

7. Pilotage

7.1 Vessels that require a pilot

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) specifies that, unless a current pilot license with a pilotage area endorsement for the port of Brisbane is held by the master of a ship, pilotage is compulsory for:

- A ship that is 50 metres or more (LOA);
- A vessel towing another vessel where the combined length of the vessels is 50 metres or more;
- A ship whose owner or master asks for the services of a pilot; and
- A ship whose master is directed by the Regional Harbour Master to use the services of a pilot.

7.2 Pilotage area

Refer to Geographical Areas in section [4.1](#)

7.3 Night pilotage

The port of Brisbane is open for pilotage and exempt ship movements 24 hours per day.

7.4 Request for pilot

The requirements of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2016* shall be observed for all bookings. Pilotage services in the port are provided by [Poseidon Sea Pilots](#) on behalf of Maritime Safety Queensland.

7.4.1 Poseidon Sea Pilots

Address: 655 MacArthur Avenue Central, Pinkenba QLD 4008

Postal Address: PO Box 1430, Eagle Farm QLD 4009

Phone: +61 7 3633 4186

Email: psp-operations@poseidonpilots.com.au

Requests for pilotage services are made directly with the provider and are also recorded in the QSHIPS booking system.

7.5 Notice Required

Ships requiring the services of a pilot in the port of Brisbane are required to submit arrival, removal and departure notices no less than the indicated number of hours prior to the desired movement:

Arrivals 48 hours

Removals 24 hours

Departures 24 hours

Initial notification should be made via [QSHIPS](#) – (Queensland shipping information planning system)

7.6 Notification of Arrival

In order to ensure the services of a pilot, masters of ships should confirm their ETA at the pilot boarding ground and maximum draft 24 hours before arrival, or on departure from the previous port whichever is the lesser, and again if necessary eight hours before arrival. Masters of ships should contact VTS by VHF channel 16 two hours prior to arrival at the pilot boarding ground, or after passing Point Lookout when north bound. Pilots are embarked and disembarked by launch.

7.7 Pilot Assignment

Pilots are assigned by the pilotage service provider.

Normally one pilot is assigned for each pilotage task. On occasion a second pilot will be carried for training or assessment purposes. This will only incur one pilotage fee.

For specific operations there is a requirement for an assisting pilot resulting in two pilots being assigned and two fees charges. Large vessels, first time callers and extra-ordinary operations will be risk assessed by the Regional Harbour Master.

7.7.1 2nd Pilot - +300m LOA Container Vessels

When swinging, +300m LOA are required to embark a second pilot. When arriving, the 2nd pilot will embark at the Pilot Boarding Ground (Point Cartwright). When departing, the 2nd pilot may disembark once safe and well clear of the Entrance channel, abeam the rear reciprocal beacon.

7.8 Point Cartwright Anchorage

Mariners are advised that a suggested anchorage for ships waiting at the pilot station for either pilots or orders should use the area to seaward of, from five nautical miles due east to five nautical miles south/east of Point Cartwright. Ships are not permitted to anchor directly on the pilot boarding ground.

7.9 Pilot boarding position

The pilot boarding ground (see appendix 16.2.1) is situated three nautical miles south/east from Point Cartwright latitude 26°43'S, longitude 153°10.5'E.

VTS will coordinate the schedule and sequence of Pilot Boarding Operations, with a preference of embarking inbound vessels first.

The pilot launch will advise the master of the required course and speed to facilitate pilot transfer. Pilots may embark or disembark outside these limits by special arrangement, or when required by VTS.

7.10 Pilot boarding arrangements

Pilot transfer instructions will be advised to the ship prior to the pilot boarding by VTS. The instructions may include:

- Pilot boarding time;
- Restrictions/requirements;
- Boarding position; and

- Pilot boarding/disembarkation sequence.

Ships are to be at the pilot boarding ground at the notified time of pilot boarding, with all preparations for boarding completed in accordance with the instructions in this section.

The pilot launches have the word 'PILOT' in black on either side of the main superstructure and exhibit the standard pilot launch signals.

