



LOSS PREVENTION UPDATE

NORTH / NORTHEAST BRAZIL MARITIME DRUG TRAFFICKING UPDATE

The Club has been advised by our Brazilian correspondent, Brazmar, that **recent developments** highlight an **alarming trend in drug smuggling operations targeting vessels operating in Brazil, particularly in the North and Northeast regions**. These regions, due to their strategic geographical location and growing roles as commodity export hubs, have become **focal points for smugglers**. As shipowners, it is crucial to understand the evolving tactics employed by traffickers and implement stringent measures to safeguard vessels and crew.

EVOLVING THREAT LANDSCAPE

Traditionally, drug smugglers have exploited ports in Southeastern Brazil, employing methods such as concealing narcotics within containers or attaching packages to a vessel's external hull. However, in the North and Northeast, smugglers increasingly target larger bulk carriers, utilising the vessel's deck and void spaces to hide drugs. These methods demand enhanced vigilance and tailored countermeasures.

LEGAL AND OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

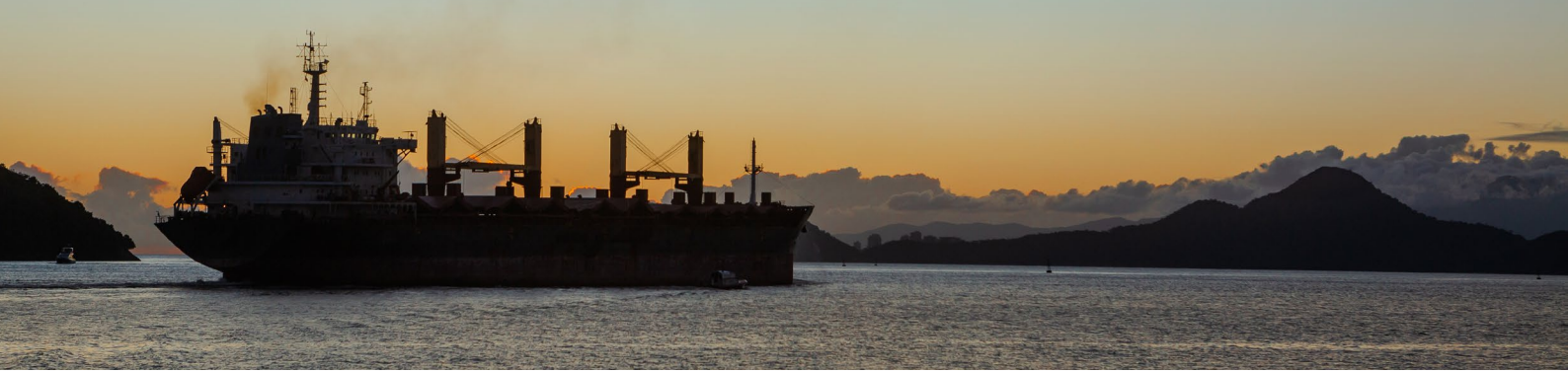
The legal repercussions for drug-related offenses in Brazil are severe, with penalties ranging from 5 to 15 years in prison, extended further for transnational trafficking. When drugs are discovered aboard, especially in locations suggesting potential crew involvement, crew members are often taken ashore for questioning. This can lead to operational delays, crew changes and prolonged investigations under the Federal Police's jurisdiction.

RECOMMENDED SECURITY MEASURES

Shipowners should adopt a proactive approach to mitigate risks associated with drug trafficking. Below are actionable guidelines categorised by operational stages:

BEFORE ARRIVAL

- **Obtain Security Updates:** Stay informed about the latest port security information through local agents or P&I correspondents
- **Crew Awareness:** Conduct comprehensive briefings for the crew on procedures for reporting suspicious activities or drug discoveries
- **Seal Critical Areas:** Secure void spaces and storage rooms with tamper-evident seals and ensure regular rounds to check these seals.



AT ANCHORAGE AND ALONGSIDE

- **Enhanced Vigilance:** Instruct crew to remain alert to small vessels approaching the ship
- **ISPS Code Compliance:** Maintain strict watchkeeping, supplemented by additional lighting as a deterrent
- **Private Security:** Consider hiring onboard security personnel if crew numbers are insufficient to secure the perimeter
- **CCTV Monitoring:** Ensure CCTV systems are operational and actively monitored, providing crucial evidence if drugs are discovered.
- **Access Control:** Secure gangways, pilot ladders, and anchor hawse pipes when not in use, and log all visitors and contractors
- **Regular Inspections:** Include void spaces and similar areas in security patrols to check for tampering.

BEFORE DEPARTURE

- **Thorough Searches:** Conduct detailed searches of potential hiding places, including void spaces, ballast tanks, and storerooms. The searches should be documented for future reference
- **Underwater Inspections:** Arrange hull inspections to check for attached packages or compartments
- **Use of Sniffer Dogs:** Employ trained dogs to search for concealed drugs, especially if suspicious activity is noted.

RESPONSIVE MEASURES IN CASE OF DRUG DISCOVERY

- Notify authorities immediately upon the discovery of drugs, following prior communication with the vessel's owners and P&I Clubs
- Ensure compliance with instructions from local authorities while safeguarding the rights and welfare of the crew.

INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES

Shipowners are encouraged to incorporate industry guidelines, such as the ICS Guidance on Drug Trafficking and the IMO's recommendations, into their Safety Management Systems (SMS). Anti-drug clauses in charter party agreements can further clarify liability allocation between owners and charterers.

The information provided is for guidance only, in particular noting that security situations can change at short notice. Therefore, it is important that Members continue to monitor the current situation closely and always contact their local agent/representative for the latest update prior to arriving in the area. Obtaining advice from the flag state is also recommended.

Furthermore, we would also like to draw attention to the Club's [Guidance on Drug Smuggling Prevention](#) or the [Onboard Security](#) section of its BSafe campaign, which provides general information for our Members operating in areas with an increased security threat.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please do not hesitate to email lossprevention@tindallriley.com.

DISCLAIMER

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