# GUIDELINES ON MOVEMENT OF VESSELS DURING HEAVY WEATHER

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**I. AUTHORITY:**

Republic Act 9993 (The Philippine Coast Guard Law of 2009)

**II. REFERENCES:**

A. Typhoon Doctrine for the Philippine Maritime Sector, 2009;
B. PCG Memorandum Circular 02-10 dated 22 January 2010;
C. PCG Approved Memorandum for SOTC re-Special Areas dated 21 Jan 2010 and HPCG MC 02-10 dated 22 Jan 2010;
D. Department of Transportation and Communications Department Order 2012-01 dated 09 Jan 2012 entitled "Mandating the Strict Implementation of Precautionary, Safety and Security Measures to Ensure Safe, Fast, Efficient, and Reliable Transportation Services, the Immediate Implementation of Quick Response Protocols, and the Immediate Investigation of Transformation-Related Incidents".
E. The Philippine Coast Pilot, 6[th] Edition 1997

**III. PURPOSE:**

This Memorandum Circular (Circular) prescribes the policies on movement of vessels during the occurrence of a tropical depression, storm or typhoon in the Philippine Area of responsibility to prevent the occurrence of maritime accident and damage to the marine environment.

**IV. SCOPE:**

This Circular shall apply to all vessels operating within the territorial jurisdiction of the Republic of the Philippines except tugboats purposely used in assisting vessels in docking or undocking to or from berthing piers or wharves, government-operated vessels and commercial vessels called upon by the PCG to assist in a specific search and rescue operation.

**V. DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

For purposes of this Circular, the following words and phrases shall be defined as:

A. Detention – the act of preventing the ships from leaving the port due to violations or conditions presenting danger to the ships or persons on board and/or harm to the marine environment.

B. MARINA – Maritime Industry Authority.

C. PAGASA – Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

D. PCG – Philippine Coast Guard

E. PPA – Philippine Ports Authority.

F. Philippine Area of Responsibility – designated area in Northwestern Pacific where PAGASA is tasked to



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monitor tropical cyclone occurrences. It is bounded by the black lines joining the following points: 25°N – 120°E, 25°N – 135°N- 135°E, N-135°E, 5°N–115°E, 15°–115°E and 21°N-120°E.

G. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Nr. 1 – declared if winds of 30-60 kph (approximately 16-32 knots) are expected in the locality in at least 36 hours.

H. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Nr. 2 – raised if winds of 61 kph up to 100 kph (approximately 35-54 knots) are expected in the locality in at least 24 hours.

I. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Nr. 3 – raised if winds of 101 kph up to 185 kph (approximately 54-100 knots) are expected in the locality in at least 18 hours.

J. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Nr. 4 – raised if winds of greater than 185 kph (approximately 100 knots and above) are expected in the locality in at least 12 hours.

K. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Sector - refers to areas covered by PSWS Nr.1 or PSWS Nr. 2 and higher which are shown with corresponding color codes, as provided in PAGASA website.

L. Route - refers to a way or course, taken or planned to be taken, in navigating from a point of origin to point of destination, (navigational route) as differentiated from the word “route” used in MARINA issued franchises that refers to ports of call.

M. Short Distance Voyages – refers to those voyages where the distance from the point of origin to the point of destination shall not exceed four kilometers or 2.16 NM or voyages from the point of origin to the point of destination can be completed within thirty minutes or voyages from the point of origin, route and point of destination, altogether are within the line of sight.

N., Special Areas – refers to areas within bays and rivers or enclosed by natural covers or sheltered zones whose natural topographical characteristics makes its areas less vulnerable to adverse effects of the prevailing whether condition. The following are declared as Special Areas:

1. Iloilo Strait:

At Iloilo side south edge of Mansaya River or at coordinates Lat 10°42.2 min Lat 122°35.3min E; West edge of Ortiz Wharf or at coordinates Lat 10°41.4 min N Long 122°34.4 min; at Guimaras side at Estapa Point or at coordinates Lat 10°42.4min N Long 122°37min E and at Nagaba Point at coordinates Lat 10°39.9 min N Long 122°35min E.

2. Tanon Strait between Boracay and Caticlan traditionally used as routes between these areas bounded by the following coordinates:

Point 1: Lat 11°56min 30sec N; Long 121°55min 40sec E.
Point 2: Lat 11°56min 22sec N; Long 121°57min 09sec E.
Point 3: Lat 11°55min 40sec N; Long 121°57min 03sec E.
Point 4: Lat 11°56min 44sec N; Long 121°57min 27sec E.
Point 5: Lat 11°56min 38sec N; Long 121°57min 33sec E.
Point 6: Lat 11°56min 13sec N; Long 121°57min 32sec E.