For Port of Brisbane transfer operations, Ships should be underway, proceeding at ten knots and providing a good lee. The pilot launch will contact the vessel on VHF Channel 14.

7.10.1 Pilot Transfer Safety

MSQ considers the safety of pilots and other personnel boarding underway absolutely critical. Responsibility for safe practices for personnel transfers rests with each person involved in the activity including the ship owners, operators, master and crew, pilotage providers, pilots and pilot boat crew, as well as the person being transferred. All parties should observe both the spirit and intent of the regulations, to ensure safety is not compromised.

The pilot ladder is to be rigged two metres above the water, with two manropes and a heaving line standing by. At night, a forward-facing light is required to illuminate the ladder in accordance with IMO requirements and IMPA recommendations. See [Pilot Boarding Ladder Arrangement](#) and [Pilot transfer arrangements – Marine Notice 04/2023. \(Pilotage - boarding ladder arrangements\)](#).

Where a Pilot suspects that the pilot transfer arrangement provided are unsafe, they should refuse to board the vessel until the matter is resolved and is made safe by the master and crew. If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the pilot, then the movement will be aborted until such time that the Pilot boarding arrangement is made to safe.

Additionally, the matter must be reported immediately to AMSA, Brisbane VTS and the pilot's employer.

7.11 Pilot licences

7.11.1 Pilotage Area Endorsements

A person must hold a current pilot license with a current pilotage area endorsement (relevant to the pilotage area of operation) in order to have the conduct of a ship of 50 metres or more LOA within the pilotage area for Brisbane.

- Pilot licences are valid for a period of five years; and
- Pilotage Area Endorsements (PAE) are valid for a period of two years.

7.11.1.1 Pilotage Area Endorsement Levels

For the purpose of PAEs, the Brisbane Pilotage Area is separated into two separate zone covering below Pelican Banks (Fisherman Island precinct) and above Pelican Banks (Brisbane River berths). Further information, including operational limitations for each PAE, is outlined in the table below.

Level	Above Pelican Banks	Below Pelican Banks
4	vessels up to 160m LOA and 8.5m draft	vessels up to 185m LOA and 10m draft
3	vessels up to 185m LOA and 9.0m draft	vessels up to 200m LOA and 11m draft
2B		vessels up to 230m LOA and 12m draft
2A	vessels up to 185m LOA and over 9.0m draft	
1B		vessels up to 295m LOA and over 12m draft
1A	vessels up to 200m LOA and over 9.0m draft	vessel size limited by Port Procedures
1U	vessel size limited by Port Procedures	

Table 15 – Pilotage Area Endorsement Levels

7.11.2 Cancellation of licences

A licence may be cancelled or suspended when major port changes or developments are taking place. It may also occur where masters fail to comply with port procedures.

7.11.3 Pilotage Exemption Certificates

Pilotage exemptions are issued for a specific vessel conducting a specific operation in a portion of the pilotage area. Application for a pilotage exemption should be made to the Regional Harbour Master's office.

7.12 Pilotage area – navigational data

Passage planning information is available on the [Poseidon Sea Pilots](#) websites. To further assist mariners in compiling and completing navigational passage plans for transit of Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River further details on distances, tide predictions and steaming times can be found in section [15.10 Navigation Data](#) of this manual.

7.13 Pilotage area – marine incidents

It is a requirement of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) that all marine incidents have to be reported to a shipping inspector within 48 hours. (Refer [11.6](#))

7.14 Pilotage delays and cancellations

The following will apply to all piloted vessels when arriving, departing or being removed within the Brisbane pilotage area:

- Delay fees will apply if a vessel departs after her programmed or booked departure time; fees are charged on an hourly basis up to a maximum of two hours after that

time. However, the fee will not be incurred if the departure occurs within the first 30 minutes of the booked departure time;

- If the delay exceeds two hours, then pilotage is deemed to have been cancelled and a full cancellation fee applies; when a cancellation fee is applied then the hourly delay fees are not applicable;
- A delay exceeding two hours may necessitate a rescheduling of the ship, however a delay caused by weather which may affect a vessel's ability to be safely navigated will not constitute a delay for the purpose of this section; and
- Equipment and mechanical failures will constitute a delay and attract a delay fee or cancellation fee as described above.

