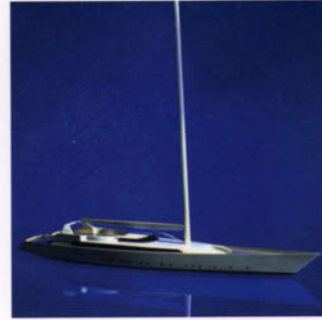


*World*  
**SUPER YACHT**

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# Foreword

Over the last 20 years, the luxury yacht market worldwide has experienced some unprecedented growth. This growth has inevitably put a greater emphasis upon the responsibilities that must be addressed by business leaders in the marine industry.

One of the most pressing of these concerns is the issue of maritime security. The IMO's own concern over this issue has been closely documented of late and increasingly brought to the attention of the yachting community. A 2002 assembly meeting of the IMO agreed to a significant boost to the Organization's technical co-operation programme of £1.5m, to help developing countries address maritime security issues.

This resolution called for a review of the existing international legal and technical measures to prevent and suppress terrorist acts against crafts at sea and in port and to improve security aboard and ashore. The aim is to reduce risks to passengers, crews and port personnel onboard ships and in port areas as well as to vessels and their cargoes. This is an issue discussed at length by Kim E Petersen, executive director of the Maritime Security Council, in this edition of *World Super Yacht*. Petersen addresses the startling new evidence that international terrorists are shifting their sights from aviation to the maritime sector and private yachts in particular. An in-depth look into advisable preventative measures for super yacht owners and crew – including advice regarding security equipment, sailing routes and a greater awareness of shore excursions – makes for essential reading.

In December 2002 another session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), considered new and amended regulations for the industry. These involved the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) chapter XI on Special Measures to Enhance Maritime Safety – the title of which might need to be amended to include maritime security.

Speaking at the end of the conference, IMO Secretary-General William O'Neil told delegates, 'You have also succeeded, through the interest the Conference has generated worldwide, in highlighting and promoting the need for the development of a security consciousness in all that we do to complement IMO's existing objectives of developing a safety culture and an environmental conscience.'

As O'Neil clearly notes, environmental regulation is another vital issue that faces the super yacht industry. Now, more than ever, is the time for each yacht and business owner alike to accept the responsibility to protect and preserve the environmentally diverse – but increasingly fragile – areas of natural beauty accessible only to yacht owners and enjoyed by their passengers and crew. A number of articles within this edition of *World Super Yacht* touch upon these concerns and seek to highlight why environmental awareness must remain at the top of the agenda. ♦



# Maritime security

What is the true terrorist risk to private yachts and what can their owners do to mitigate that risk, asks Kim E Petersen of the Maritime Security Council and SeaSecure LLC.

Intelligence services have recently reported that international terrorists are shifting their sights to the maritime sector.

Ships and seaports are being viewed by terror groups as 'low hanging fruit' in their assessment of targets for their next campaign. Looking at a world map, it becomes strikingly clear that US-declared state sponsors of terrorism are often situated on strategic bodies of water proximate to key shipping lanes or coastal routes. Many are destinations for cruise ships and yachts, offering exotic landfalls on faraway itineraries. If terrorists are prepared to attack naval ships and commercial tankers, it is safe to assume that they will attack large yachts, if the rewards are substantive.

Yachts are designed to announce prestige, glamour, wealth and power. These latter two elements are what conspire to place the occupants at risk. It is the job of the ship's owner and captain to take deliberate and precautionary steps to prepare the yacht in advance of any trip. The owner/captain team needs to perform a security assessment of the planned itinerary coupled with liaising with port authorities, ships' agents and shore staff well in advance of sailing.

## Crew and security

Now, there is the possibility that a would-be crewmember has a political agenda and has deliberately targeted the owner's boat. There are also liability issues, particularly when crew members are responsible for ship navigation and safety duties. Injuries to guests or others on the water could result in claims against the owner for failing to perform due diligence in the hiring process. However, it is possible for the owner's representative to perform background checks and credentials verification of virtually any person of any nationality. While some nationalities are more problematic there are companies that are geared toward providing quick and accurate checks of prospective maritime crew.

Private vessels are rarely adequately staffed. Most crew find themselves handling multiple duties to overcome the shortfall of personnel and security duties are often overlooked. It is not enough to delegate security responsibilities to one or two of the deck crew, and then leave them with little training or substandard equipment. The

smart owner/captain will insist that all crew be designated as security staff, with everyone trained in both threat analysis and the standard operating procedures for the mitigation of perceived threats. This requires that a security plan be drafted for the ship, complete with security duties and responsibilities clearly outlined for all crew. This is not to say that the chef's assistant is going to be fending off pirates on the fantail; but it does mean that the chef's assistant is going to know what steps the yacht will take when transiting high-risk areas for pirates and what to do should an attack occur.

