



AUTORIDAD DEL CANAL DE PANAMÁ
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENCY FOR OPERATIONS

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TO : All Shipping Agents, Owners, and Operators

SUBJECT: Pilot Portable Units for neopanamax vessels

With the opening of the Expanded Canal on June 26, 2016, the Panama Canal has implemented the usage of new and more accurate Pilot Portable Units (PPU) on neopanamax vessels, replacing the AIS based system previously used by Panama Canal pilots. The new PPU system consists of a tablet computer (iPad) and an external Real Time Kinematics (RTK) antenna, which will provide the pilot with a high degree of precision during navigation. The RTK antenna will be installed by Canal officials who board neopanamax vessels scheduled for transit and be removed prior to their departure from Panama Canal waters.

Prior to installing the RTK antenna, Canal officials will measure and certify the proper location for the installation of the antenna, which requires an unobstructed view of the sky, and are generally installed on the bridgewings or the flying deck. The antenna location will be marked with three retro-reflective adhesive labels for future transits.

Since RTK antennas have a limited battery life and require charging while in operation, access to an uninterrupted power source is required during the transit. In order to provide this power source, all neopanamax vessels are required to install a USA standard (NEMA5-5-15R) 120V, AC, 3-prong power receptacle close to the designated RTK antenna location, outside the wheelhouse and close to the designated antenna location in order to prevent the power cable from being slashed and/or ruptured by doors. Canal officials who determine the antenna location will advise the Master as to the best location for the installation of this new power receptacle.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Esteban G. Sáenz
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