



Vietnam Security Report

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Vietnam Report

Over the summer months Allmode Intelligence will be issuing a number of 'Security Reports' that will cover the regions of Southeast Asia. They will outline security based information on different locations across these regions. The purpose of these reports are to aid vessels and their crews with up to date information that will help them build better knowledge of an area and thus improve their situational awareness.

Situational Awareness (SA) is all about having the information you need to make effective decisions. There will always be occasions when people are required to make critical choices – sometimes at a fast pace – and the vast majority of errors that can occur are as a direct result of failure in situational awareness.

For the majority of vessels and crew visiting Southeast Asia, it will be a very familiar sight, however for some it may be their first time and often, as with many locations across the globe, looks can be deceiving and can lull people into a false sense of security.

Intelligence is more than information and news gathering. It is the process by which information is collated, verified, analysed and used to respond effectively to time critical information. Current, historical and creditable intelligence not only tells you what the risks are but projects possible hot spots of criminal activity.

At Allmode we do not outsource intelligence but gain real time situational awareness and speed of reporting by continually developing our product, and getting the time critical information out to our teams and clients. These reports will look into areas such as crime, corruption and political issues within certain areas and offer advice on how to stay safe and in some cases advice on areas to avoid. It will also offer advice on any relevant health advisories to be aware of and travel information for those wishing to travel and tour certain areas or regions.

Vietnam Overview



Vietnam is situated in the centre of the Southeast Asian region, in the eastern part of the Indochina peninsula bordering China to the north, Laos and Cambodia to the west and the East Sea and Pacific to the east and south. Its inland area is 331,688 square kilometres and its population amounts to about 89 million.

Vietnam lies in the tropical and temperate zone and has two seasons – the southwest monsoon from April to September and the northeast monsoon from October to late March or early April.

Vietnam has three climate zones.

The North has four seasons, with a chilly winter (temperatures can drop below 15°C in Hanoi), a hot and wet summer and pleasant spring (March-April) and autumn (October-December) seasons. In the Highlands there is occasional snow in the winter and temperatures up to 40°C in the summer.

In the Central regions the Hai Van pass separates two different weather patterns of the North starting in Langco (hotter in summer and cooler in winter) from the milder conditions South starting in Danang. It is difficult to travel through Central Vietnam between September and February due to North East Monsoon conditions characterised by strong winds, large sea swells and rain. It is usually hot and dry in the summer.

The South has three seasons: hot and dry from March to May/June, rainy between June/July and November; and cool and dry from December to February. April is the hottest month (temperatures of about 33°C during the day). In the rainy season, downpours causing street flooding can occur. Temperatures range from very hot before a rainstorm, to cool afterwards. The best time to visit the south is from December to February when the evenings are cool, with temperatures about 20°.

The local currency is Vietnam Dong (VND), but US dollars are also accepted. To change VND into US dollars, you have to present a flight ticket showing your onward destination.

The two most destructive natural hazards in Vietnam are storms and floods. They occur over a large area as well as in the plains and the coastal zones, which are essential economic centres in Vietnam.

The coastal regions also experience tropical Cyclones. The season usually runs from May to November, but tropical Cyclones can occur outside this period. You should monitor the progress of approaching storms and follow the advice of the local authorities.

According to the report released at the beginning of January 2014 by the National Committee on Criminal Control and Prevention, criminal activity in Vietnam rose in 2013 as a result of increases in cases relating to drugs, human trafficking and other 'social evils'. The report showed 59,000 cases in 2013, increasing 5 per cent from the previous year. The report also pointed out the increase in crimes involving the use of weapons and explosive substances. Moreover, there were 18,000 recorded drugs cases, up 500 cases from the previous year. Authorities also tracked more than 500 human trafficking cases affecting around 1,000 victims. Vietnam is also a destination for illegal rhino horn trafficked from Africa by organised criminal poaching networks.

Petty crime is common in crowded places as well as in the main tourist and shopping areas. Secure your personal items against pickpockets and bag-snatchers. Thieves often use razors to cut the straps or bottoms of bags. Snatchers use motorbikes. There are usually two people and the passenger snatches the victim's mobile phone, camera, necklaces, bags, etc. It is quite dangerous, as they often travel at the same speed and when you have the straps of your bag over your shoulder or around your neck, you can be pulled down or dragged by the strap until it breaks.

It is much better to carry a photocopy of the pages from your passport with your personal details and visa for ID and leave the original document in a safe in the room (offered by many of the better hotels) or in a safety deposit box at the front desk.

Violent attacks against tourists have been reported in towns and popular tourist areas. Some tourists have been attacked while using the services of a motorcycle taxi (xe om). Although sexual assaults are seldom, you should travel with friends and be careful.

Arguments over hotel, restaurant or taxi bills have also happened. Some of them turned violent or abusive. It is recommended to research accommodation before you arrive. Find out about the level of service and costs.

Hotel owners may charge you almost a double. They can also tell customers that a "room" is a few dollars, but the next day they say that the price was for a fan room only and the price for an air-conditioned room is different. If they want you to pay when you check out, insist on writing down the price.

Some restaurants have two menus, one for local people and another one for foreigners. It is advised to learn a few Vietnamese phrases and request the Vietnamese menu. If they are not willing to show you the local menu, it is better to find another place to eat.

Drug use is a serious problem in Vietnam, especially the increasing use of methamphetamine and intravenous drugs. Possession, distribution or manufacturing of drugs are severely punished. Possession of even a small amount of drugs can result in death sentence.

Illegal drugs are available in major cities and are much stronger and of a higher potency than in Europe, so there is a much greater risk of overdose among abusers.

Reduced controls on society and Westernisation has led to an increase in prostitution, drugs and more serious crimes; they are called 'social evils'. The police have imposed midnight closing on bars and clubs for several years now, mainly because of drugs. Crimes like sex offences or fraud can result in very long prison terms or a death sentence. The Vietnamese legal system is not well developed and the standard of prisons is very poor.

Although prostitution is illegal in Vietnam, it is widespread. Prostitutes can be met in many places, including hair salons. Be particularly careful if you want a massage, as many massage salons are just fronts for brothels, and while you can still get only a massage there, the quality may not be very high. The age of consent is 18. In Vietnam, sexual exploitation of women and children can result in penalties up to 20-40 years in prison. Also, be aware that although the epidemic has stabilised, AIDS is still a serious problem in Vietnam.

As a foreign visitor to Vietnam, you are generally not allowed to invite Vietnamese nationals into your hotel room.

Do not take photographs near military installations as the Vietnamese authorities are sensitive about military installations and strategic areas, such as border regions, military camps, bridges, airports, naval dockyards and even train stations. There is a risk of having the memory card removed from your camera or being fined.