3. Pier 3, Port of Cebu to Muelle Osmena Pier, Lapu-lapu City route bounded by the following coordinates:

Point 1: Lat 10°18min 51.43sec N; Long 123°56min 55.52sec E.
Point 2: Lat 10°18min 47.18sec N; Long 123°56min 49.90sec E.
Point 3: Lat 10°17min 48.98sec N; Long 123°54min 37.10sec E.
Point 4: Lat 10°17min 53.14sec N; Long 123°54min 39.57sec E.


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4. Mukas – Ozamis Route

Point 1: Lat 8°06min 14.77sec N; Long 123°50min 27.20sec E.
Point 2: Lat 8°06min 27.20sec N; Long 123°50min 32.01sec E.
Point 3: Lat 8°08min 21.00sec N; Long 123°50min 37.46sec E.
Point 4: Lat 8°08min 53.14sec N; Long 123°50min 50.98sec E.

5. Km. 11 – Villarica Pier Route along Pakiputan Strait betweem Davao City and Island Garden City of Samal bounded by the following coordinates:

Point 1: Lat 7°08min 04.49sec N; Long 125°39min 48.83sec E.
Point 2: Lat 7°08min 02.65sec N; Long 125°41min 02.71sec E.
Point 3: Lat 7°08min 15.05sec N; Long 125°41min 15.01sec E.
Point 4: Lat 7°08min 17.09sec N; Long 125°39min 61.08sec E.

6. Sasa Barge Wharf – Maewess Babak Wharf Route bounded by the following coordinates:

Point 1: Lat 7°07min 59.69sec N; Long 125°39min 48.38sec E.
Point 2: Lat 7°07min 16.10sec N; Long 123°40min 21.03sec E.
Point 3: Lat 7°07min 29.10sec N; Long 123°40min 34.03sec E.
Point 4: Lat 7°07min 50.69sec N; Long 123°39min 58.83sec E.

7. All other areas as the Commandant, PCG may declare as Special Areas.

O. Tropical Cyclone – refers to a type of low pressure system which generally forms in the tropics and composed of a large, rotating area of clouds, wind and thunderstorm activity. It begins as tropical depression (TD), further intensifies to a tropical storm (TS), then becomes a typhoon (TY) when its maximum sustained winds reach more than 119 kph.

P. Tropical Depression (TD) – A tropical cyclone with maximum sustained 1- minute mean surface winds of 35 to 64 kph. The storm begins to assume the familiar spiral appearance with increasing cyclonic wind flow around the low-level circulation center.

Q. Tropical Storm (TS) – A tropical cyclone with maximum 1-minute mean sustained surface winds in the range of 65 to 118 kph, inclusive. The developing bands of thunderstorms contribute additional heat and moisture, further intensifying the system.

R. Typhoon (TY) – A tropical cyclone with maximum sustained 1-minute mean surface winds of greater than 119 kph. About this time, the clouds free eye typically forms in the inner region of the tropical cyclone until one or more of the necessary conditions described earlier is either lost or undergoes a significant change, the system will continue to develop and sustain itself.

S. Vessel – refers to any ship, watercraft or other conveyance used or capable of being used as means of transportation.

T. Mandatory Sheltering – the vessel, while underway after departing with no prohibition under a certain PSWS, is automatically obligated to proceed to the nearest port or sheltering area in the event a PSWS is raised along its routes or destination that already disallows the vessel to continue its regular voyage.

**VI. POLICIES:**

A. No vessel of any type or tonnage shall be allowed to sail except to take shelter, as the situation may warrant, when Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS) Number 1 or higher is hoisted within its point of origin, the intended

route, and point of destination. All vessels that are already underway shall seek shelter when any PSWS is hoisted in its immediate vicinity, along its route, and point of destination. It is the responsibility the ship owner/operator and Master/Patron of the vessel on how to seek shelter and ensure the safety of the ship. Vessels are allowed to leave port only to take shelter and shall depart without passengers and/or dangerous cargo onboard.

B. Due to the distinct geographical characteristics of certain areas in the country, effects of any particular typhoon signal may vary from one place to another whenever PSWS Number 1 is hoisted or declared by PAGASA. Vessels engaged in "Short Distance Voyages" as defined under paragraph V (M) within "Special Areas" as enumerated under paragraph V (N) may sail when PSWS Nr. 1 is hoisted within its point of origin or route or point of destination only when all the following conditions are strictly satisfied.

1. Voyage shall only be from sunrise to sunset, the ship must arrived at the point of destination 30 minutes before sunset.

