

Regulation 23 - Pilot Transfer Arrangements

Summary

- Requirements for pilot boarding arrangements.
- Responsibilities for ship's personnel in rigging pilot transfer equipment.
- Requirements for associated equipment
- Requirements for clear access and lighting.

Regulation 23

1. Application

- 1.1 *Ships engaged on voyages in the course of which pilots may be employed shall be provided with pilot transfer arrangements.*
- 1.2 *Equipment and arrangements for pilot transfer which are installed¹ on or after 1 July 2012 shall comply with the requirements of this regulation, and due regard shall be paid to the standards adopted by the Organization².*
- 1.3 *Except as provided otherwise, equipment and arrangements for pilot transfer which are provided on ships before 1 July 2012 shall at least comply with the requirements of regulation 17³ or 23, as applicable, of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, in force prior to that date, and due regard shall be paid to the standards adopted by the Organization prior to that date.*
- 1.4 *Equipment and arrangements installed on or after 1 July 2012, which are a replacement of equipment and arrangements provided on ships before 1 July 2012, shall, in so far as is reasonable and practicable, comply with the requirements of this regulation.*
- 1.5 *With respect to ships constructed before 1 January 1994, paragraph 5 shall not apply later than the first survey⁴ on or after 1 July 2012*
- 1.6 *Paragraph 6 applies to all ships.*

¹Refer to the Unified interpretation of SOLAS regulation V/23 (MSC.1/Circ.1375).

²Refer to the Recommendation on pilot transfer arrangements, to be adopted by the Organization

³Refer to resolution MSC.99(73), renumbering previous regulation 17 as regulation 23, which entered into force on 1 July 2002.

⁴Refer to the Unified interpretation of the term "first survey" referred to in SOLAS regulations (MSC.1/Circ.1290).

2. General

- 2.1 *All arrangements used for pilot transfer shall efficiently fulfil their purpose of enabling pilots to embark and disembark safely. The appliances shall be kept clean, properly maintained and stowed and shall be regularly inspected to ensure that they are safe to use. They shall be used solely for the embarkation and disembarkation of personnel.*
- 2.2 *The rigging of the pilot transfer arrangements and the embarkation of a pilot shall be supervised by a responsible officer having means of communication with the navigation bridge who shall also arrange for the escort of the pilot by a safe route to and from the navigation bridge. Personnel engaged in rigging and operating any mechanical equipment shall be instructed in the safe procedures to be adopted and the equipment shall be tested prior to use.*

- 2.3** A pilot ladder shall be certified by the manufacturer as complying with this regulation or with an international standard acceptable to the Organization⁵. Ladders shall be inspected in accordance with regulations 1/6, 7 and 8.
- 2.4** All pilot ladders used for pilot transfer shall be clearly identified with tags or other permanent marking so as to enable identification of each appliance for the purposes of survey, inspection and record keeping. A record shall be kept on the ship as to the date the identified ladder is placed into service and any repairs effected.
- 2.5** Reference in this regulation to an accommodation ladder includes a sloping ladder used as part of the pilot transfer arrangements.

⁵Refer to the recommendations by the International Organization for Standardization, in particular publication ISO 799:2004, Ships and marine technology - Pilot ladders.

3. Transfer arrangements

- 3.1** Arrangements shall be provided to enable the pilot to embark and disembark safely on either side of the ship.
- 3.2** In all ships where the distance from sea level to the point of access to, or egress from, the ship exceeds 9 m, and when it is intended to embark and disembark pilots by means of the accommodation ladder⁶, or other equally safe and convenient means in conjunction with a pilot ladder, the ship shall carry such equipment on each side, unless the equipment is capable of being transferred for use on either side.
- 3.3** Safe and convenient access to, and egress from, the ship shall be provided by either:
- 3.3.1** a pilot ladder requiring a climb of not less than 1.5 m and not more than 9 m above the surface of the water so positioned and secured that:
- 3.3.1.1** it is clear of any possible discharges from the ship;
- 3.3.1.2** it is within the parallel body length of the ship and, as far as is practicable, within the mid-ship half length of the ship;
- 3.3.1.3** each step rests firmly against the ship's side; where constructional features, such as rubbing bands, would prevent the implementation of this provision, special arrangements shall, to the satisfaction of the Administration, be made to ensure that persons are able to embark and disembark safely;
- 3.3.1.4** the single length of pilot ladder is capable of reaching the water from the point of access to, or egress from, the ship and due allowance is made for all conditions of loading and trim of the ship, and for an adverse list of 15°; the securing strong point, shackles and securing ropes shall be at least as strong as the side ropes;
- 3.3.2** an accommodation ladder in conjunction with the pilot ladder (i.e. a combination arrangement), or other equally safe and convenient means, whenever the distance from the surface of the water to the point of access to the ship is more than 9 m. The accommodation ladder shall be sited leading aft. When in use, means shall be provided to secure the lower platform of the accommodation ladder to the ship's side, so as to ensure that the lower end of the accommodation ladder and the lower platform are held firmly against the ship's side within the parallel body length of the ship and, as far as is practicable, within the mid-ship half length and clear of all discharges.
- 3.3.2.1** when a combination arrangement is used for pilot access, means shall be provided to secure the pilot ladder and manropes to the ship's side at a point of nominally 1.5m above the bottom platform of the accommodation ladder. In the case of a combination arrangement using an accommodation ladder with a trapdoor in the bottom platform (i.e. embarkation platform), the pilot ladder and man ropes shall be rigged through the trapdoor extending above the platform to the height of the handrail

⁶Refer to regulation II-1/3-9 on Means of embarkation on and disembarkation from ships, adopted by resolution MSC.256(84), together with the associated Guidelines (MSC.1/Circ.1331).

4. Access to the ship's deck

Means shall be provided to ensure safe, convenient and unobstructed passage for any person embarking on, or disembarking from, the ship between the head of the pilot ladder, or of any accommodation ladder or other appliance, and the ship's deck. Where such passage is by means of:

- 4.1** *a gateway in the rails or bulwark, adequate handholds shall be provided;*
- 4.2** *a bulwark ladder, two handhold stanchions rigidly secured to the ship's structure at or near their bases and at higher points shall be fitted. The bulwark ladder shall be securely attached to the ship to prevent overturning.*

5. Shiplside doors

Shiplside doors used for pilot transfer shall not open outwards.

6. Mechanical pilot hoists

Mechanical pilot hoists shall not be used.

7. Associated equipment

7.1 *The following associated equipment shall be kept at hand ready for immediate use when persons are being transferred;*

7.1.1 *two man-ropes of not less than 28 mm and not more than 32 mm in diameter properly secured to the ship if required by the pilot; man-ropes shall be fixed at the rope end to the ring plate fixed on deck and shall be ready for use when the pilot disembarks, or upon request from a pilot approaching to board (the manropes shall reach the height of the stanchions or bulwarks at the point of access to the deck before terminating at the ring plate on deck;*

7.1.2 *a lifebuoy equipped with a self-igniting light;*

7.1.3 *a heaving line.*

7.2 *When required by paragraph 4, stanchions and bulwark ladders shall be provided.*

8. Lighting

Adequate lighting shall be provided to illuminate the transfer arrangements overside, the position on deck where a person embarks or disembarks.

MCA Guidance

1. General

- 1.1** *This Regulation applies to any ship which may employ a pilot (SOLAS Ch V/Reg. 23.1.1) with equipment and arrangements installed on or after 1 July 2012 (23.1.2). It does not apply to: UK ships below 150 GT on any voyage; UK ships below 500 GT not on*

international voyages; or fishing vessels, unless they are likely to employ a pilot. [IMO Resolution A.1045 \(27\)](#) outlines further guidance on applicable standards.