Those who want to drive a car or motorcycle must get a Vietnamese driving licence from the Hanoi Department of Public Works and Transportation (telephone: +84 4 3843 5325) or the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Public Works and Transportation (telephone: +84 8 3829 0451 or 0452). Never leave your passport as a deposit to hire vehicles or in place of a fine in the case of a traffic offence.

Crossing the street and driving/riding in traffic in Vietnam are very dangerous and risky. The road system is chaotic and traffic laws are often not followed. There are no open sidewalks and appropriate traffic controls, such as stoplights at all intersections, which poses a security threat for pedestrians and motorists. The standard of driving and vehicle maintenance is poor. Fatal crashes occur frequently. If involved in a traffic accident, you can face criminal charges and you may have to pay compensation to the injured person, even if the injuries are minor. You will get a receipt for any official fine.

If you are injured, local people probably will not call an ambulance because it is not free. You must tell them clearly that you will pay the ambulance fee.

Riding a motorbike can also be dangerous and there are many fatal accidents. It is forbidden to ride on a motorbike without a helmet.

When you choose to travel by taxi, take metered ones from larger firms as they are more reliable. There are many taxi operators and meters are set at different prices. The meter should start at around 8,000 to 20,000 VND. Hotels or restaurants can also book a reputable taxi for you. Always remember to make sure that the driver will use the meter and ask for a price before you get into a taxi. You can usually negotiate the price. If the driver tells you that a given hotel or restaurant is close, do not believe him as he probably tries to take you to his friend's place.

Buses and coaches are often poorly maintained and crashes are quite common. The risk of death or injury on the road increases at night. When travelling by bus, be careful of petty theft. Do not accept offers of free transfers to hotels, because they can be fake.

Rail travel in Vietnam is quite safe, but remember to protect your personal items as there have been reports of personal belongings being stolen while people are asleep on the Sapa to Hanoi train.

Travel is restricted near military installations and some areas of Vietnam are not accessible. Stick to the main routes in rural areas. Unexploded landmines and ordnance constitute a danger in former battlefields, especially in central Vietnam and along the Laos Border, previously traversed by the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Remember that mined areas are often unmarked.

Assume that all rooms, telephones and fax machines may be monitored and all movements and activities may be subject to surveillance by government services. Personal possessions, media and documents kept in hotel rooms or apartments can be searched. Be cautious when discussing sensitive or proprietary information.

Corruption is a big problem in Vietnam. Motorcycle riders can be stopped by a police officer for any reason and fined about USD20 (the average traffic fine should be about USD5-10). Remember that all officers are required to write all traffic violations in their notebook, give you a receipt and pay at the station (not the officer). If you have a mobile phone, threaten to call your embassy. You might find it easier to pay the fine and get on your way.

Immigration officers are also known to take bribes. It is risk-free and acceptable if you do not bribe.

The international monitoring group Transparency International has rated Vietnam as one of the most corrupt nations in Asia.

Human trafficking affects women, men and children in Vietnam. Men and women go abroad to work. Some of them are forced to work in the construction, fishing, agriculture, mining, logging, manufacturing and other sectors, mainly in Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea, Laos, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Japan, and to a lesser extent in China, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, the United Kingdom (UK), the Czech Republic, Cyprus, France, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and elsewhere in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Vietnamese women and children are subjected to sex trafficking throughout Asia, especially in China, Cambodia and Malaysia. Many victims are sold to brothels on the borders of Cambodia, China, and Laos; some are sent to other countries, including Thailand and Malaysia. Some Vietnamese women who travel to China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore or South Korea as part of internationally brokered marriages suffer domestic servitude, forced prostitution or both. Vietnamese and Chinese organised crime networks transport Vietnamese nationals, mostly children, to the UK and Denmark where they have to work on cannabis farms.

Internal trafficking is common as well. Vietnamese women and girls are also trafficked for labour and sex from rural to urban areas, including Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and newly developed urban zones, such as Binh Duong.

China suffers from one of the worst gender imbalances in the world as families prefer male children, which is why men cannot find Chinese brides and therefore Vietnamese women are trafficked to China and forced into marriages. Experts say that this is due to the fact that trafficking is run by illegal gangs and the communities involved are poor and remote. Official data is patchy and likely underestimates the scale of the problem. According to Michael Brosowski, the founder and CEO of Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, Vietnamese girls are sold for up to \$5,000 as brides or to brothels. Since 2007, the Foundation has rescued 71 trafficked women from China.

In northern Vietnam, trafficking has become so acute that communities say they are living in fear.

The political situation in Vietnam is stable. In 2013, Vietnam experienced political unrest that concerned Land Rights activists protesting against unlawful land seizures by the Vietnamese government without equitable compensation. These demonstrations were quite common. A

few times these have resulted in disruption of consulate operations. There were also some peaceful demonstrations as a result of the territorial disputes between Vietnam and China in the South China Sea.

There have been a number of anti-China protests associated with international maritime incidents that took place in May 2014. On 13-15 May 2014, some protests in industrial zones became violent – 2 people were killed and several others injured. You should stay alert and avoid all protests.

Vietnam is not known to accommodate any regional terrorist groups. Some organised criminal elements exist and usually concentrate their activities in the manufacture and distribution of drugs and counterfeit goods, illegal timber trade and Trafficking in Endangered Species (TES) as well as extortion against informal businesses.

Vietnam is also not known to be the target of any international/transnational terrorist groups at this time.

Three major ports in Vietnam are

- **Da Nang Port** – located at the south end of a bay off the Pacific Ocean in east central Vietnam, about 622 kilometres north-northeast of Saigon Port in Ho Chi Min City; it is the third largest commercial port in Vietnam, after the ports of Saigon and Haiphong; the Port consists of two main terminals: Tien Sa Seaport and Song Han Terminal; Tien Sa Seaport has a navigation depth of 11m and can receive 35,000 DWT ships and other kinds of vessels, such as container ships and large cruise ships; the annual capacity for handling cargo through Tien Sa Seaport is about 3-4 million tonnes; the approach to Song Han Terminal is 12 nautical miles long with a navigation depth of 6-7 m; the terminal has five berths along the shore; Da Nang Port has an excellent harbour enclosed to the east by the Tien Sa Peninsula and Cape Da Nang; Da Nang Port is also an industrial city – the major products produced in Da Nang Port's factories are seafood, furniture, household goods and clothing
- **Port of Saigon** – a network of ports in Ho Chi Minh City; the Port is located along the Saigon river, 45 nautical miles from the sea, with the total area of 3,860,000 square kilometres; it includes four areas: Ham Nghi area: 4 km along the right bank of the Saigon river with 3 wharves for domestic vessels, Nha Rong area (old place) along Tau Hu river with 3 wharves for seagoing vessels, Khanh Hoi area 1.25 km in length with 11 wharves for seagoing vessels and fish-market area with 3 wharves and 2 berthing places; its facilities include quayside gantry crane (QC), rubber tyred/rail mounted gantry crane RTG/RMG, harbour mobile crane, crawler crane, rail mounted slewing crane, reach stacker /forklift/toplift, CFS forklift, tugboat, tractor, cargo truck and dozer/trimmer
- **Haiphong Port** – see section 'Haiphong'.

