

Port Procedures and Information for Shipping - Port of Cairns

March 2025



Copyright

This publication is protected by the Copyright Act 1968.

© The State of Queensland (Department of Transport and Main Roads) 2024. All rights reserved.

Disclaimer

This publication is provided as a source of information only and the State of Queensland makes no statements, representations or warranties about its accuracy or completeness. To the extent permitted by law, the State of Queensland disclaims all responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within and excludes all liability (including, without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs that may be incurred.



Harbour Master's Direction
Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994
Division 2, Subdivision 1, Sections 88 – 92

I, **Captain David Ferguson**, Regional Harbour Master, Cairns am appointed as harbour master under part 7 of Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994.

Under section 86 of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 a harbour master may give a direction only if the harbour master reasonably considers it necessary to ensure safety. Further, section 86A of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 enables a harbour master to give a general direction that applies to all ship owners, ship masters, ships, other persons or matters.

I am satisfied that it is necessary to issue this direction to ensure marine safety in the Port of Cairns. Sections of the Port Procedures and Information for Shipping – Port of Cairns (https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Shipping) are mandatory and must be complied with.

I DIRECT THAT:

The Port Procedures and Information for Shipping – Port of Cairns must be complied with by all vessels within the Port of Cairns.

Note:

It is an offence to fail to comply with my direction without reasonable excuse. It is also an offence to obstruct a harbour master in the exercise of a power. The maximum penalty is \$20,000 for an individual for each offence. If you fail to comply with my direction, then I may carry out the direction myself, and recover all expenses associated with performing the direction from you as a debt in civil jurisdiction.

Captain David Ferguson

Regional Harbour Master - Cairns

Maritime Safety Queensland

DATED AT CAIRNS THIS 3rd Day of June 2020

Contents

Conte	nts	3
Table	of Figures	10
Table	e of Figures e of Tables for Tables e of amendments Introduction General Purpose Datum Definitions Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Australian Standard - AS 3846, 2005 Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRPMA) Length Overall (LOA) Lowest astronomical tide (LAT) Manager (Pilotage Services) Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) MASTREP – the Modernised Australian Ship Tracking and Reporting Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) MASTREP – the Modernised Australian Ship Tracking and Reporting Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) MASTREP – the Modernised Australian Ship Tracking and Reporting Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) MASTREP – the Modernised Planning System (QSHIPS) REEFREP Reef VTS Reef VTS Regional Harbour Master (RHM) Sailing time Vessel Traffic Service Operator (VTSO) Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Contact information The Regional Harbour Master	
Table	of amendments	11
1.	Introduction	12
1.1	General	12
1.2	Purpose	12
1.3	Datum	13
1.4	Definitions	13
1.4.1	Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)	13
1.4.2	Australian Standard - AS 3846, 2005	14
1.4.3	Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited	14
1.4.4	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRPMA)	14
1.4.5	Length Overall (LOA)	14
1.4.6	Lowest astronomical tide (LAT)	14
1.4.7	Manager (Pilotage Services)	14
1.4.8	Manager (Vessel Traffic Services)	14
1.4.9	Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)	14
1.4.10	MASTREP – the Modernised Australian Ship Tracking and Reporting	
System	n 14	
1.4.11	Navigation Act	14
1.4.12	Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC)	15
1.4.13	Queensland Shipping Information Planning System (QSHIPS)	15
1.4.14	REEFREP	15
1.4.15	Reef VTS	15
1.4.16	Regional Harbour Master (RHM)	15
1.4.17	Sailing time	15
1.4.18	Vessel Traffic Service Operator (VTSO)	15
1.4.19	Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)	15
1.5	Contact information	16
1.5.1	The Regional Harbour Master	16
1.5.2	Vessel Traffic Services	16
1.5.3	Port authority	16
1.6	Rules and regulations	17

