

TANGGAPAN NG KOMANDANTE
(OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT)
PUNONGHIMPILAN TANOD BAYBAYIN NG PILIPINAS
(HEADQUARTERS PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD)
139 25th Street, Port Area
Manila

HPCG/CG-3

15 October 1998

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
NUMBER 03-98A
(Corrected copy)

**GUIDELINES ON RESTRICTING THE MOVEMENTS OF VESSELS
DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER**

I. AUTHORITY:

RA 5173 as amended by PD 601.

II. PURPOSE:

To prescribe policies and procedures in order to enhance maritime safety especially during the occurrence of a tropical cyclone, tropical depression, tropical storm or typhoon that makes sea travel dangerous.

III. SCOPE:

This policy applies to all vessels that may be affected by the prevailing weather disturbance.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

A. Public Storm Warning Signal (PSWS)

- PSWS No. 1
 - is declared if winds of 30-60 kph (approximately 16-32 knots) is expected in at least 36 hours
 - the affected seas can be MODERATE to ROUGH
 - (2-4 meters wave height in open sea)

- PSWS No. 2
 - is raised if winds of greater than 60 kph up to 100 kph (approximately 32-54 knots) is expected in the locality in at least 24 hours.
 - the affected seas can be VERY ROUGH to HIGH

- (4.9 meters wave height in open seas)
- PSWS No. 3
 - is raised if winds of greater than 100 kph up to 185 kph (approximately 54-100 knots) is expected in at least 18 hours usually accompanied by heavy rains.
 - the affected seas can be VERY HIGH to PHENOMENAL
 - (9-over 14 meters wave height in open sea)
- PSWS No. 4
 - is raised if winds of greater than 185 kph (approximately 100 knots) is expected in the locality in at least 12 hours usually accompanied by heavy rains.
 - the affected seas will be CHAOTIC (Extremely dangerous that no vessel could withstand)

B. Tropical Cyclone is a general term for a low atmospheric pressure disturbance of tropical origin. It is characterized by very strong cyclone wind circulation which spiral inwards the center called the "eye" wherein atmospheric pressure is lowest. It is associated with bands of massive cloudiness and rain around the center. The rain intensity varies from moderate to heavy towards the eye.

Tropical Cyclone is classified according to the speed of the associated maximum sustained wind near the center such as:

1. **Tropical Depression** is a weak tropical cyclone with a maximum sustained wind near the center of up to 60 kph. The maximum wind may be encountered within 20 - 30 kilometers from the center. The sea can be moderate to rough within 100-kilometer radius from the center in the inter island area and 150 kilometers in the open sea up to the open coastal zone.
2. **Tropical Storm** has a maximum sustained wind near the center greater than 60 kph (the estimated maximum sustained with at a given time is given in the warning bulletin issued by PAGASA). The maximum sustained winds may be encountered within 50 kilometers of the center. (In a tropical cyclone, the strength of the wind decrease outward from the center).

In the inter island seas, the state of the sea can be VERY ROUGH to HIGH within 200 kilometers of the center becoming VERY HIGH within 50 kilometers of the center. In the open sea up to the exposed coastal zone, the state of the sea can be HIGH to VERY HIGH within 200 kilometers of the storm center becoming PHENOMINAL near the center if the maximum sustained wind is greater than 100 kph.

3. **Typhoon** is the strongest class of Tropical Cyclone which has maximum sustained wind of greater than 117 kph usually associated with heavy rains and gustiness of at least plus 20% of the sustained winds.

In a typhoon, the state of the sea is PHENOMENAL within 100 kilometers of the typhoon center. The area coverage of the HIGH to VERY HIGH SEA varies with the size of circulation of the typhoon. For disaster prevention purposes, consider the area beyond 100 kilometers to 200 kilometers radius from the typhoon center with HIGH to VERY HIGH sea and farther beyond

up to 400 kilometers radius with VERY ROUGH to HIGH seas in the open sea. In the inter island sea between Luzon and Mindanao, consider the area within 200 km radius from the typhoon center as VERY DANGEROUS to all passenger vessels and other seacraft.