Hanoi



Hanoi is the capital and the second largest city of Vietnam. It lies at the centre of the triangular basin of the Red River. With about 4 million people and an area of 920 square kilometres, the city is the country's centre of economy, politics, culture and society.

The majority of Hanoi's population comprises of ethnic Vietnamese. Other groups include ethnic Chinese or Khmer, Cham and members of some 55 ethno-linguistic groups.

Hanoi is characterised by a warm humid subtropical climate. It has four seasons: fresh, green and cool springs (March-April), hot and humid summers (May-September), fine autumns (September-November), and short, mild winters. Autumn and spring are best seasons to visit Hanoi – the weather is pleasant with milder temperatures. In winter, it is quite cold in Hanoi and the temperatures can fall below 10°C. In summer, the temperature ranges around 28-35°C. Hanoi has high humidity all year round. The rainy season in Hanoi is between May and September.

The best way to visit the city is to take a taxi. If a taxi driver tries to negotiate the price, it means you should probably look for another taxi – remember that reputable taxi companies have meters. Negotiate the fare in advance to avoid unpleasant surprises. Some drivers may pretend to be taxis. They then drive you outside of the city unless you give them your money and valuables. Two recommended taxi companies are Hanoi Group Taxi and Mai Linh.

Like everywhere else in Vietnam, traffic in Hanoi is dominated by a large number of motorbikes, which is why pedestrian traffic can be tough for visitors, particularly in the narrow streets around the Old Quarter. Just move slowly and be careful while crossing the road.

Do not wear flashy jewellery and always protect your valuables from pickpockets, especially in busy markets. Pickpockets (often operating in groups) are well organized and very fast. Thieves on motorbikes, in turn, snatch bags from café tables or phones out of the hands of pedestrians. Do not lose sight of your items or carry your backpack on your back, particularly in crowded areas, like Dong Xuan night market or Hoan Kiem Lake area.

Be careful when you decide to visit Titanic Bar or Phuc Tan Bar near Song Ho River as the area is one of the poorest in Hanoi. When you walk around in the area, people will try to get you into one of the nearby brothels. It is advisable to come by taxi or motorbike

Watch out for money misunderstandings. The denominations are not very clear. 10,000, 100,000 or 500,000. The notes are not distinct – they are not colour or size-coded. Also, do not change more dong than you need, because this currency is not widely used outside Vietnam.

It is important to pay attention to food safety and hygiene precautions in Vietnam. Many birds suffer from a dangerous illness, which is also infectious for humans. Eating chicken or ducks may be risky. You should peel fruits and remove any parts that may be bad for your health. Be aware that the ice cubes are often made of water that has not been boiled.

Clare Arthurs of the BBC News wrote The Hanoi Transport Company has put security guards on the city's buses. Many of them are martial arts experts or ex-commandos which seems to raise the stakes against attempts to trick the ticket collector. The metals business appears to be risky too. A man who used cow fat and paint to pass off a lump of iron as bronze was himself tricked. The buyers paid him, but with counterfeit notes.

Most cruise travellers reach Hanoi via Halong Bay, where most of the large cruise ships anchor. The bay is one of Vietnam's most celebrated attractions, with about 2,000 limestone islands that make up a spectacular natural UNESCO World Heritage site.

Cruise ships dock at a number of different ports in the Hanoi area: Halong Bay, Haiphong and Cai Lan. Most ships dock or are tendered at Halong Bay, about a 3.5-hour drive from Hanoi, because it's one of the deeper ports and a wonderful tourist destination.

Cai Lan is a quite new deep-water port about 10 miles from Halong Bay and two to three hours from Hanoi. It is a busy cargo port serving only a handful of cruise ships and has no passenger amenities.

Haiphong is Vietnam's third largest city and northern Vietnam's most important seaport. The port city is located on the Red River, about 62 miles from Hanoi. It is still used by cruise lines, including Crystal, Oceania and Regent. The ships dock in the container port where there are no tourist attractions or facilities, although there is dining and shopping in Haiphong city. Hanoi is about a 1.5-hour drive from the port.

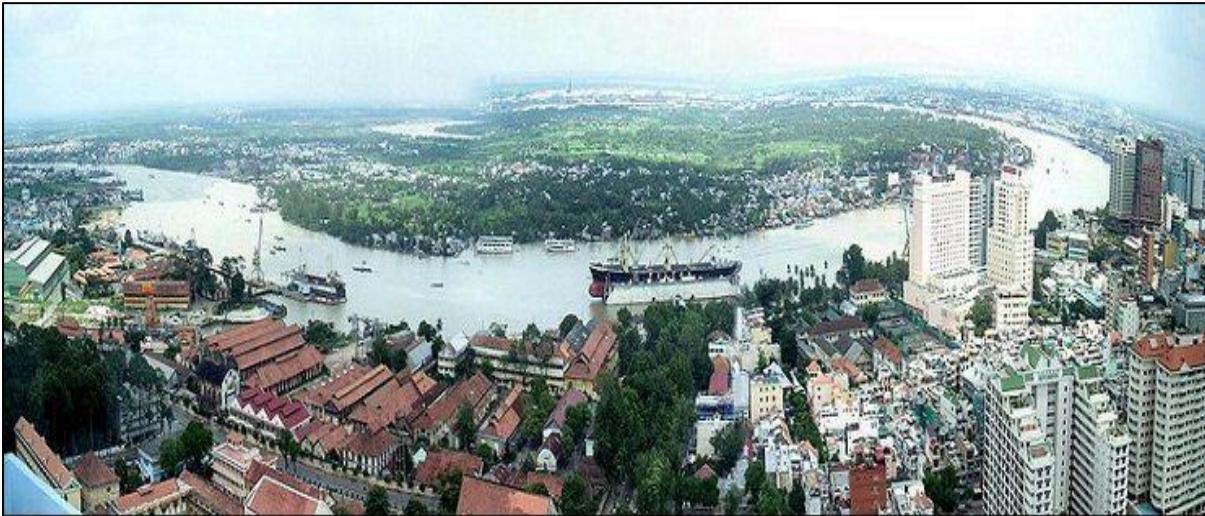
Many large cruise ships anchor in Halong Bay and tenders take passengers on about a 10-minute ride into the tourist town of Bai Chay, where an old car ferry is used to load and unload cruisers.

Bai Chay, which along with nearby Hong Gai is collectively known as Halong Bay City, is the main tourist area for Halong Bay. Turn left from the tender pier and walk about 15 minutes to shop for souvenirs, coffee and other goods at tourist markets. Cafes there offer refreshments, and Internet access can be found at Emotion Cybernet Cafe for about 400 VND per minute. Adjacent "hotel alley" is another source of Internet cafes and Wi-Fi access.

At the Halong Bay commercial pier, a boardwalk offers souvenir stalls, casual cafes and outdoor disco stages.

Remember to check safety standards carefully before taking an overnight boat trip on Halong Bay as boats can sink quickly and without warning.

Ho Chi Minh City



Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), formerly Saigon, is located on the right bank of the Saigon River, in the southeastern region of Vietnam, 1,760 km south of Hanoi. It is the largest city, the greatest port and the commercial and industrial centre of Vietnam. Its total area is more than 2,000 square kilometres and its population is about 8 million.

Ho Chi Minh City lies in the tropics and very close to the sea, so its climate is steadily warm to hot all year round. Temperatures are slightly cooler between December and April, which is also the dry season. Rains begin in May and become heavy between June and August, but the showers are sudden and short. There is a danger of typhoons from July to November. The best time to visit is in the cooler, dry season, between December and April.

Pick-pocketing, snatch and grabs, and petty thefts are the most frequent types of crime in Ho Chi Minh City, most common in the areas visited by foreigners, such as major hotels, tourist sites, and public parks. HCMC is experiencing a steady increase in this type of activity.

Watch out for kids and grannies who can act as lures for thieves, particularly in the bar districts and other popular tourist areas.

Single men are a target for '*taxis girls*' (prostitutes) who circle the streets on their motorbikes at night.

There have been acts of extreme violence in local nightspots, including District 1. Never start any confrontation or argument in a nightclub or on the street and do not get involved in disputes

Traffic in Ho Chi Minh City is horrible and the worst place is the roundabout outside the Ben Thanh Market. There are plenty of motorbikes on the roads and they never stop at a pedestrian crossing. Before you cross the road, a good idea is to see how the locals do it. Move slowly forward and do not make sudden rash movements.

While taking a taxi, be aware that the drivers often try to overcharge passengers. It is recommended to use taxis of two most reputable companies – Vinasun or Mai Linh – and insist on turning on a meter. Keep your luggage next to you. A 10-minute taxi ride usually costs about 70,000 dong.

A common scam in Ho Chi Minh City is the '*Poker Scam*'. A well-dressed man starts a conversation with you. He makes a connection with your home city by telling you his sister is

studying there. He invites you to his house for dinner and tries to involve you in a poker game. Never agree to that as you will lose and have to pay heavily.

Another scam involves the Cyclo drivers present near main tourist spots. A Cyclo is a three-wheeled bicycle taxi. They offer a cheap tour around the city. When the price is agreed, they take you only to some of the places previously offered. At the end, they take you to a small store on a street to have a drink with them. They then ask you to write a recommendation of their services in a notebook and offer to take you back to your hotel. Finally, they tell you they need the payment right there and show you a paper with high new prices. What you should do in this situation is to pay them the amount you agreed at the beginning and find a taxi to get back to your hotel. To check whether a Cyclo driver is honest, ask him to take a photo with you. If he refuses, it means you should not use his services. They operate mainly around the Ben Thanh Market. Also, avoid taking a Cyclo at night and do not walk alone at any time outside Districts One and Three.

Ho Chi Minh City has a lot of big parks. Some of them are quite dangerous to visitors, particularly at night. They are as follows: Gia Dinh Park (Tan Binh District), 23rd September Park (District 1), Hoa Binh Park, Le Thi Rieng Park (District 10) and Phu Lam Park (District 6). They are associated with prostitution, drugs selling, robbery and ambushes.

Phu Quoc



Phu Quoc is the largest island in Vietnam, in the Gulf of Thailand, 12 km south of the Cambodian coast. Together with nearby islands, Phu Quoc is part of Kiên Giang Province – Phu Quoc District. The island covers an area of 593 square kilometres and its population is around 85,000. The district of Phu Quoc includes 21 smaller islets. Duong Dong, which lies on the west coast, is Phu Quoc's capital and the largest town of the island.

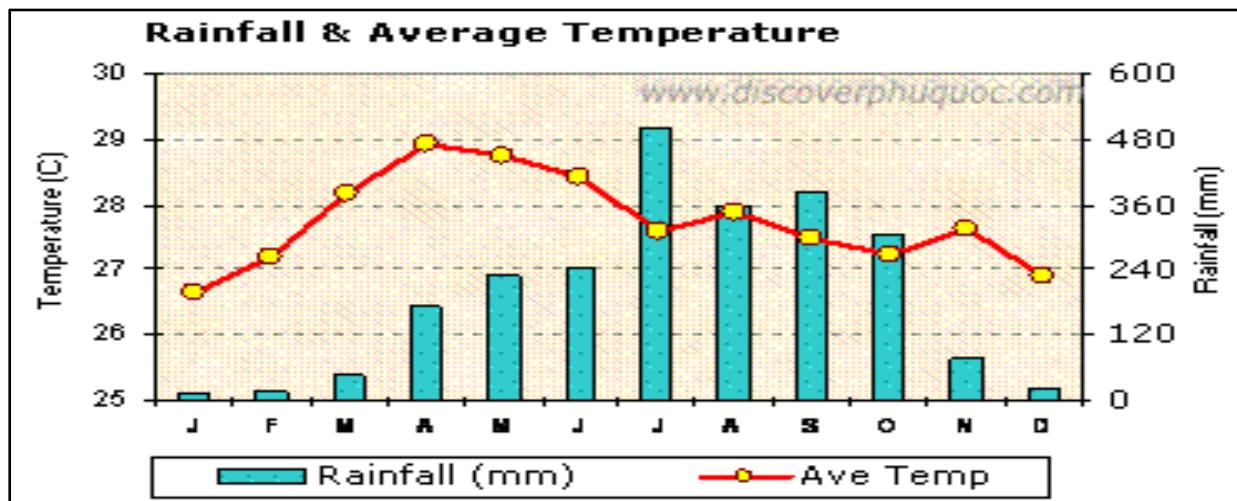
The island is very mountainous, densely forested and surrounded by beautiful beaches. Off the coast of the island there are a group of 105 islands. Some of them are densely inhabited, such as Hon Tre and Kien Hai, 25 km from Rach Gia. Visitors can spend time on the beach or hike and observe the wild animals.

The island's climate is monsoonal and sub-equatorial. It has three seasons:

High Season: between November and March; the daily temperature is usually up to about 31 degrees Celsius. It is generally sunny and the humidity is low throughout the year.

Shoulder Season: between April to June and late October; the temperatures are a bit higher than in the high season and the humidity is about 80-85%.

Low Season: between July and September; the season is dominated by the monsoons. The hottest months are April and May, with the temperature up to 35 °C.



Source: <http://discoverphuquoc.com/climateweather.html>

The economy concentrates on fishing, agriculture and tourism. Phu Quoc is known for fish sauce and black pepper. Fish sauce smells good because it is made from a small fish, ca com, with a high level of protein.

Tourism plays an important role in the economy and the beaches are the main attraction. Other worth-visit places include the Phu Quoc Pearl Farm, Ham Ninh fishing village, Phu Quoc National Park and the island's fish sauce factories. There are some good historical sites, such as National Hero Nguyen Trung Truc's military base, Gia Long King relics from the time he spent on the island and Phu Quoc prison.

The island's best beach, Bai Thom, lies on Phu Quoc's remote north-east corner among dense jungle, whereas Bai Sao, wide and sandy, is closer to the main town, but the journey may not be very comfortable.

Saigon Phu Quoc Resort have their own large boat you can charter from Long Beach. All resorts run tours with charter boats. The cost depends on the number of passengers.

Phu Quoc offers diving in two locations:

- Up north on the western side of the island – there are three main diving locations; their maximum depths are 10m, so they are especially suited to beginners; sites are surrounded by corals and rock formations which offer shelter to a variety of fish and species of Nudibranch
- Down south at An Thoi islands – there are up to 20 different dive sites around a group of 13 islands with depths from 10 m to 40 m; most islands are surrounded by coral. The majority of the islands are slowly being changed into Marine Protected Areas; the south is not as well protected as the northern sites; average visibility during diving is around 7-8 m, but it changes a lot.

The cruising season is between January and December.

The port at Phu Quoc is situated in Duong Dong Harbour. Port of Duong Dong is one of the deep-sea port of Vietnam. Its time zone is GMT+7 and the official currency is VND. The water location of Port of Duong Dong is Gulf of Thailand (Gulf). It has 11 m-12.2 m anchor depth and 9.4 m-10 m oil terminal depth. The shelter of Port of Duong Dong is in good condition.

Phu Quoc Island has many harbours, such as An Thoi and Hon Thom where international and domestic ships anchor.

The port town of An Thoi is located on the south-east coast of Phu Quoc and is the main rival to Duong Dong. An Thoi is popular among divers for its numerous coral reefs and amazing tropical fish. Its waters offer the best scuba diving conditions off Phu Quoc. In the clear sea you can see bamboo sharks, angelfish, scorpion fish, octopuses as well as rare and mysterious dugong - a large marine mammal.

There are ferries and hydrofoils between Phu Quoc to Rach Gia, Ha Tien and Hon Chong. Services generally take about 2:30 hours from Rach Gia and 1:15 hours from Ha Tien. Most vessels dock at An Thoi Port, but some services also dock at Duong Dong Port. Minibuses and motorbike taxis are available when arriving in An Thoi, travelling onto Duong dong, long beach or any of the resorts or hotels on the island.

The An Thoi Islands is a group of 15 islands lying off the south coast of Phu Quoc. They can be visited by chartered boat. The area is good for sightseeing, fishing, swimming and snorkelling. The largest island in the group is Hon Thom (Pineapple Island) – about 3 kilometres in length, with two 100m high hills at its northern and southern tips, its own harbour and native population. It is one of the busiest of the islands and is permanently cloaked with blue fishing boats. It is also very popular with tourists. Other islands include Hon Dua (Coconut Island), Hon Roi (Lamp Island), Hon Vang (Echo Island), Hon May Rut (Cold Cloud Island), the Hon Dams (Shadow Islands), Chan Qui (Yellow Tortoise) and Hon Mong Tay (Short Gun Island).

The best time to travel by sea is the dry season when seas are calm (late October-May). During the monsoon season (June- September), seas are rougher.

Major operators are: Duong Dong Express, Super Dong Hydrofoil, Trameco, Hai Au (Seagull) and Bien Xanh Express.

Some boats run from Ham Ninh port in the east of Phu Quoc to Ha Tien on the mainland (near the Cambodian border). Nonetheless, departures are erratic, especially in the dry season when small boats transfer passengers between the ferry and Ha Tien due to low water levels.

The Border crossing between Cambodia (Kampot) and Ha Tien opened in May 2007, however if entering Vietnam you will need a Vietnamese visa in advance, which are not issued at the border.

From March 2014, foreign tourists can visit the island without a visa for up to 30 days. Visitors from any country arriving to Phu Quoc by cruise ship, do not need a visa for stays of up to 15 days. A passport with at least 45 days' validity is still required.

While going around by rented motorbike, be aware that there are no reliable and updated maps of the island. Therefore, it is advised to stick to the main roads not to get lost.

Nha Trang



Nha Trang is a coastal city and capital of Khanh Hoa province in Vietnam. It is famous for its very clean beaches and excellent scuba diving. It is becoming a popular destination for international Vietnamese and tourists. It also attracts large numbers of backpackers on the Southeast Asia circuit.

The city has about 500,000 inhabitants and is surrounded by mountains and a large island that blocks major storms from potential damage of the city.

Nha Trang has a tropical savannah climate with a dry season (January-August) and a wet season (September-December). The average temperature in Nha Trang is 26 degrees Celsius. It also has the lowest level of humidity in all of Vietnam.

Travellers to Nha Trang need to realise that this is the area where petty crime is common. In large crowds of tourists, pickpockets and purse snatchers can easily operate.

Never leave your belongings on the beach when you go into water and avoid using your mobile phone in public places, as this is a more and more common crime. Moped theft is also fairly common. If you want to rent a moped, be aware that it may get stolen and you will be responsible for it.

Never take rides from motos. They can be thieves, or in some cases, participate in more dangerous activities, such as human trafficking in slavery.

Nha Trang is a stopover for annual yacht races starting in Hong Kong.

Nha Trang is a coastal city and it has developed in marine science with Nha Trang Oceanography Institution. There is also Hon Mun marine protected area – one of four first marine protected area in the world admitted by IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature).

Nha Trang has several famous islands, among others, Hon Tre, Hon Yen, Hon Rua and the Spratly islands. Off Nha Trang lies the Hon Tre Island (Bamboo Island), with a resort operated by the Vinpearl Group. The Vinpearl Cable Car, a gondola lift system, links the mainland to the five-star resort and theme park on Hon Tre Island.

