

# Guidance under anti-piracy law



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## Shipping & Transport, Cyprus

The Protection of Cyprus Ships Against Acts of Piracy and Other Unlawful Acts Law 2012 regulates the use of private security contractors on board Cyprus ships.<sup>(1)</sup> It requires contractors providing services to Cyprus ships to be authorised by the Department of Merchant Shipping and sets out the obligations and rights of the ship's master, personnel and other persons on board with regard to ship security.

Articles 70 and 81 of the law empower the minister of transport, communications and works to issue instructions on its implementation and establish the procedures and requirements for the reissue, renewal or extension of certificates issued to private ship security contractors, and to delegate these powers to the Department of Merchant Shipping.

Based on experience gained through implementation of the law to date, the department recently issued instructions to cancel the authorisation of inactive private ship security contractors and to regulate the number of private ship security guards and firearms that contractors may register under the law.

As of January 1 2016, if a calendar year elapses in which a private ship security contractor provides no service to a Cyprus ship, the contractor's certificate will be automatically withdrawn.

The maximum ratio of firearms to guards is two firearms for every guard and there is an overall limit of 400 on the number of firearms that a private ship security contractor can register. Any contractor that has more than 400 firearms registered on its certificate must immediately submit an application to the Department of Merchant Shipping to delete the excess. Contractors within the overall limit, but with a higher than permitted ratio of firearms, must submit an application to delete the excess firearms or to add additional guards. Failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence punishable by up to two years' imprisonment, a fine of up to €20,000 or both, and may also result in the contractor's authorisation being cancelled.

The Department of Merchant Shipping has also announced that it is reviewing the fees payable under the law and that an amended notification will be issued shortly.

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### Endnotes

(1) For further information please see "Anti-piracy law enters into force".

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