trying to board the ship and the methods used.
2. The pilot ladder should be hoisted inboard immediately after the pilot has left.
3. Anchor chain hawse pipes should be covered and secured in position.
4. Rafts used for painting should be retrieved on board upon completion of daily work.
5. Deck stores should be locked.
6. A vigilant and continuous gangway watch should be maintained throughout the whole period while at anchor or in port. Local watchmen or security staff may supplement the gangway watch. (Although there is an extra cost this will be cheaper and much easier than having to deal with a stowaway problem).
7. The gangway should be hoisted when port workers and visitors leave the ship. Particularly for periods at night when it is not in frequent use.
8. Access to accommodation should be limited to only one or two doors and others locked. (Ensure that they can be unlocked from the inside to enable escape in an emergency.)
9. Whilst at anchor, the lookout should be doubled up at night or during reduced visibility and there should be frequent deck patrols.
10. Cargo or other lighting should be rigged to shine outboard whilst the ship is at anchor.

11. The lookout should treat every approaching fishing or pleasure boat as a craft that may be carrying intruders. Where appropriate, deterrent measures may include high-pressure jets of water from fire hoses. An unidentified boat approaching the vessel may be intent on the transfer of stowaways, but may even be piracy. All means available on the ship should be used to prevent people boarding the ship from such boats. The port authority should be immediately advised of any attempt at boarding.
12. The ship should be searched before sailing. For many vessels a thorough search is not practicable but at least a check of unlocked storage areas and the lifeboats should be made. Remember also that any unsealed containers are a common concealment. Some ships may find it helpful to compile their own search checklist. A more extensive search may be conducted on the outward passage to the port entrance or sea buoy.

If ship owners or managers have any other suggestions to make for practical precautions to prevent stowaways we would be pleased to learn about them. If assistance is needed in compiling a checklist we would be pleased to help.

Please contact Nigel Hartley, Chief Surveyor at British Marine.

While every care is taken in the preparation of this page, it is published solely for the purpose of providing information and should not, in any way, be construed as a substitute for legal advice, which should always be sought in respect of any specific legal problems experienced.
DATE OF ISSUE: 2/99