2. Sea condition is calm to gentle breeze with the prevailing wind speed in the area is not more than 30 kph or 16 knots based on PAGASA or other reputable sources;

3. Rain showers in the point of origin, route or destination should be light rains with the rate of fall is from trace to 2.5mm per hour;

4. There is good visibility. The route and area of destination is seen by the naked eye from the point of origin;

5. Duly licensed passenger vessels shall only carry passengers not exceeding 50% of its authorized passenger capacity as per MARINA issued Passenger Ship Safety Certificate (PSSC);

6. For passenger boats with open decks, passenger, including children and crew shall wear lifejackets prior to the departure of vessel and until disembarkation at the point of destination;

7. Masters and Boat Captains shall ensure that maximum precautionary measures shall be observed in ensuring the proper lashing and stowage of cargoes loaded onboard the vessel prior departure;

8. There shall be a designated look-out and standby Emergency Boat provided by any of the Local Government Unit(s) or Shipping Company or Motorboat Association in the origin and/or destination in case assistance will be needed; and

9. There shall be a reliable communication link between vessels and the designated standby Emergency Boat and the PCG.

**VII. PROCEDURES:**

A. Every Master or any person in charge of the vessel shall ensure that the latest weather is received and the track of the typhoon is plotted on the weather chart aboard the vessel.

B. When applicable PSWS Nr. 1 or higher is hoisted in the port where a vessel is located, the Master/Patron, when based on his judgment, there is a probable danger due to a typhoon or tropical storm, shall prior to the vessel departure, request permission from the Coast Guard Unit having jurisdiction over the area to be allowed to take shelter in a safer place or to avoid the path of the typhoon or tropical storm, attesting therein the decision to leave port is his in consultation with the ship owner/operator/Port Captain. The PCG shall not allow any vessel to seek shelter with passenger and dangerous cargo on board.

C. It is the decision and responsibility of the ship owner/operator and Master/Patron of the vessel to ensure the safety of the ship and crew whenever they are allowed to take shelter by the Coast Guard Unit having jurisdiction


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over the area, in accordance with this Circular.

D. For purpose of taking shelter, the vessel shall depart without passengers. The Master/Patron shall disembark passengers while cargoes already on board the vessel may be permitted to remain on board except dangerous cargoes provided that maximum precautionary measures shall be observed through proper lashing and stowage as prescribed by MARINA's cargo securing guidelines.

E. If already underway when applicable PSWS is hoisted in its immediate vicinity, along its route, or point of destination, the Master/Patron shall take no other option except to avoid the path of the typhoon and to take mandatory sheltering and promptly inform the ship owner and the neares Coast Guard Unit. The ship owner/operator shall ensure that the Master/Patron maintains continuous communication and shall immediately report to the Coast Guard Unit the ship's compliance with this Circular regarding mandatory sheltering where the ship owner/operator should direct for its immediate compliance.

F. The ship owner and the Master of the vessel shall at all times exercise extraordinary diligence and observe precautionary measures in taking shelter to ensure safety of the ship and that of the passengers and crew on board.

G. Communication between the vessel and the ship owner/operator shall be maintained at all times during the entire voyage, including vessels that are taking shelter. Communication checks between the vessel and the ship owner/operator shall be conducted at an interval of at least every 30 minutes. Any failure of communication with the vessel shall be reported immediately by the ship owner/operator to the nearest Coast Guard Unit through any available means. At no instance will the ship and the ship owner/operator office close their radios or observe radio silence.

**VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A. Every Ship Owner/Operator shall:

1. Ensure that the latest weather advisories, bulletin and warnings are secured from PAGASA, once they are released, when a typhoon enters the Philippine area of responsibility;

2. Ensure that weather advisories, bulletin and warnings are disseminated immediately to their ships. For this purpose, ship owner/operator shall install weather fax and/or other weather monitoring equipment and communications on board as prescribed by MARINA and regulations of other relevant Government Agencies.

3. As a Company Safety Policy, disallow Master/Patron from having the vessel depart from port except for sheltering purposes, when typhoon signal wherein his vessel is not allowed to sail is hoisted or expected to be hoisted within the area of origin or along the route or destination of the vessel;

4. Monitor and maintain communication with their vessel from the time it departed the port until its arrival at the port of destination;

5. Order the Master or Patron to seek shelter to the nearest safe port or sheltering area in case the vessel is already en route to its destination when a PSWS is hoisted in its immediate vicinity or along its route or point of destination. The Master/Patron shall maintain continuous communication with the ship owner/operator and notify the PCG of the vessel's action to take shelter.