By involving the crew, the owner ensures maximisation of available human assets in the protection of the ship. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the owner to employ a security co-ordinator. This individual would assign patrol and gangway assignments; liaise with port security officials; interview shore excursions vendors; establish contingency plans for each segment of the itinerary; and provide training to the crew and passengers on security and personal safety matters. Security specialists are available full-time and on a contract basis, many with former work histories with security forces. In addition, these specialists often have emergency medical training and double as skilled logisticians, handling everything from air and land transportation arrangements to complex administrative requirements.

## Security equipment

There is a multitude of security equipment available to the yacht designer, with devices intended to act as access controls the most essential. Often, minimal crewing levels make gangway security less than ideal. A deck hand painting a bulkhead and watching access onto the ship might well become distracted and miss someone slipping onboard. Either mechanical or electronic locks should control doorways leading into the ship's interior from the gangway. Cipher locks are keyless and employ a mechanical keypad to disengage the locking mechanism. Favoured by high-security installations, they are also an ideal solution for yachts.

Depending upon the size of the yacht, photo identification badges, tied to an electronic access control system, may be

## SEASecure

3471 North Federal Highway  
Suite 611  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33306 – U.S.A.  
Phone – 954.567.4700 / Fax – 954.567.2511  
[www.seasecure.com](http://www.seasecure.com) / [staff@seasecure.com](mailto:staff@seasecure.com)

appropriate. Such a system is surprisingly simple, with added benefits such as electronic audit trails that afford the captain a detailed log of every access point. This can be especially helpful in controlling access into restricted areas, both preventing unauthorised access and revealing unsuccessful attempts by restricted persons. An additional benefit of such a system is that these badges can often be used to gain egress and access through ports of call. Frequently, the port authority will accept ship-issued photo ID cards.

Other equipment that should be considered is dependent upon the yacht's size and itinerary. Such equipment might include CCTV; intrusion and duress alarms; transom-mounted radar; special deck and overside lighting for protection in port, at anchor and underway in high-risk areas; and communications equipment. The latter should include devices intended to facilitate communications between crew and passengers, including while ashore, as well as ship-to-shore communications that can ensure quick and reliable calls for assistance.

As to whether or not to carry defensive weapons, there is considerable disagreement. If carrying weapons, several concerns must be considered:

- ❖ Is the crew or owner skilled enough to use a weapon?
- ❖ Could the weapons be found and used by unauthorised and perhaps hostile persons?
- ❖ What are the applicable customs' laws at your destination?
- ❖ Have you determined whether the carriage of weapons onboard might place the ship and its owner in violation of foreign law in a port of entry?

There should be a security assessment of the yacht's route. Certain coastal routes are well known for piracy. The Maritime Security Council ([www.maritimesecurity.org](http://www.maritimesecurity.org)), the US Office of Naval Intelligence Threat to Shipping Reports (<http://pollux.nss.nima.mil>) and the International Maritime Bureau ([www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org)) issue summaries of maritime incidents. Details as to incident location, type of vessel attacked, descriptions of the attacker's boats, as well as advice to mariners are all available.

### Shore excursions

Part of every sailing adventure is the excitement of exploring new ports of call. Typically, the ship owner will contract a shore excursion vendor to arrange transportation, guides, entry tickets, restaurants and so forth. While ashore the passengers and crew are often vulnerable. It is important to establish in advance what vendors are available and their performance records. A check with the US or UK embassy or consulate may provide recommendations. Checks should establish whether: they are licensed by the state and/or local government; their guides speak the language of the passengers on tour; the cars or buses to be used up-to-date in their safety inspections and carry first aid kits and mobile phones onboard; drivers trained on secondary and tertiary routes and are familiar with the locations of police stations and consulate buildings; and the guide company receives regular updates from the local police on changing trends in crime and high-risk areas. Special effort should be given to avoid congested tourist areas such as bus parking lots and popular restaurants. Guidance on crime and terrorism can be obtained from the US State Department's website ([www.ds-osac.org](http://www.ds-osac.org)).

### Concluding thoughts

The risk of terrorism is fast evolving and, while attacks against private yachts have recently been limited to piracy and other criminal motivations, it is the consensus within the intelligence community that a super yacht could easily become a target of terrorism. Yachts and their owners have the potential of sailing into terrorists' crosshairs. Security is no longer a luxury for the super yacht community, but rather an imperative that necessitates careful consideration and implementation of physical, personnel and information security efforts. ❖

### Author

Kim E Petersen is the president of SeaSecure LLC and the executive director of the Maritime Security Council. He is the former director of security for Princess Cruises and Renaissance Cruises. He has held senior staff positions with former US Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig.