

## Seafarers risk arrest from using drones

[Sam Chambers](#)

October 8, 2024



HHLA

Seafarers need to be careful deploying drones while in port, even in seemingly friendly, liberal nations.

A new report from Gard, a P&I club, details how a ship's officer of one of its member's vessels was recently arrested, fined and at risk of being deported from Norway for flying his personal drone over a commercial port in Norway, where the vessel was berthed.

Whilst the officer in the above case was a European national, several Russian citizens have also been detained in Norway for flying drones near certain sites, including oil platforms and airports. An individual with dual Russian and British citizenship was jailed for flying a drone on Svalbard.

"Norwegian and other national authorities take these matters very seriously in the current geopolitical climate and a number of foreign nationals have already been deported for flying drones in various locations around Norway," Gard noted in an update to members.

The risks involved in flying and carrying drones' onboard vessels are not new. Back in 2016, a vessel entered with Gard was detained following the launch of a drone to photograph the vessel proceeding through the Suez Canal. In 2022, Gard's local correspondent in Egypt reported an increase in cases where seafarers were being detained for carrying prohibited items, such as drones and other "suspicious" electronic devices, in their luggage when embarking or disembarking ships in the country.

To fly a drone for personal or professional use in Norway, the equipment must be registered and necessary exams taken. Drones must always be flown below 120 m from the ground and the drone must be kept within the controller's line of sight at all times.