- 1.2 Equipment and arrangements installed before 1 July 2012 may continue to comply with the SOLAS requirements in force before that date, but if it is replaced, the new equipment and arrangements must comply with this Regulation (23.1.3 & 23.1.4).
- 1.3 The arrangements for the embarkation and disembarkation of pilots should also be considered at the design stage, particularly where unusual hull forms or the provision of belting is proposed, to ensure full compliance with the Regulations. Information and guidance on the pilot transfer arrangements is also provided in "ISO 799 Ships & marine technology - Pilot ladders, 3rd edition 2004".

2. Adequate securing of Pilot ladders

- 2.1 Adequate arrangements for securing the pilot ladder should be provided. An arrangement conforming to the Shipbuilding Industry Standard No. SIS 6 or equivalent can be accepted.
- 2.2 A bulwark ladder should comply with the specifications set out in the Shipbuilding Industry Standard No. SIS 7 or be of an equivalent standard.

3. The Pilot ladder

- 3.1 Pilot ladder shall be type-approved to MED standards (European Council Directive 96/98/EC of 20 December 1996 on marine equipment, as amended). MSN 1734, as amended, provides more information on the above. A pilot ladder conforming to BS MA 92 (incorporates ISO 799:2004), can be accepted provided that it meets the Regulation requirements.
- 3.2 Steps and spreaders must be of one piece and made from knot free ash, oak, elm, teak or other hardwood of similar characteristics or of a material of at least equivalent strength, stiffness and durability.

4. Ropes

- 4.1 Use of synthetic fibre ropes is conditional on:
 - (I) it is clear of any possible discharges from the ship;
 - (II) it is within the parallel body length of the ship and, as far as is practicable, within the mid-ship half length of the ship;
 - (III) each step rests firmly against the ship's side; where constructional features, such as rubbing bands, would prevent the implementation of this provision, special arrangements shall, to the satisfaction of the Administration, be made to ensure that persons are able to embark and disembark safely;
 - (IV) the single length of pilot ladder is capable of reaching the water from the point of access to, or egress from, the ship and due allowance is made for all conditions of loading and trim of the ship, and for an adverse list of 15°; the securing strong point, shackles and securing ropes shall be at least as strong as the side ropes;

5. Associated Equipment

- 5.1** *Shipside doors used for pilot transfer shall not open outwards (23-5). With respect to ships constructed before 1 January 1994, this shall apply not later than the first survey on or after 1 July 2012. Where the ladder is rigged adjacent and to the side of a shipside door, in addition to the requirements in (23.4), provision should be made for a platform with stanchions and railings in order that a pilot can safely step sideways and into the ship.*
- 5.2** *Belting should be cut back in the way of the pilot ladder to ensure that the pilot ladder rests firmly against the ship's side throughout its length. Tapered fendering should be fitted underneath the belting immediately forward and abaft the cut-out in the belting to prevent the gunwale of a pilot boat becoming trapped under the belting.*

6. Vessels with large freeboard conditions

- 6.1** *Combination Arrangements; When an accommodation ladder is used in combination with a pilot ladder, the accommodation ladder should comply with the specifications set out in standard BS MA 89: 1980 (incorporates ISO 5488-1979) or be of an equivalent standard.*
- 6.2** *Crew Safety; In order to ensure safety of the crew who may be involved with the set-up and rigging of the pilot transfer arrangement, particularly with a combination arrangement that involves securing of pilot and accommodation ladders overside, a full risk assessment shall be undertaken. As part of mitigation measures in view of the work overside, bespoke personnel security arrangements may have to be deployed to ensure safety of the crew whilst rigging this equipment.*
- 6.3** *Further advice on the above securing arrangements can be obtained from International Marine Pilots' Association (IMPA at <http://www.impahq.org>).*

7. Lighting

- 7.1** *Fixed or portable lights may be used to illuminate the ladder overside. To avoid dazzling the pilot boat crew, lights should shine from abaft the pilot ladder. The deck area in the vicinity of the pilot ladder should also be adequately lit. Spot lighting from the wings of the bridge or other suitable position may be accepted.*

An updated poster entitled "**Required boarding arrangements for pilots**" is contained in [MSC.1/Circ.1428 - Pilot Transfer Arrangements](#) . IMO advises that this poster should be brought to the attention of all concerned with pilot transfer.