

10. Work permits

10.1 Request for Permits

In order to be able to perform certain work on ships in the port masters, owners or their agents must first apply for and obtain the necessary permits before that work can proceed. Applications for approval by the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) must be submitted via the QSHIPS program and by fax or email to the relevant authorities; the required terms and conditions are completed by the Regional Harbour Master's office and the agent may then print off the completed permit for passing to the master of the applicable vessel.

Works requiring permits include:

- hot work;
- engine immobilisation;
- bunkering;
- ship to ship/shore transfer operations;
- life boat drills;
- overside work;
- live flare (pyrotechnic) demonstration; and
- Night fuel transfers.

Ship's masters must comply with all requirements specified in the permit.

Table 14 Permit requests

Who	Permit	When	Comments
All ships	Overside work	48 hours prior to arrival	Lodged to NQBPC
All ships	Lifeboat drill	Prior to event	Lodged to the RHM
All ships	Hot work	48 hours prior to arrival	Lodged to wharf operator
All ships	Engine immobilisation	24 hours prior to commencement	Lodged to NQBPC and RHM
All ships	Night fuel transfer	24 hour prior to event	Lodged to NQBPC and RHM

The legend refers to the comments section above:

RHM: Regional Harbour Master

NQBPC: North Queensland Bulk Port Corporation

10.2 Work Permits Description

10.2.1 Immobilisation main engines

Ships may not be immobilised without first obtaining written permission from the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns). Permission may not be given for more than 24 hours during the cyclone season (November to April), or more than 48 hours during the rest of the year.

Ships wishing to immobilise main engines must lodge an application via QSHIPS with the Regional Harbour Master and to the port authority NQBP at least 24 hours prior to the requested immobilisation.

Weipa VTS is to ensure that the duty and allocated marine pilots are advised of any work being carried out to main engines in Weipa.

For any ships that have advised Weipa VTS of maintenance, the escort tug is to remain in the Bell Mouth until the vessel has cleared the channel or the Pilot has dismissed the tug.

10.2.2 Hot work permit

Ships wishing to carry out repairs and any form of metal work, which includes performing hot work, must lodge an application in writing with the berth operator. When granted, masters must comply fully with the requirements of the permit.

10.2.3 Boat drills

Ships wishing to put boats in the water for painting, maintenance purposes or to carry out lifeboat drills, must first obtain clearance from the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns). This clearance is to be obtained by the vessel's agent.

The ship's agent is to lodge an advice via QSHIPS or email to the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

Masters are requested to contact Weipa VTS on VHF channel 16/12 prior to commencement and again on completion of such drills when the boats have been returned on board and secured.

10.2.4 Diving Operations

Diving operations in Weipa should be conducted with the appropriate safety infrastructure relevant to protect against the threat of Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodiles and other marine life, which are known to inhabit the area.

10.2.5 Notification of handling of bulk liquids/Night Fuel Transfer

Under the [*Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995*](#) Maritime Safety Queensland is both the statutory and combat agency for response to all ship sourced oil spills. It is therefore a requirement for owners/agents or masters of vessels to notify MSQ of the intention to load/unload or transfer any form of bulk liquids to, from or between vessels.

Such notification is required on the approved form and is to be lodged with Weipa VTS and NQBPC. For the purposes of this notification, it would be deemed that the liquids will be transferred by pipeline to, from or between vessels.

The operations of bunkering and the pumping of sillage/sludge from vessels, by road, barge or ship transfer, are to be included within this notification.

Masters of vessels conducting bulk liquid transfers, as specified above, are required to notify Weipa VTS on VHF channel 12 of the time of commencement of such transfer/bunkering operation and again the time when the operation is completed.

10.2.6 Gas Free status

A tanker or products carrier will be regarded as non-gas free unless a gas free declaration has been received at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

The declaration must include the following:

- whether the ship is carrying any IMDG class 3 cargo (flammable liquid or gas cargo on board in bulk);
- empty cargo tanks have been washed, vented and are free of hazardous residues;
- the atmosphere in each cargo tank or residue space has been tested with an explosimeter and a zero reading has been obtained;
- slop tanks and pump rooms are free of hazardous residues;
- an explosive gas detector meter is held on board and calibrated correctly;
- a current copy of the ISGOTT manual is held on board; and
- maintain a zero gas reading for the atmosphere in each pump room, cargo tank or residue space.

The declaration should be forwarded to the Regional Harbour Master Cairns and Weipa VTS centre. Once the above requirements have been satisfied the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns), shall determine the ship's gas-free status for movement purposes and forward written confirmation to the agent and the port authority NQBPC as appropriate (see [Gas-free status declaration](#))

The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns), on receipt of the gas-free declaration, will amend QShips to reflect confirmation of gas-free status. This information is recorded and restrictions on movements of the ship with regard to being non-gas free are lifted. Failure to comply may result in the ship being considered non-gas free until an approved industrial chemist has tested the spaces, declared the ship to be gas free and issued a gas free certificate.

10.2.7 Overside maintenance work

For environmental reasons, NQBPC has strict guidelines on the performance of overside maintenance work on ships within the port limits. Ships wishing to undertake overside maintenance work must lodge a request, with NQBPC for permission to undertake overside work. No scraping of the hull is permitted in port waters.