Hon Lao (Monkey Island) – 12°22'16N, 109°12'74E – is close to the mainland and famous for its monkey show with daytime resort ashore. Anchor on the west side of this small island in 2-4 metres to shelter from the south-eastern swell. It is best to head toward the large green Chinese Pagoda on the shore, which will lead you away from low ground immediately west of the island.

The city's main attraction is the sea – warm and clear, with sandy beaches and rocky islands with coral reefs. It is the most popular destination in Vietnam for scuba diving, snorkelling, water sports and sunbathing. Boat trips around the bay and up the Cai River are also popular. The clear visibility of the sea in the sailing season (May-September) has made this area the scuba-diving capital of Vietnam

Although the beach and waterfront in Nha Trang are quite safe in the evenings, do not forget that bag snatching by passing motorbikes is common.

Nha Trang Bay (12° N, 108° E) is among the world's most beautiful bays. The bay's surface is 507 square kilometres. It extends between Cay Cape (north) and Dong Ba Cape (south). Its coastline (103 km) includes two parts: continental and islander.

Port of Nha Trang (12°12'N, 109°13'E) is a small port. Its maximum vessel size is 150 m, tide – 2.0 m, channel depth – 12.5 m, anchorage depth – 15.5 m, cargo pier depth – 12.5 and oil terminal depth – 11.0 m. To cruise the immediate area, you must give the authorities a detailed plan of where you will be sailing during that day, when the office opens and you must be back before it closes. The area should be approached with great caution, as it is encumbered by shallows. A channel leads into the port and visiting boats are normally asked to anchor nearly one mile offshore. Harbour dues are payable in each port of entry you visit.

Haiphong



Haiphong is the third largest city of Vietnam, the most important seaport in northern part of the country and the third most populous city in Vietnam, with a population of around 2 million and a total area of around 1,500 square kilometres. It is located close to Quang Ninh Province to the north, Hai Duong Province to the west and Thai Binh Province to the south; about 100 km from Hanoi and on the way to the Halong Bay.

Since it lies in the vicinity of the East Sea, Haiphong's weather is affected by two types of monsoon. Northeast monsoon in winter (November-April) is dry cold. Southwest humid monsoon in summer runs from May to October. The annual average temperature varies between 23 °C and 24 °C. The annual rainfall is about 1600-1800 mm. The highest humidity (100%) is in July, August and September, whereas the lowest one is observed in December and January. Hurricanes tend to occur between June and September. There are four seasons in Haiphong: spring, summer, autumn and winter. Spring months of February, March and April are the best times to visit Haiphong.

Haiphong is on tourism route: Hanoi – Haiphong – Halong Bay. Do Son Beach, 20 km from Haiphong, is a good place for bathing. Nevertheless, remember that during the monsoon season, the water turns yellow due to the Red River's alluvial sands.

There are daily ferries from the dock on Ben Binh St. for other destinations. The ferry runs from Haiphong to Cat Ba Island several times a day. The hydrofoil boats run between Haiphong – Cat Ba and Haiphong – Hon Gai. The high-speed air-condition Thong Nhat Boat leaves daily from Haiphong to Cat Ba.

Haiphong Port (20°52'N, 106°41'E), on the Cấm River, has the biggest cargo throughput among the ports in northern Vietnam. It offers a deep-water anchorage, large maritime facilities and sufficient infrastructure. It is divided into three main docks: Hoang Dieu (Central terminal) near the city centre, Chua Ve and Dinh Vu. Several ferry terminals connect Haiphong with the nearby Cát Hải and Cát Bà Islands. Ben Binh Ferry terminal lies near the city centre and Dinh Vu Ferry is located on a spit of land on the coast.

Access channel:

Name of channel	Length (km)	Breadth (m)	CD Depth (m)
Lach Huyen	17.5	100	-7.8

Ha Nam	6.3	70	-5.7
Bach Dang	9.2	70	-6.1
Song Cam	9.8	70	-6.1
Total length of access channel	42.8	70	

Handling operation areas provide modern and advanced handling equipment for every kind of cargo.

Seaport	Length	Depth	Quantity	Class
HoangDieu terminal	1.717 m	8.4 m	11 berths	Gen Cargo, bulk, bagged and container
ChuaVe terminal	498 m	8.5 m	3 berths	Gen Cargo / container
TanCang terminal	498 m	8.5 m	3 berths	Gen Cargo / container
Halong bay roadsteads	-	14 m	7 roadsteads	Gen Cargo / container
Bachdang roadsteads	-	7.5 m	3 roadsteads	Gen Cargo / container
Lahna roadsteads	-	14 m	3 roadsteads	Gen Cargo / container

The Port also offers storage and warehouse systems, such as Container Freight Station, General cargo warehouses, Container yard as well as Open storages and cargo yards.

Other facilities include jib crane, floating crane, mobile harbour crane, forklift, electronic weighing bridge, tug boat, quayside gantry crane (QC) and rubber-tired gantry crane (RTG).

In July 2014, Port of Haiphong bought six additional rubber-tired gantry cranes from Terex Port Solutions (TPS). The 12 cranes will begin operating at the end of 2014. There will be 18 cranes altogether in operation from 2015. The cranes have a lifting capacity of 40 tonnes.

Allmode Summary and Advice

The 4th edition of the Malaysian Report concentrated on the news on Malaysia. This edition focuses on Vietnam and the aim is to help create better Situational Awareness (SA) and highlight the risk of visiting a particular location.

According to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (an organisation directly under Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism), 618,588 international visitors arrived in Vietnam in August, increase 9.5% over July and down 8.6% over the same period last year. Total international arrivals in 8 months amounted to 5,471,209, increase 12.2 % over the same period last year.

All travellers are obliged to try to minimise any potential threats in advance and follow some basic rules and advice to avoid dangerous situations. When going out, take only what is absolutely necessary. In the event of being mugged or assaulted, give the criminals what they want and run away as soon as possible to report the incident to the police. Secure your money, documents and valuable items. Also, take care of your bag/backpack. Always stay alert and do not forget you are in a foreign country.

There have been a number of fatal boat accidents in Vietnam. Be aware that safety regulations and standards vary from country to country. Check the safety record and registration of boats as well as the certification of personnel before setting off. Make sure you receive a full safety briefing when joining any boat.

Piracy has also been known to occur in coastal areas off Vietnam. Mariners should be vigilant, reduce opportunities for attacks, establish secure areas on-board and report all incidents to the coastal and flag state authorities.

Health Advisory

Travellers should be aware of the limitations of medical care in Vietnam. Health care in the cities is appropriate for minor injuries. More complicated treatment may require evacuation to another country. Medical care at private clinics is rather expensive. Healthcare in rural areas is very basic. Make sure to have adequate travel health insurance and funds to pay for any medical treatment. Complete the next of kin details in the back of your passport. If you need emergency medical assistance, dial 115 and ask for an ambulance. If you are referred to a medical facility for treatment, you should immediately contact your insurance/medical assistance company.

If you take prescription medication to Vietnam, carry it in your hand-luggage with a copy of the prescription. Some specific medicines can be hard to find in Vietnam and many medications on sale are fake.

Remember that food from street-side vendors can be contaminated and do not drink wine without recognised brand names. There have been deaths caused by fatal levels of methanol in rice wine. Always drink only bottled water.

Since early April 2014, Vietnam has experienced a higher number of measles infections, including cases involving young children with severe symptoms. Make sure your vaccinations are up to date.

There has also been an increase in the number of reported cases of dengue fever in Vietnam.

A small number of people have died from Avian Influenza since January 2014. Although the risk to humans from Avian Influenza is low, it is recommended to avoid visiting live animal markets, poultry farms and other places where you can come into contact with domestic, caged or wild birds. Also, make sure poultry and egg dishes are thoroughly cooked.

Malaria can be found in rural areas in Vietnam, except in the Red River Delta and the coast north of Nha Trang. There are rare cases in the Mekong Delta. There were no reported cases in Da Nang, Haiphong, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Nha Trang and Qui Nhon. To avoid malaria, take a prescription anti-malarial drug, use insect repellent, wear long trousers and sleeves and sleep in well-screened rooms or use bed nets.

Recommended vaccinations:

- Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine and your yearly flu shot
- Hepatitis A – you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in Vietnam, no matter where you are eating or staying
- Typhoid – you can get typhoid through contaminated food or water in Vietnam; CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends this vaccine for most travellers, particularly for those staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas or adventurous eaters

- Japanese Encephalitis – you may need this vaccine if your trip will last more than a month, depending on where you are going in Vietnam and what time of year you are traveling; you should also consider this vaccine if you plan to visit rural areas in Vietnam or will be spending a lot of time outdoors, even for trips shorter than a month; transmission season – year-round with seasonal peaks May–October, especially in the north; highest rates of disease in the northern provinces around Hanoi and north-western and north-eastern provinces bordering China
- Hepatitis B – you can get hepatitis B through sexual contact, contaminated needles and blood products, so CDC recommends this vaccine if you might have sex with a new partner, get a tattoo or piercing or have any medical procedures
- Rabies – it can be found in dogs, bats and other mammals in Vietnam, so CDC recommends this vaccine for travellers involved in outdoor and other activities (such as camping, hiking, biking, adventure travel, and caving) that put them at risk for animal bites; people who are going to work with or around animals (such as veterinarians, wildlife professionals and researchers); people taking long trips or moving to Vietnam; children.

Arrival/Departure Procedures

Clearance

To visit any port, permission must be obtained in advance from a Vietnamese diplomatic mission abroad. You can do it when applying for the visa, but due to the fact that permission must be given by several government departments, the procedure takes time and can be very expensive.

It is advisable to use an agent to arrange the clearance procedures.

When in radio range, call the Port Control and they will issue directions. You may be required to take a pilot on board.

In the event of leaving the boat overnight to travel inland, it is necessary to have a guard posted.

Customs

Firearms must be declared on arrival.

It may be necessary to provide lists of equipment, stores and medical supplies.

If carrying prescription drugs, have a note from a doctor detailing the drugs you are taking.

Animals must be declared on arrival

Visas

You need a visa to enter Vietnam. Make sure you get the correct visa for the purpose and destination of your trip.

You can apply for a visa in the traditional way, by applying in person at a Vietnam Embassy or Consulate, or try the quicker and more convenient way, by applying online before you travel, upon which your visa is issued when you arrive in Vietnam. The Vietnam Immigration Department has implemented this modern electronic system for processing your Vietnam visa (Vietnam business visa or Vietnam tourist visa) upon arrival at international airports in the country. From now on, you can get your Vietnam visa fast and simple without having to send your passport to the Vietnam Embassy. Please note that this system works at the Airports only.

Overstaying your Vietnamese visa without authority is a serious matter and may delay your travel until you pay a fine. Check the visa validity and conditions.

All visitors must hold a passport valid for 6 months.

You may be refused entry into Vietnam if your passport has less than 1 month validity from the date your Vietnamese visa expires.

Nationals of 17 countries are allowed to enter Vietnam without a visa for varying time periods.

In June 2014, it was proposed to extend the visa exemption for tourists from the European Union, the United States, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In August 2014, the Ministry of Tourism put a proposal to the Government to extend the visa exemption for tourists from France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India.

Citizens of Cambodia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand do not require a visa to visit Vietnam for 30 days.

Citizens of the Philippines do not require a visa for 21 days.

Citizens of Denmark, Finland, Japan, Norway, Russia, South Korea and Sweden do not require a visa to visit Vietnam for 15 days.

Citizens of Brunei and Myanmar do not require a visa for 14 days.

Citizens of China do not require a visa to visit Vietnam only if holding normal passports endorsed "For Public Affairs".

All other nationalities will require a visa in advance to visit Vietnam.

Extensions may be available, but must be applied for before the expiry of the existing visa.

The visa or entry permit must be accompanied by a photograph. When clearing in, additional passport photos for each crew member may be required.

Visas are normally issued with the points of both entry and exit from the country specified. This can be altered at an Immigration office in the country.

For security reasons, it is recommended to carry copies of documents when in Vietnam.

Visa on arrival

Holders of an approval letter issued and stamped by the Vietnamese Immigration Department can obtain a visa on arrival for a maximum stay of 1 or 3 months at airports in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City or Da Nang. (use the online service to apply for this and print off before you travel)

The visa on arrival fees 2014:

- One month – single entry USD45
- One month – multiple entry USD65
- Three months – single entry costs the same with one month single entry
- Three months – multiple entry USD95
- Six months – multiple entry USD135

Travellers must be aware that visas on arrival are not valid for border crossings and the official stamp can only be obtained at the three international airports. Therefore, people arriving by land from Cambodia, Laos or China must be in possession of a full visa when they arrive at the border.

The Vietnamese authorities have confirmed they will accept British passports extended by 12 months by British Embassies and Consulates under additional measures put in place in mid-2014.

Fees

Visa cost US\$75 (2009).

Port fees are payable at every port entered and range from US\$400 to US\$800 plus.

You can pay to have a guard for the boat when it is unattended overnight.

Maritime News

On 27 August 2014, representatives of ASEAN countries met to review maritime co-operation and security among regional members at the opening of the 5th ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF-5). Major topics included maritime co-operation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, the management and protection of maritime ecosystem and biodiversity as well as aquatic resources. Director General, Deputy Head of SOM ASEAN Viet Nam, Nguyen Vu Tu said, "Maritime co-operation has increasingly become a priority area among ASEAN member states and between ASEAN and its partners, given the increasingly complicated and unpredictable situation and incidents in regional seas".