- C. **Vessel** - Any ship, watercraft or other conveyances used or capable of being used as a means of transportation.

V. **POLICY:**

A. **General:**

1. Safety of Life at Sea should take precedence at all times. Whenever there is a weather disturbance within the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR), the PCG Station Commander (from whose area of responsibility, any vessel is scheduled to depart) should study carefully the typhoon movement to ensure that the vessel will not be within the dangerous area of the tropical cyclone throughout its voyage.
2. After careful evaluation of the intensity, size of the circulation and the direction and speed of movement of the tropical cyclone, as well as the areas affected, the concerned PCG Station Commander shall order the suspension of departure of the vessel as may be necessary based on the PCG approved guidelines.
3. It is expected that shipowners/masters of the vessels will cooperate with the decision of the concerned PCG Station Commander.

B. **Specific Guidelines:**

1. When only a tropical depression exists: (This means that only PSWS#1 will be the highest storm signal that can be raised by PAGASA since the maximum winds expected is up to 60 kph).
 - a. Stable inter island ships should be advised to take necessary actions/caution and to continuously monitor the possible intensification of the disturbance into a tropical storm.
 - b. Small ferry boats and bancas should not be allowed to venture into the sea if the area will be within 150 km of the path of the center of the tropical depression.
2. When a tropical storm exists: This means that the highest storm signal could be PSWS#3 since the maximum sustained winds range from greater than 60 kph up to 117 kph with gustiness of at least 20% more than the sustained winds. When the maximum sustained winds of an existing tropical storm is 110 kph which could have a gustiness of about 135 kph, PSWS #3 is raised over the areas threatened or to be affected by the inner core, PSWS # 2 is raised over the areas expected to be affected by a range of wind speeds greater that 60 kph to 100 kph, and PSWS #1 over areas to be affected by the outer periphery of the storm circulation.

- a. All vessels of 1000 GT or less shall not be allowed to proceed with their scheduled voyage if they will cross the area of or be caught within 200 km of the center of the tropical storm, or if they will navigate within the area under PSWS # 3.
 - b. All vessels greater than 1000 GT shall take extra caution to avoid the area within 150 km of the center of the tropical storm specially on its forward semicircle. If this cannot be avoided then these vessels shall not be allowed to sail.
3. When a typhoon exists that threatens the shipping routes: This means that PSWS #3 is surely in effect with a wider area coverage. PSWS #4 will be hoisted when the maximum sustained winds of the typhoon exceeds 185 kph.
- a. No vessels of any size shall be allowed to sail if it will navigate in the area within 250 km radius from the center of an approaching typhoon, or through the routes under PSWS #3 & #2, which are on the track of the typhoon.
 - b. All vessels in port that will, within 50 km radius of the typhoon center shall be secured or evacuated. If the maximum sustained wind of the approaching typhoon is greater than 150 kph, all ships in port in danger of being hit by the "EYE" of the typhoon shall be ordered evacuated.
4. Tropical cyclone continuously changes its intensity, especially while over the ocean. All PCG Station Commanders shall be continuously updated on the latest development of the existing tropical cyclone, especially on possible intensification from a tropical depression into a tropical storm and then into a typhoon.

VI. PROCEDURES:

- A. Every Master or any person-in-charge of the vessel shall ensure that the latest weather bulletin is received and the track of the typhoon is plotted on the weather chart aboardship.
- B. The Master or Patron, upon sensing the danger as a result of a typhoon, shall request in writing to leave the port (if necessary) in order to take shelter in a safer area, attesting therein further that the decision to leave the port is his alone.
- C. The Master or Patron must disembark passengers and cargo before leaving port to take shelter at a safer place.
- D. It is the responsibility of the Master of the vessel to take the necessary precaution to avoid risking his ship and injury to his crew and passengers.

