



RECOMMENDED MEASURES TO DETER UNAUTHORISED BOARDINGS IN SINGAPORE STRAIT

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS FROM REGIONAL AUTHORITIES & THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY

Key Observations

- While incident numbers have risen, they remain petty theft and opportunistic in nature. However, perpetrators do appear to be more skilled in identifying “loopholes” and breaching shipboard security measures (particularly if not done in a robust manner), increasing their confidence levels.
- Increase in incidents involving Container Vessels in 2025 (last incident >5 years ago). However, no indication that they are being specifically targeted due to change in perpetrators’ Modus Operandi or vulnerabilities/characteristics (e.g. items stolen) unique to the vessel type.
- Most incidents continue to occur in the Phillip Channel, under the cover of darkness:
 - Perpetrators take advantage of vessels’ predictable behaviour (reducing speed significantly when turning), low freeboard (<10m), and lack of vigilance and/or security measures.
 - Low lighting and wide area of coverage makes it challenging for authorities to patrol and distinguish perpetrators from actual fishermen.
- No indication of increased aggression. Perpetrators do not actively seek to hurt/capture crew, but may respond aggressively if confronted (out of fear of being caught), leading to unintended injuries.
- Increasing number of delayed reporting by shipping community during incidents in 2025. Lack of evidence submitted post-incidents. These factors make it difficult for authorities to respond effectively at sea, and prosecute perpetrators when caught.

Key Insights and Recommended Measures



Maintain good light and door/hatch discipline - Leave only one entry/exit point; access to be monitored and controlled by the bridge.



Monitor potential boarding points - Pay special attention to vessel’s aft, and gaps near mooring bollards. Perpetrators often use these areas.



Maximise effectiveness with combined measures - e.g. (1) turn on weather deck lighting around the accommodation block and rear facing lighting on the poop deck, (2) maintain an elevated all-round lookout at all times, and (3) sound ship’s alarm when suspicious small craft(s) are sighted.



Remain vigilant and avoid complacency - Perpetrators have been known to use long poles or modified ladders with hooks to board vessels (up to 10m freeboard). Incidents can also occur outside of Phillip Channel.



Avoid confrontation - Injuries typically occur only when crew resist and/or threaten the perpetrators. When confronted, comply and prioritise safety.



Report promptly and provide evidence - Report incidents and suspicious activities immediately to enable timely responses. Share CCTV footage and photos (face of perpetrators and unique features of craft) with local authorities and IFC; do not tamper with the scene.