On 23 August 2014, an oil tanker exploded while docked at the northern port of Lach Bang in Vietnam. Two people were killed and four others injured. It happened when some crewmen were using a weld torch to repair the vessel. The fire destroyed the tanker, which was carrying 5,000 litres of oil.

On 1 August 2014, at the meeting with Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh in Hanoi, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida Japan has agreed to provide the Vietnamese Coast Guard with six maritime vessels to strengthen and enhance Vietnam's maritime enforcement and surveillance capabilities, especially in the South China Sea. The vessels are worth 500 million yen (\$5 million) and are between 600 to 800 tons.

On 26 May 2014, a Chinese fishing boat, #11209, rammed and sank a Vietnamese fishing ship, DN 90152, with 10 fishermen on board in the Vietnamese territorial waters. All the crewmembers were rescued by other Vietnamese fishing boats.

In April 2014, the first vessel, Xutra Bhum, navigated the new 54-km long channel on the Soai Rap River to Saigon Premier Container Terminal (SPCT) in Hồ Chí Minh City, Vietnam. The channel makes SPCT the deepest Ho Chí Minh City port. With a draft of 9.5 metres, and a tidal rise of up to 3.4 metres, the channel doubles the size of vessels that can access SPCT, allowing Panamax vessels to safely berth 15 km from the city. SPCT can now handle vessels of 50,000 dwt and vessels with 5000 TEU capacity.

On 1 April 2014, Cailan Channel, Vietnam, three robbers in a small boat boarded a grounded container ship and tried to break into the forward stores. Alert duty crew noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. The robbers escaped empty handed.

On 20 January 2014, the Bitu Gulf, previously named the Asphalt Venture, sank in the South China Sea, 42.6 nm southeast of Phan Rang (Vietnam). The Asphalt Venture was hijacked by Somali pirates on September 28th 2010 and held until negotiations secured her release in April 2011.

On 2 December 2013, off Norway Island, Haiphong, Vietnam, robbers boarded, stole ship property and escaped unnoticed from a drifting container vessel. The theft was noticed by the duty crew during routine rounds.

In November 2013, a South Korean container ship, the Heung A Dragon, nearly sank after it collided with the Marshall-Island cargo vessel Eleni off the coast of Vietnam, 2.2 nautical miles off the Vung Tau coast. No casualties were reported. 19 crewmembers on the Heung A Dragon were rescued.

On 8 November 2013, Gas-PVC Phuc Thai Jetty, Go Dau, Vietnam, three armed robbers with a gun and knives boarded a berthed LPG Tanker. The alert crew raised the alarm. The robbers escaped with ship's stores.

In September 2013, a cargo ship transiting to Malaysia collided with a fishing vessel with 16 fishermen aboard, about 50 nautical miles to the south of Vung Tau – a group of seaports, one of the sea transport hubs of Vietnam. The fishing vessel sank. Eight people were rescued.

On 3 September 2013, Vung Tau Anchorage, Vietnam, six robbers disguised as fishermen boarded a chemical tanker at anchor. Duty A/B noticed the robbers and informed bridge. The alarm was raised. The robbers escaped with ship's stores. All crew members were safe.

On 28 August 2013, Cam Pha Anchorage, Vietnam, six robbers boarded an anchored bulk carrier via the anchor chain and hawse pipe by removing the cover and anchor lashing. They stole the ship's properties. Duty officer noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. The robbers escaped with stolen ship stores.

On 21 July 2013, Nha Be Terminal, Vietnam, five robbers armed with knives in a small boat boarded a berthed product tanker Duty A/B, on deck watch, noticed the robbers and informed the duty officer who raised the alarm. The robbers escaped empty handed.

On 17 April 2013, Campha Outer Anchorage, Vietnam, three robbers boarded a bulk carrier. Duty AB noticed them and informed the Master who raised the alarm and alerted the crew. The robbers escaped.

On 9 April 2013, Ho Chi Minh City Port, Vietnam, robbers boarded a bulk carrier at berth. They stole the ship's properties and escaped unnoticed.

On 12 December 2012, Cailan Outer Anchorage, Vietnam, seven robbers boarded an anchored bulk carrier using a hook and a rope. Duty A/B noticed the robbers and informed bridge who raised the alarm. The robbers threatened the duty A/B with knives, broke the forepeak store lock and stole ship's stores. Crewmembers tried to stop the robbers but they threw knives, sticks and iron rod at them and started lowering the stolen stores into their boat. The Master stopped the crew from confronting the robbers as some of them were armed with pistols. The robbers escaped with the stolen stores in a small motor boat.

In April 2012, a Vietnamese ship Truong Hai Star, sank with a 66-container cargo after a collision with a Thai vessel, Krairatch Dignity, in the offshore region of Vung Tau city. All 16 crewmembers aboard the container ship were rescued.

In March 2012, a luxury cruise liner, the Silver Shadow, collided with a container ship off Vietnam. The container vessel suffered some damage. No injuries were reported and the ship finally anchored in Ha Long Bay.

On 27 January 2012, Haiphong anchorage, Vietnam, eight armed robbers with long knives boarded an anchored container ship. They took the duty A/B hostage, forced him into the bosun store and tied him up. The robbers stole ship stores and escaped.

Security Awareness Training

Are your crew compliant with the mandatory STCW 95 modules?

STCW Regulation VI/6 became mandatory on 1st January 2014. This regulation requires all seafarers on ships subject to the ISPS Code to have received security related training and instruction relevant to their assigned duties on-board.

• Proficiency in Security Awareness

ALL seafarers who **do not** have specific security-related duties on board are required to hold a Proficiency in Security Awareness Certificate ([PSA](#)) and will need to take an approved course approx. 4 hours in length.

• Proficiency in Designated Security Duties

All seafarers with **designated** security duties stipulated in the ship security plan will be required to hold a certificate of Proficiency in Designated Security Duties ([PDSD](#)) and will need to take an approved course approximately 10 hours in length.



Are your Crew prepared?

New STCW 95 – proficiency in security awareness & for seafarers with designated security duties.

Course Topics:

- Reporting a security incident
- Security threat procedures
- Enhancement of maritime security through heightened awareness
- Recognition of security risks and threats
- Maintaining security awareness and vigilance
- Maintaining conditions set out in a Ship Security Plan.
- Vessel Security Inspections
- Security equipment and systems.

On 1st January 2014, security training required for seafarers will change.

STCW Regulation VI/6 will enter into force. This regulation requires all seafarers on ships subject to the ISPS Code to have received security related training and instruction relevant to their assigned duties on-board.

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