

8. Pilotage

8.1 Vessels that require a pilot

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) specifies that, unless a current Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC) is held by the master of a ship, pilotage is compulsory for:

- a vessel with LOA \geq 50 metres or more
- a vessel towing another vessel where the combined length of the vessels is 50 metres or more
- a vessel whose owner or Master asks for the services of a pilot
- a vessel whose Master is directed by the Regional Harbour Master to use the services of a pilot.

8.2 Pilotage area

Refer to Section 4.2 Pilotage area.

8.3 Night pilotage

Port Alma is open for pilotage and exempt ship movements 24 hours per day.

8.4 Request for pilot

The requirements of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) shall be observed for all bookings. Gladstone Ports Corporation provides a pilotage service for ship arrivals, departures and removals. Pilot transfers are carried out by pilot launch.

Requests for pilotage services are described in QSHIPS booking procedures (see [3.4 – QSHIPS \(Queensland Shipping Information Planning System\)](#)).

8.4.1 Notice required

Ships requiring the services of a pilot at Port Alma 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 the [QSHIPS](#) website.

8.5 Pilot boarding position

The pilot boarding ground is located in position: 23° 24.39'S, 151° 00.96'E.

Ships should make their way to the pilot boarding ground as advised by Gladstone VTS prior to embarking their pilot. (See [Pilot boarding ground \(Port Alma\)](#)).

8.5.1 Pilot boarding arrangements

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

- pilot boarding time
- restrictions/requirements (by the Regional Harbour Master)
- boarding position
- desired course and speed to conduct the transfer.

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. Ships should be underway, proceeding at 6 knots and providing a good lee. The pilot ladder is to be rigged 1.5 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 full compliance with IMO Res A.1045(27) and subsequent amendments.

8.5.2 Pilot launch preparation

Ships pilot ladders must comply with the requirements of SOLAS CH V – Regulation 23 – Pilot Transfer Arrangements Resolution A.1045(27). Ships must complete the Pilot Ladder Checklist (see Section 16.17). The checklist must be submitted to ships agent no later than 12 hours prior to arrival to the pilotage area, as detailed within Section 2.2, Table 1.

8.5.3 Passage planning and bridge resource management (BRM)

The master and pilot should exchange information regarding navigational procedures, local conditions and rules and the ship's characteristics. This information should be a continuous process that generally continues for the duration of the pilotage.

The proposed manoeuvre should be well discussed with the master and any doubts/queries he/she may have should be resolved prior to commencement of pilotage.

The exchange of information should include at least:

- The presentation of a completed standard pilot card (by ship). In addition information should be provided on rate of turn at different speeds, turning circles, stopping distances and, if available other appropriate data.
- General agreement on plans and procedures including contingency plans for the anticipated passage.
- Discussion of any special conditions such as weather, depth of water, tidal currents and marine traffic that may be expected during the passage.
- Discussion of any unusual ship-handling characteristics, machinery difficulties, navigational equipment problems or crew limitations that could affect the operation, handling or safe manoeuvring of the ship.
- Information on berthing arrangements; use, characteristics and numbers of tugs, mooring boats and other external facilities.
- Information on mooring arrangements.
- Confirmation of the language to be used on the bridge (normally English) and with external parties.
- 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 ([Pilotage passage plan](#)).

8.5.4 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 Port Alma, or about to depart. Severe penalties apply to infringements.

8.6 Pilotage requirements for Torres Strait and Great Barrier Reef (GBR)

All merchant vessels 70 metres in length and over and all oil, gas and chemical tankers irrespective of size are required to take a licensed marine pilot when transiting the Torres Strait and Great North East Channel. Pilotage is also required for these vessels transiting the Inner Route from Cape York to Cairns Roads and for transit of Hydrographers Passage.

Significant penalties apply for non-compliance.

Full details can be found in [Marine Order 54](#). Maximum draft for transit is 12.5 metres; vessels with a draft >10 metres will be advised of the required tidal window by the pilotage company.