6. Order the Master/Patron to inform the nearest PCG unit of its intent to proceed or continue with her voyage to her destination should the PSWS be lifted by PAGASA;

7. Maintain communication with the Master of the vessels at all times. Any failure of communication or any unusual incident, such as their vessel being involved in a maritime incident or is missing or developed engine


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derangement, shall be reported immediately to the nearest Coast Guard Unit through any available means;

8. Direct Masters to institute maximum precautionary measures to ensure proper stowage and lashing of cargoes, as prescribed by MARINA, before departure and cause the posting of watches to ensure the safe condition of cargoes during the entire voyage/sheltering;

9. Require Masters/Company Operations Officers or owners' representative involved in the safe operation of their ships to review and study the Typhoon Evasion or Avoidance Doctrine;

10. In coordination with the PPA/Port Manager, extend necessary assistance to the disembarked passengers; and

11. Ensure the company and the ship's compliance to the provisions of this Circular.

B. Every Master/Patron shall:

1. Monitor and keep track the movement of typhoon once it enters the Philippine area of responsibility and obtain the latest weather bulletin through PAGASA, company offices and other available sources;

2. Plot the prevailing weather condition, weather forecast for the next 72 hours on the weather chart;

3. Inform the nearest PCG unit of his decision to depart to seek shelter as may be necessary and submit voyage plan;

4. Ensure that there are no passengers and dangerous cargo onboard when departing from port to seek shelter. The Master shall coordinate with PPA on the appropriate storage of dangerous cargo unloaded for purposes of seeking shelter;

5. Take no other option except to take shelter and immediately inform the ship owner if a PSWS Nr., where his vessel is not allowed to sail as per this circular, is raised while underway. Ensure that they maintain continuous communication with ship owners/operators and notify the PCG of said action.

6. Institute maximum precautionary measures to ensure proper stowage and lashing of cargoes, as prescribed by MARINA, before departure and cause the posting of watches to ensure the safe condition of cargoes during the entire voyage/sheltering;

7. Review/study the Typhoon Evasion or Avoidance Doctrine;

8. Submit hourly reports to the ship owner/operator on the condition of the vessel;

9. At all times, ensure the safety of the ship, its passengers and crew rests with the Master/Patron at all times, as closely supervised and monitored by the ship owner/operator;

10. Submit a voyage plan before departure; and

11. Ensure strict adherence to the directives of this Circular at all times.

**IX. FINES AND PENALTIES:**

A. Violation of Part VI, VII and VIII of this Circular shall be a ground for immediate detention.

B. After due notice and hearing, the following penalties shall be imposed upon the ship owner/operator and Master of the vessel of 1000 gross tonnage and below who have been found to have violated Part VI, VII and VIII of this Circular.

First Offense


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P50,000 and recommendation to MARINA for three (3) months suspension of Seafarers Identification and Record Book (SIRB) of the Master and Patron and ship's franchise.

Second Offense

P100,000 and recommendation to MARINA for six (6) months suspension of SIRB and ship's franchise and recommendation to Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) for six (6) months suspension of Master's License.

Third Offense

P150,000 and recommendation to MARINA and PRC for the cancellation of SIRB and ship's franchise and company license to operate and Master's License.

C. The following penalties shall be imposed upon ship owner/operator and Master of the vessel of more than 1000 gross tonnage who have been found to have violated Part VI, VII and VIII of this Circular.

First Offense

P200,000 and recommendation to MARINA for three (3) months suspension of Seafarers Identification and Record Book (SIRB) of the Master and Patron and ship's franchise.

Second Offense

P400,000 and recommendation to MARINA for six (6) months suspension of SIRB and ship's franchise and recommendation to Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) for six (6) months suspension of Master's License.

Third Offense

P600,000 and recommendation to MARINA and PRC for the cancellation of SIRB and ship's franchise and company license to operate and the Master's License.

D. Twice the amount of the applicable fine shall be imposed upon any vessel that is allowed to sail for the purpose of taking shelter but has intentionally taken passengers or deviated from the intent of taking shelter.

E. The permit and licenses of ship owner and master who are third-time offenders shall be subjected to revocation proceedings.

F. Whenever a sailing ban is in effect, vessels that are prevented from sailing or placed under detention by the PCG shall secure permission from the nearest PCG office for purposes of taking shelter only. The herein prescribed fines shall be imposed for failure to seek the PCG permission.

**X. RESCISSION CLAUSE:**

This Circular rescinds MC Nr. 01-09 and 02-10.

## XI. EFFECTIVITY

This Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after completion of publication in the Official Gazette or in a news paper of general circulation.


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(SGD.) RODOLFO D. ISORENA
RADM PCG
Commandant, PCG

Approved by:

(SGD.) JOSEPH EMILIO AGUINALDO-ABAYA
Secretary, DOTC


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