In determining the delay time the following criteria will be used:

- Inbound – delay fees will be incurred if the pilot boards a vessel more than 30 minutes after the programmed estimated time of arrival of the vessel at the pilot boarding ground or the agreed boarding ground; and
- Outbound or removal – delay fees will be incurred if the vessel departs the berth or anchorage more than 30 minutes after the programmed estimated time of departure. The actual time of departure will be taken as 'last line' or 'anchor aweigh' as these times are recorded in QSHIPS and are the acknowledged and accepted time of departure.

Agents would be aware that some vessels take longer to let go all lines and this fact should be taken into consideration when nominating sailing times.

Full details of the regulations and fees are contained in Schedule 6 Part 2 Division 3 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#).

7.14.1 Pilotage delays – arrival

All ships arriving under pilotage which are held at Brisbane Roads for any reason will be treated as one arrival for the purposes of pilotage fees if the delay is less than four hours (calculated from anchor down to anchor aweigh). A delay in excess of four hours will attract a pilotage removal fee in addition to the arrival pilotage fee, whether the pilot disembarks or not.

7.14.2 Pilotage delays – departure

All ships departing under pilotage which are held at Brisbane Roads for any reason will be treated as one departure for the purpose of pilotage fees if the delay is less than four hours (calculated from anchor down to anchor aweigh). A delay in excess of four hours will attract a pilotage removal fee in addition to the departure pilotage fee, whether the pilot disembarks or not.

If a departing vessel is delayed and anchors at Brisbane Roads for whatever reason and subsequently returns to a berth, then the movements will be charged as two removals.

7.14.3 Pilotage delays – removal

If a ship is required to remove from a berth or outer anchorage and is required to anchor at Brisbane Roads will be treated in the same manner as 7.13.1 and 7.13.2.

7.14.4 Aborted movement due to pilots assessment

Whilst every effort is made to maintain schedule integrity, safe movements are the priority. Once boarded, an allocated pilot may make a further safety assessment which could result in abort movement. This can include ship's ability to safely navigate or weather conditions. An aborted movement will still incur a full pilotage fee.

7.15 Passage planning – Bridge resource management (BRM)

Any passage plan is a basic indication of preferred intention and both pilot and master should be prepared to depart from it when circumstances so dictate. (Refer to [AMSA Marine Notice 07/2021](#)).

7.16 Instrument Navigation – Portable Pilot Units

The use of independent high precision instrument navigation (Portable Pilot Units (PPU)) is mandatory to support all piloted movements within Port of Brisbane. This is to ensure the safe movement of all vessels including passing, swing and docking.

In the event of failure of the PPU, VTS is to be advised and a vessel defect risk assessment for the movement to be conducted.

Vessel movements conducted by local master under Pilotage Exemption are not required to have PPUs.

7.17 Alcohol management

The [Transport Operations \(Road Use Management\) Act 1995](#) section 79 requires that persons in charge of ships have a zero blood alcohol reading. The Queensland water police periodically conduct random breath tests of masters and pilots on ships arriving at Brisbane, or about to depart. Severe penalties apply to infringements.

7.18 Master/pilot responsibilities

Masters and owners of vessels are responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) (the act) and [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) (the Regulation).

When a vessel is under the direction of a pilot, the pilot is responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the act and regulations, however the responsibility of the pilot does not relieve the master and the owner of a vessel of their responsibility.

Arising from these responsibilities is the obligation of persons directing the navigation of vessels to comply with directions of the Regional Harbour Master. VTS is delegated to exercise the relevant functions of the Regional Harbour Master.

7.19 Smoking on the Bridge while under Pilotage

Research continues to confirm and further define the effects of the exposure to environmental Tobacco smoke (Passive Smoking) and case law highlights legal liability and duty of care obligations in relation to passive smoking. The Queensland Government have responded to these developments by the introduction of a total smoking ban in the workplace.

The bridge of a vessel is considered a work place for the pilots and therefore it is requested that no smoking is conducted in the bridge of a vessel whilst under pilotage.