

1. Introduction

1.1 General

Cairns is the principal port in far north Queensland, with regular visits of bulk carriers, tankers and general cargo ships. Regular shipping services have been established to service the small communities in the Gulf of Carpentaria and the Torres Strait.

Cairns is a regular port of call for cruise ships, super yachts and is a base for Royal Australian Navy patrol boats and a large fishing fleet. There are several large marinas catering for super yachts and the Great Barrier Reef tourism industry. A ship building and maintenance industry exists in the port.

Shipping legislation in Queensland is controlled by Maritime Safety Queensland, a government agency of the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

The state of Queensland is divided up into six regions, five of which are controlled by a Regional Harbour Master and the sixth by a manager, all officers of Maritime Safety Queensland who report to the General Manager and under the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#), are responsible for:

- Improving maritime safety for shipping and small craft through regulation and education;
- Minimising vessel sourced waste and providing response to marine pollution;
- Providing essential maritime services such as port pilots and aids to navigation; and
- Encouraging and supporting innovation in the maritime industry.

The limit of Queensland coastal waters is defined by a line three nautical miles seaward of the territorial sea baseline. The arrangements outlined in these procedures apply to the geographical areas gazetted as pilotage areas in Queensland. Pilotage areas have been gazetted around designated ports and maritime areas to ensure the safe and efficient movement of shipping. These areas encompass the approaches, main shipping channel and waters of the port.

Collectively, the Regional Harbour Master and the port authority have responsibility for managing the safe and efficient operation of the port.

MARITIME SAFETY QUEENSLAND ADVISES THAT ESTUARINE CROCODILES ARE PRESENT IN THE WATERS OF THE PORT

1.2 Purpose

This document defines the standard procedures to be followed in the pilotage area of the port. It contains information and guidelines to assist ship's masters, owners, and agents of vessels arriving at and traversing the area. It provides details of the services and the regulations and procedures to be observed.

Nothing in this publication is intended to relieve any vessel, owner, operator, charterer, master, or person directing the movement of a vessel from the consequences of any failure to comply with any applicable law or regulation or of any neglect of precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamanship, or by the special circumstances of the case.

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Information on external agencies (Border Force, Quarantine, Port Authority rules, and REEFREP and so on) is provided as an example only. Readers are strongly recommended to consult their respective web sites for current information.

The latest version of this publication is available on the [Maritime Safety Queensland](#) website.

Any significant updates to the content of these procedures will be promulgated on this site. The [Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited](#) website should be consulted for the latest information on port rules and notices:

Should errors or omissions in this publication be noted, it would be appreciated if advice of these could be forwarded to:

The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns)

Maritime Safety Queensland

Postal address: GPO Box 1787, Cairns Queensland 4870

Phone: +61 7 4052 7400

Fax: +61 7 4052 7451

Email: rhmcairns@msq.qld.gov.au

1.3 Datum

All water depths refer to the lowest astronomical tide height (LAT).

All positions in this manual are in WGS84.

All directions are referenced to true north.

1.4 Definitions

1.4.1 Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority is the Commonwealth authority charged with enhancing efficiency in the delivery of safety and other services to the Australian maritime Industry.

1.4.2 Australian Standard - AS 3846, 2005

AS 3846 refers to the Australian requirements for the transport and handling of dangerous goods in port areas.

1.4.3 Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited

Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited (FNQPCL) (trading as Ports North) is a statutory Queensland-Government owned corporation charged with overseeing the commercial activities in the port, including the maintenance of the port infrastructure.

1.4.4 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRPMA)

Commonwealth authority responsible for the management of the marine park

1.4.5 Length Overall (LOA)

LOA is the extreme length of a vessel.

1.4.6 Lowest astronomical tide (LAT)

This is the zero value from which all tides are measured.

1.4.7 Manager (Pilotage Services)

The person responsible for the service delivery of pilotage services within the region.

1.4.8 Manager (Vessel Traffic Services)

The person responsible for the management of the vessel traffic service (VTS) centre

1.4.9 Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)

The state government agency responsible for the operations of pilotage, pollution protection services, VTS services and the administration of all aspects of vessel registration and marine safety in the state of Queensland.

1.4.10 MASTREP – the Modernised Australian Ship Tracking and Reporting System

The Modernised Australian Ship Tracking and Reporting System (MASTREP) is a ship reporting system designed to contribute to safety of life at sea and is operated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) through the Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC) in Canberra.

1.4.11 Navigation Act

Refers to the [Navigation Act 2012](#).

1.4.12 Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC)

Exemption granted to certain qualified masters who have satisfied the necessary legislative requirements and are authorised to navigate ships in the port pilotage area without a pilot.

1.4.13 Queensland Shipping Information Planning System (QSHIPS)

An internet web-based ship movement booking service that may be accessed by the shipping community.

The program allows port service provider organisations the ability to accept service requests made by shipping agents and streamline ship movement planning by significantly reducing the existing levels of point to point communications that are necessary to ensure a planned ship movement has been adequately resourced with supporting services.

1.4.14 REEFREP

The mandatory [ship reporting system](#) established by IMO Resolution MSC.52(66), amended by Resolution MSC.161(78) and Resolution MSC.315(88) – see Marine Order 63 (Vessel reporting systems) 2015.

1.4.15 Reef VTS

The Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Vessel Traffic Service ([Reef VTS](#)) established by Australia as a means of enhancing navigational safety and environmental protection in Torres Strait and the Great Barrier Reef.

1.4.16 Regional Harbour Master (RHM)

The person authorised to give direction under the relevant provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#).

1.4.17 Sailing time

The actual sailing time is the time of the last line.

1.4.18 Vessel Traffic Service Operator (VTSO)

A person, suitably qualified, delegated by the Regional Harbour Master to monitor the safe movement of vessels and to give direction under the relevant provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#).

1.4.19 Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)

VTS is any service implemented by a competent authority, designed to maximise the safe and efficient movement of water borne traffic.

1.5 Contact information

1.5.1 The Regional Harbour Master

For operational maritime questions, marine incidents, pilotage, buoy moorings and navigation aids please contact the harbour master's office located at:

Physical address: 100–106 Tingira Street, Portsmith Queensland 4870

Postal address: GPO Box 1787, Cairns Queensland 4870

Phone: + 61 7 4052 7400

Cairns VTS phone: 1300 551 899

Fax: + 61 7 4052 7451

Email: rhmcairns@msq.qld.gov.au

1.5.2 Vessel Traffic Services

The VTS centre, (call sign "Cairns VTS" operated by MSQ) is situated at the Regional Harbour Master's office. For ship traffic scheduling, pollution incidents and reporting of defective navigation aids please direct initial enquiries to the VTS centre. The service is provided by MSQ and provides a 24 hour, seven days a week marine operations service to the port community. VTS are contactable on:

VHF radio: VHF channels 12 and 16

Phone: + 61 7 4033 3670

Phone: 1300 551 899

Fax: + 61 7 4052 7460

In the event of an emergency, the VTS centre is the key notification and communications facility that will activate the appropriate response agencies.

Ship traffic movements QSHIPS may be accessed on the website.

1.5.3 Port authority

The primary function of the [Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited](#) under the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*, is to establish, manage and operate effective and efficient facilities and services within the port, while maintaining appropriate levels of safety and security.

Seaports Operations office:

Phone: + 61 7 4051 2558

Fax: + 61 7 4031 2551

Email: seaport.operations@portsnorth.com.au

1.6 Rules and regulations

1.6.1 General

The rules and regulations in the port contribute to the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible handling of shipping traffic.

The international rules of the IMO, such as the SOLAS convention and its amendments (for example the IMDG Code) and state, national and local port authority regulations are in force in the port.

Based on the [Cairns Port Notices](#), the port rules on dangerous substances contain additional, specific regulations for ships carrying dangerous cargoes in the port.

1.6.2 Applicable legislation and regulations

The procedures outlined in this document are designed to include the requirements of the following:

- [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) and [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#);
- [Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995](#) and [Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Regulation 2018](#);
- [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975](#);
- [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (the EPBC Act);
- [The International Maritime Dangerous Goods \(IMDG\) Code](#);
- Australian Standard – AS3846 2005 which defines the standards to be observed by masters, berth operators and consignors involved with the transport and handling of dangerous goods in port areas in Australia;
- [SOLAS XI-2 and the ISPS Code](#) ; and
- Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003 and Regulations.

In addition, they will also complement the procedures of:

- Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited;
- Cairns Regional Council (CRC);
- Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ);
- [Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)
- [Quarantine - Department of Agriculture](#)
- [Customs - Australian Border Force](#)
- [Royal Australian Navy \(RAN\)](#)

As they relate to ship movements within the jurisdiction of the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).