



Loss Prevention Circular No. 02-06

## Navigation through the entrances to the Baltic Sea

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This circular is based on a recent letter received from The Danish Maritime authorities highlighting the increased number of navigational accidents in Danish waters, and Gard's own experience with similar accidents in the same area.

As members and clients are aware, IMO resolution MSC.138 (76) provides recommendations on navigation through the entrances to the Baltic Sea, namely the Great Belt (Route T) and The Sound. The recommendations include the use of pilots for certain types of ships in high traffic density waters. The purpose of IMO resolution MSC 138(76) was to provide those responsible for the operation of ships with recommendations on safe navigation through the entrances of the Baltic Sea with the objectives to ensure safety, prevent human injury or loss of life, and to avoid damage to the environment, in particular the marine environment, and to ships and their cargoes.

In a letter to the International Group of P&I Clubs, the Danish Maritime Authority has drawn the shipping industry's attention to IMO resolution MSC.138 (76) and indicating that a number of ships are disregarding the recommendations. According to a safety study conducted by the Danish Maritime Authority, during the period from 1st January 2002 to 30th June 2005 alone, 22 ships grounded in the Great Belt and none of these ships had a pilot on board at the time.

The Danish Maritime Authority letter illustrates and emphasises that it is highly recommended to utilise the expertise and local knowledge of pilots, and that as a minimum, vessels sailing through the Great Belt or The Sound follow IMO's recommendation on navigation through the entrance of the Baltic Sea.

Denmark has also launched a procedure whereby all vessels entering Danish waters without ordering a pilot in accordance with the IMO recommendation will be contacted in order to draw their attention to the recommendations on the use of pilots. When a ship does not comply, the master will be informed that Denmark finds it inconsistent with safe navigation practices and procedures to neglect an IMO recommendation. These ships will be reported to the maritime authority in the ship's flag state.

The following documents are available at [www.gard.no](http://www.gard.no) under [News](#) in the Loss Prevention section:

- The Danish Maritime Authority Letter.
- IMO resolution MSC.138(76)
- Intertanko model charterparty clauses in recognition and support of IMO res MSC 138(76).

General information on Pilotage in the Baltic can be found at the Baltic Pilotage Authorities Commission website at: <http://www.balticpilotage.com> and <http://www.pilotage.dk>

Vessels to which the IMO recommendations do not apply are advised to navigate with extra caution through the entrances to the Baltic Sea, i.e. the Great Belt (Route T) and The Sound.

A guide to navigation in Danish waters can be found at:  
[http://www.frv.dk/en/ifm/navigation/navigation\\_ntdw.htm](http://www.frv.dk/en/ifm/navigation/navigation_ntdw.htm)

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