



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20593-0001
Staff Symbol: CG-5
Phone: (202) 372- 2613
Fax: (202) 372-2941

COMDTINST 5231.4
20 JUL 2006

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 5231.4

Subj: EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction promulgates responsibility and policy for the facilitation and coordination of technology enabled foreign information exchange initiatives. Encl (1) establishes a unified Coast Guard approach to the exchange of maritime information with foreign governments and will enable a holistic, strategically sound approach to information sharing protocols with key international partners.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders and assistant commandants shall ensure widest dissemination and compliance with this policy. Internet release authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None.
4. BACKGROUND. The Assistant Commandant for Policy and Planning shall develop, in close coordination with other Assistant Commandants, a charter that will establish a cross-matrixed workgroup to carry out the enclosed policy.
5. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. None.
6. FORMS/REPORTS. None.

R. J. PAPP Jr. /s/
Chief of Staff

Encl: (1) Exchange of Information with Foreign Governments Policy Statement

DISTRIBUTION – SDL No. 145

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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

BUILDING NATIONAL MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS
THROUGH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

U.S. COAST GUARD POLICY STATEMENT:

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) is the effective understanding of anything associated with the global maritime domain that could impact the security, safety, economy, or environment of the United States. MDA enables the United States and its partners in the international community to identify and understand threats, assess vulnerabilities, determine potential impacts, and disseminate timely information among homeland security partners. This policy statement addresses how the U.S. Coast Guard will support national MDA by working in cooperation with homeland security partners to exchange information with foreign governments.

As stated in the National Strategy for Maritime Security, the National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness and the U.S. Coast Guard International Strategic Guidance, the Coast Guard requires strong partnerships with members of the international community to counter today's full spectrum of transnational activities and threats. Criminals and terrorists make effective use of sea lines of communication and exploit the many boundaries recognized by the international community. Since awareness for all nations begins in the ports of origin, international partnerships are foundational to MDA and an important step toward improved transparency, greater trust and better decision-making. The Coast Guard is uniquely well-suited to lead a national effort to build worldwide MDA and address global maritime activities in general and threats in particular. A globally synchronized and integrated MDA effort is essential to global stability, security, safety and prosperity and can only be achieved through information exchange arrangements that facilitate automatic information exchange among our regional and global MDA partners.

The Coast Guard will build international partnerships to exchange maritime information with foreign governments, utilizing existing Executive Branch procedures to maximize appropriate information sharing opportunities while safe-guarding Coast Guard missions, resources and personnel. Prioritization of effort and resources will be based on the strategic value of specific information exchange arrangements and the willingness of foreign partners to participate. The content and detail of each information exchange partnership will vary depending on the mutual needs, capabilities and desires of participants. Information exchange partnerships will leverage existing agreements and will to the greatest extent possible allow the Coast Guard to tailor information exchange protocols and controls over time as information requirements develop and change. In general, Coast Guard maritime information exchange arrangements with foreign partners will:

- 1) Increase national awareness of people, cargo, and vessels operating in the maritime domain;
- 2) Increase national awareness of events or conditions in the maritime domain;
- 3) Enable the timely dissemination of maritime information to homeland security partners;

- 4) Facilitate mutual information exchanges with strategic foreign government partners consistent with the required procedures for Foreign Disclosure that govern all such Executive Branch agencies; and
- 5) Ensure appropriate information safeguards protect sensitive information.

Coast Guard efforts, to gather requirements and establish liaisons with foreign governments in order to effect technology enabled information sharing agreements, will be facilitated and coordinated as necessary by the Assistant Commandant for Policy and Planning with direct support from the Assistant Commandant for Command Control, Communications, Computers and Information Technology, the Assistant Commandant for Prevention, the Assistant Commandant for Response, the Assistant Commandant for Intelligence and Criminal Investigations, the Director of International Affairs, the Judge Advocate General, Commander, Atlantic Area, and Commander, Pacific Area.

T.W. Allen /s/
Commandant
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard