

## 8. Pilotage

### 8.1 General

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:

- i. a ship that is 50 metres or more;
- ii. a vessel towing another vessel where the combined length of the vessels is 50 metres or more;
- iii. a ship whose owner or master asks for the services of a pilot; or
- iv. a ship whose master is directed by the Regional Harbour Master to use the services of a pilot.

A port pilot must be employed for all shipping movements to and from the Lucinda bulk sugar terminal.

The Lucinda pilotage area is the area of—

- (a) waters bounded by an imaginary line drawn—
  - starting at the high-water mark at George Point on Hinchinbrook Island at approximate latitude 18° 29.11' south, longitude 146° 19.50' east
  - then east to latitude 18° 29.11' south, longitude 146° 26.07' east
  - then south to latitude 18° 34.91' south, longitude 146° 26.07' east
  - then west to the high-water mark on the mainland at latitude 18° 34.91' south
  - then by the high-water mark in a northerly direction along the eastern shoreline of the mainland to approximate latitude 18° 31.41' south, longitude 146° 19.87' east
  - then 352° (T) by a straight line to the starting point; and
- (b) the navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters mentioned in paragraph (a).

The Lucinda Compulsory pilotage area is described in Schedule 3 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) as the part of Lucinda pilotage area that is the area of

- (a) Waters bounded by an imaginary line drawn
  - starting at the high water mark at George Point on Hinchinbrook Island at approximate latitude 18° 29.109' south, longitude 146° 19.500' east
  - then east to latitude 18° 29.109' south, longitude 146° 24.300' east
  - then south to latitude 18° 34.909' south, longitude 146° 24.300' east
  - then west to the high water mark on the mainland at latitude 18° 34.909' south
  - then by the high water mark in a northerly direction along the eastern shoreline of the mainland to approximate latitude 18° 31.409' south, longitude 146° 19.870' east
  - then 352°(T) by a straight line returning to the starting point; and

- (b) The navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters in paragraph (a).

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 section 99

*A person must not navigate a ship in a compulsory pilotage area unless the person uses the services of a pilot.*

*Maximum penalty – 200 penalty units*

## 8.2 Pilotage

The port is open for pilotage 24 hours per day.

Pilot boarding is restricted by the ability of the pilot vessel to safely transport a pilot across the sand bar from the inshore wharf. Depending on the pilot vessel in use at the time the height of tide required for the transit over the sand bar may vary.

VTS in conjunction with Pilotage services will provide tidal windows for POB times on request by shipping agents.

### 8.2.1 Request for pilot

The requirements of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) shall be observed for all bookings. Port of Townsville provides a pilotage service for ship arrivals, departures and removals under contractual arrangements with Maritime Safety Queensland. All pilot transfers are carried out by pilot launch. Requests for pilotage services are described in 3.6 QSHIPS (Queensland Shipping Information Planning System) booking procedures.

### 8.2.2 Notice required

Ships requiring the services of a pilot are required to submit arrival, removal and departure notices no less than 48 hours prior to the desired movement.

Updates to the pilot boarding time should be sent at 12 hours and six hours prior to arrival.

## 8.3 Pilot boarding place

Boarding position: Latitude 18° 29·00'S, Longitude 146° 25.00'E approximately 2.8 nautical miles from the berth.

### 8.3.1 Pilot Transfers

Pilot transfer instructions will be given by Townsville VTS to the ship prior to pilot boarding. The instructions shall include:

- a) Pilot boarding time; and
- b) Restrictions/Requirements (by the Regional Harbour Master).

Boarding and disembarkation is generally undertaken with the ship underway proceeding at a Safe speed and providing a good lee.

Pilot transfer instructions from the Pilot vessel may be given to the ship if the Pilot determines the requirement to do so and may include:

- Desired course and speed to conduct the transfer; and
- Stopping of Engines, and so on.

Master must comply if safe to do so and must not obstruct another vessel manoeuvring in the vicinity.

### 8.3.2 Pilot Transfer arrangements

All preparations shall be completed prior to the pilot boarding time; in accordance with the instructions in this section

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 16.6). The checklist must be submitted port duty officer and VTS Townsville at least 24 hours prior to arrival.

Reference should also be made to [Marine Notice 04/2023 Pilot transfer arrangements](#) and [Pilot Boarding Ladder Arrangement](#)

## 8.4 Passage planning – 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 ([Pilotage – Lucinda passage plan](#))
- 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 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.

## 8.5 Master/pilot responsibilities

Masters and owners of vessels are responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) and [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#). When a vessel is under the direction of a pilot, the pilot is responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the Act and Regulation, 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.

### 8.5.1 Fatigue management

Professional pilotage services are maintained for the port. The service is provided on a 24 hour basis but is not an 'on-demand' service. A pilot fatigue management plan is followed to ensure that adequately rested pilots are assigned to ships.

### 8.5.2 Alcohol consumption

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

### 8.5.3 Pilotage delays

A delay fee is payable if the programmed ship movement is delayed for more than 30 minutes but not more than one hour for the first hour. If the ship is delayed for more than one hour but not more than two hours then for each of the first two hours; a delay in excess of two hours constitutes a cancellation. These charges can be found in Schedule 6 Part 2 Division 3 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#).

### 8.5.4 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.