1.6.1	General	17
1.6.2	Applicable legislation and regulations	17
2.	Arrival and departure procedures	18
2.1	General	18
2.2	Arrival check list	18
2.3	Departure check list	18
2.4	Quarantine	19
2.4.1	Ballast water information	19
2.5	Customs	20
2.5.1	Customs – yacht arrivals	20
2.6	MASTREP Reporting	20
2.7	Reef user guide	21
2.8	Security	21
3.	Movement notification and traffic procedures	22
3.1	General	22
3.2	Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)	22
3.2.1	Cairns VTS area	23
3.2.2	VTS Role	24
3.2.3	VTS Communications	24
3.2.4	Language	24
3.2.5	Voice recordings	25
3.3	Distress and emergency	25
3.4	QSHIPS (Queensland Shipping Information Planning System)	25
3.5	Booking a vessel movement	25
3.6	Passenger ship bookings	26
3.6.1	Passenger ship assessment	26
3.6.2	Passenger ship tender operations	26
3.6.3	Passenger ship pilot boarding times	26
3.7	Reporting defects	27
3.7.1	Reporting Requirements – arrival reporting requirements	27
3.7.2	Departure and removal reporting requirements	28
3.8	Removals (Warping)	29
3.8.1	Dead ship removals	30
3.9	Tug and tow requirements	30
3.9.1	Operational conditions	30
3.9.2	Notification	31
3.10	Movement scheduling	31

3.10.1	Confirmation of schedules	31
3.10.2	Schedule changes	31
3.10.3	Ship movements priorities	31
3.11	Movement clearance notification	32
3.11.1	Recreational vessels reporting	32
3.12	Master/pilot responsibilities	33
4.	Port Description	34
4.1	General Information	34
4.2	Pilotage area	34
4.3	Load lines	34
4.4	Maximum vessel size	34
4.5	Trim requirements	34
4.6	Time zone	35
4.7	Working hours	35
4.8	Charts and books	35
4.9	Shipping announcements	35
4.9.1	Notices to Mariners	35
5.	Port Infrastructure	36
5.1	Berth channel and swing basin information	36
5.1.1	Berth headings	37
5.2	Leading lights and beacons	38
5.2.1	Beacons – entrance channel	38
5.2.2	Leading lights – entrance channel	39
5.2.3	Trinity Inlet – harbour beacons	39
5.2.4	Trinity Inlet – harbour leads	39
5.2.5	Trinity Inlet – Eastern arm	40
5.2.6	Smiths Creek – beacons	40
5.3	Anchorage conditions	40
5.4	Anchorage areas	40
5.4.1	Anchorages inside the pilotage area	41
5.4.2	Harbour anchorages	41
5.4.3	Area Foxtrot Outer anchorage	41
5.4.3 5.4.4	Area Foxtrot Outer anchorage Area Golf Magazine Creek anchorage	41 42
	•	

6.	Weather information	43
6.1	General	43
6.1.1	Extreme Weather Contingency Plan	43
6.2	Tidal information	43
6.2.1	Tide boards/gauges	43
6.2.2	Tidal information – tsunami effects	43
6.3	Water density	44
7.	Port navigation and movement restrictions	45
7.1	General	45
7.2	Speed	45
7.3	Movement restrictions	45
7.3.1	Under keel clearance	45
7.3.2	Static under keel clearance (SUKC)	46
7.3.3	Tidal Windows	46
7.3.4	Ebb tide departures	46
7.3.5	Maximum draft departures	46
7.3.6	Berth number 12 restrictions	46
7.3.7	Passing restrictions	47
7.3.8	Non gas-free (NGF) tanker restrictions	47
7.3.9	Tidal restrictions	47
7.3.10	Slack water	47
7.3.11	Dead ship movements	47
7.3.12	Dynamic positioning equipped vessels	48
7.3.13	Berth number 10 (fuel berth) restrictions	48
7.3.14	Tropical Reef Shipyard	48
7.3.15	Part Loaded Tankers	48
7.3.16	Tug and barge operations	49
7.3.17	Marlin Marina	49
7.4	Smiths Creek	49
7.4.1	Passing restrictions	49
7.4.2	Vessel Restrictions	50
7.4.3	Tug and barge restrictions	50
7.4.4	Tidal restrictions	51
7.5	Advisory Note – Interaction with Marine Mammals	51
8.	Pilotage	53
8.1	Vessels that require a pilot	53

8.1.1	Approaches to the pilot boarding ground			
8.1.2	Night pilotage	53		
8.1.3	Request for pilot	53		
8.1.4	Notice required	53		
8.1.5	Pilotage transit times	54		
8.1.6	Exception from Smiths Creek Pilotage	54		
8.1.7	Personal Pilot Unit (PPU)	54		
8.2	Pilotage area	54		
8.2.1	Pilot boarding places	54		
8.2.2	Pilot boarding arrangements	55		
8.2.3	Pilot /Personnel Transfer Safety	55		
8.2.4	Passage Planning	55		
8.2.5	Pilotage delays and cancellations	56		
8.2.6	Alcohol management	56		
8.3	Pilot licences, pilotage area endorsements and exemption from pilotage			
licence	es	56		
8.3.1	Examination for pilotage exemption area endorsement	56		
8.3.2	Cancellation of licences	56		
9.	Tugs	57		
9.1	Tug information	57		
9.2	Tug usage requirements	57		
9.2.1	Arrivals (stemming tide at berth)	58		
9.2.2	Departures (stemming tide at berth)	58		
9.3	Request for Tug Reduction	58		
9.4	Vessels with advanced manoeuvring characteristics.	59		
9.4.1	Arrivals (stemming tide at berth)	59		
9.4.2	Departures (stemming tide at berth)	59		
9.5	Part Loaded Tankers	60		
9.6	Additional Information	61		
9.6.1	Vessels turning in Crystal Swing Basin	61		
9.6.2	Bow and stern thrusters	61		
9.6.3	Tug Availability	61		
10.	Work Permits	62		
10.1	General	62		
10.1.1	Diving Operations	63		
10.2	Work Permits Description	63		
10.2.1	Immobilisation Main Engines	63		

10.2.2	Hot Work Permit	64
10.2.3	Boat Drills	64
10.2.4	Engine Trials	64
10.2.5	Notification of Handling of Bulk Liquids/Night Fuel Transfers	64
10.2.6	Gas-Free Status	65
10.2.7	Overside Maintenance Work	65
10.3	Maintenance – marina	66
11.	Dangerous cargo	67
11.1	General	67
11.1.1	Notification	67
11.1.2	Dangerous Cargo Limits	68
11.1.3	Dangerous Cargo Events	68
12.	Emergency, pollution, marine incidents	69
12.1	Emergency Contact Numbers	69
12.2	Authorities	69
12.3	Fire	69
12.3.1	Wharf/Marina Evacuation Plan	70
12.3.2	Emergency Plans	70
12.4	Marine Pollution	70
12.4.1	Reporting	70
12.5	Marine Incidents	71
12.5.1	Procedures subsequent to serious Marine Incidents	71
12.5.2	Marine Incident Reporting – Maritime Safety Queensland	71
12.5.3	Marine Incident Reporting – Australian Maritime Safety Authority	72
12.5.4	GBRMPA Incident Report Form	73
12.5.5	Environmental Incident Reporting	73
12.6	Port Community Responsibilities	73
13.	Security	74
13.1	General	74
13.1.1	Security Levels	75
13.1.2	Maritime Security Zones	75
13.1.3	Security measures	76
13.1.4	Reporting of incidents	76
13.1.5	Refuse ship entry – no International Ship Security Certificate	76
13.1.6	Shore access to ships and port facilities	76
13.1.7	Port Security Contacts	76