VII. RESPONSIBILITY:

A. Director, Coast Guard Operations Center

1. Coordinate with PAGASA for the availability of weather bulletin every 0500H, 1000H, 1700H and 2300H and immediately disseminate same through fastest means

of communication to all CG units with priority to the area directly affected by the typhoon.

2. Plot in the weather chart the track and forecast position of the typhoon.
3. Advise immediately the CPCG on all major maritime accidents.
4. Monitor continuously all PCG units and take appropriate action on all reported maritime accidents. Recommend to CSPCG the activation of the HPCG Maritime Coordinating Center in the event of a major incident.
5. Perform other duties as CPCG may direct.

B. Coast Guard District Commanders:

1. Monitor and get all weather bulletin at all times through HPCG or other sources.
2. Direct duty Radioman to get weather broadcast through CW originating from FWC Guam, Taiwan and Japan.
3. Plot the prevailing weather condition and weather forecast for the next 72 hours at the weather board. Display the weather board in a conspicuous area for the benefit of local seafarers. Further, hoist the basic day signals to indicate the expected velocity of the winds within the next 12-24 hours. (See enclosure re-characteristics of day signals.)
4. Disseminate to all subordinate units and local shipping agencies the latest weather update.
5. Render situation report to HPCG at intervals as indicated:
 - every 12 hours if PSWS No. 1 is hoisted
 - every 6 hours if PSWS No. 2 is hoisted
 - every 3 hours if PSWS No. 3 or 4 is hoisted

(Note: SITREP to include weather and Maritime Traffic Condition.)
6. Monitor distress frequencies (VHF-channel 16, CW-5 khz and SSB-2182 mgz) particularly during adverse/heavy weather condition.
7. Perform other duties as CPCG may direct.

C. Coast Guard Station Commanders:

1. Monitor the weather bulletin through the District Headquarters, HPCG or other sources.
2. Ensure receipt of the weather forecast that are coming from Japan, Taiwan and Guam through CW.
3. Plot the prevailing weather condition/weather forecast for the next 72 hours on the weather board.

4. Display the weather board in a conspicuous area for the benefit of local seafarers. Further, hoist the day signals to indicate the expected velocity of the winds within the next 12-24 hours.
5. Disseminate to all subordinate detachments and local shipping agencies and commercial vessels the latest weather update.
6. Render situation report to HPCG/CGD at intervals as indicated:
 - every 12 hours if PSWS No. 1 is hoisted
 - every 6 hours if PSWS No. 2 is hoisted
 - every 3 hours if PSWS No. 3 or 4 is hoisted
7. Recommend to appropriate authority/ies the denial of departure clearance to a vessel of particular category in accordance with typhoon signal hoisted.
8. Ensure that Master's requests to leave port for purposes of sheltering in a safer area or riding out the storm are put in writing and properly attested to.
9. Ensure that vessels granted approval to leave port for the purposes of sheltering or riding out the storm have disembarked their passengers and cargoes.
10. Monitor distress frequencies (VHF-channel 16, CW-5 khz and SSB-2182 mgz) particularly during adverse/heavy weather condition.
11. Perform other duties as higher headquarters may direct.

D. Shipping Owners/Operators:

1. Ensure that all vessels are properly informed of the weather update, to include the areas where typhoon signals are hoisted.
2. Discourage any vessels movement except for sheltering purposes especially when typhoon signals are hoisted or expected to be hoisted within the area of origin, the route and the destination.
3. Keep track of all weather reports for dissemination purposes as well as monitor all vessels' movement until they reach the port safely.
4. Inform the Coast guard immediately of any unusual incident involving maritime safety such as missing craft and/or loss of contact with any of their vessels.

VIII. RESCISSION CLAUSE:

This Memorandum Circular rescinds MC Nr 04-96 and further update MC No. 03-

IX. EFFECTIVITY:

This Memorandum Circular takes effect immediately.



MANUEL I DE LEON
RADM AFP
Commandant, Philippine Coast Guard