13.2	National Security	76
14.	Port State Control in Australia	77
15.	Port Services	78
15.1	Bunkering	78
15.2	Fresh Water	78
15.3	Waste	78
15.3.1	Waste – Quarantine	78
15.4	Electric Power	78
15.5	Miscellaneous Contacts	79
15.6	Shipping Agencies	79
16.	Appendices	81
16.1	Port of Cairns Pilotage Plans	82
16.2	Port of Cairns Pilotage Plans Reverse and Pilot boarding grounds	83
16.3	Cairns Berth Layout (North)	84
16.4	Port and Pilotage Areas	85
16.5	Cairns Berth Layout (South)	86
16.6	Smith's Creek and Trinity Inlet	87
16.7	Smith's Creek and Trinity Inlet Reverse	88
16.8	Gas-free status declaration	89
16.9	Example – Chemist's Certificate of Compliance	90
16.10	Permission to Immobilise Main Engines (at berth or anchor)	91
16.11	Application for Reduction in Tugs	92
16.12	Cairns Vessel Traffic Service Area	93

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Minimum approach distances and maximum speeds within proximity to whales and dolphins.		
Table of Tables		
Table 1 Arrival check list	18	
Table 2 Departure check list	19	
Table 3 VTS communications	24	
Table 4 Inbound reporting requirements	28	
Table 5 Outbound reporting requirements	29	
Table 6 Berth information	37	
Table 7 Berth information	37	
Table 8 Entrance Channel navigation aids	38	
Table 9 Aids to navigation, Trinity Inlet	39	
Table 10 Aids to navigation, Smiths Creek	40	
Table 11 Anchorage areas outside pilotage areas	40	
Table 12 Anchorage areas inside pilotage areas	41	
Table 13 Speed limits	45	
Table 14 Under keel clearances (pilotage area)	46	
Table 15 Pilot boarding places	54	
Table 16 Tugs	57	
Table 17 Svitzer Australia contact details	57	
Table 18 Tug requirement for arriving vessels	58	
Table 19 Tugs required by departing vessels (stemming tide at berth)	58	
Table 20 Arrivals (stemming tide at berth)	59	
Table 21 Departures (stemming tide at berth)	60	
Table 22 Permit requests	63	
Table 23 Dangerous goods notification	68	
Table 24 Emergency contact details	69	
Table 25 Miscellaneous contacts	79	
Table 26 Shipping agencies	80	

Table of amendments

If you have any questions regarding this document or if you have a suggestion for improvements, please contact:

Regional Harbour Master (Cairns)

Phone: +61 7 4052 7400

Revision date	Page number or section	Summary of changes	Approved by
March 2022		New Issue	Regional Harbour Master
July 2022	Section 3.2	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master
October 2022	Section 3.2, 7.3.7, 7.4.2, 7.4.4 and 9.4.2	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master
December 2022	Section 1.5.2, 3.3, 12.1, and 16.10	Contact information updated	Regional Harbour Master
December 2022	Section 16.13	Information updated/added	Regional Harbour Master
February 2023	Entire Document	Amending broken links and correcting outdated corporate forms. Correction of numbering.	Regional Harbour Master
March 2023	Sections 61.1, 16.2, 16.5	Update Passage Plan- Channel centre line	Regional Harbour Master
April 2023	Section 3.6.1, 9.2	Information updated/added	Regional Harbour Master
June 2023	Section 7.5, 8.2.2	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master
August 2023	Section 10.1 Table	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master
February 2024	Section 7.3.1, 8.2.2, 8.2.3, 9	New section; updated section; new section; updated section	Regional Harbour Master
July 2024	Section 2.7, 9.22	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master
September 2024	Section 9.2.1, 9.2.2	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master
October 2024	Section 9.4.2	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master
February 2025	Section 7.3.13, 9.4	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master
March 2025	Section 7.3.17	Information updated	Regional Harbour Master