

4. Port description

4.1 General

Townsville is Queensland's third largest commercial port, situated 1,360 kilometres north of Brisbane and is adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The port is managed by the Port of Townsville Limited, a statutory Queensland-Government owned Corporation, who maintain the dredging, security, berth infrastructure at the port. There are eight operational berths including a tanker berth, and all operate 24 hours a day seven days a week.

4.2 Townsville Pilotage Area

The pilotage area ([section 16.2](#)) is described in Schedule 2 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) as the area of:

- a) Waters bounded by an imaginary line:
 - starting at the high-water mark on the northern extremity of Cape Cleveland
 - then in a north-westerly direction to latitude 19° 04.909' south, longitude 146° 52.070' east
 - then west to latitude 19° 04.909' south, longitude 146° 45.070' east
 - then south to the high-water mark on the mainland at longitude 146° 45.070' east
 - then by the high-water mark along the shoreline of the mainland to the starting point; and
- (b) the navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters mentioned in paragraph (a).

4.3 Townsville Compulsory Pilotage Area

The Compulsory pilotage area ([section 16.1](#)) is described in Schedule 3 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) as the area of:

- a) Waters bounded by an imaginary line:
 - starting at the high-water mark on the northern extremity of Cape Cleveland
 - then in a south-westerly direction to latitude 19° 13.599' south, longitude 146° 54.300' east
 - then west to latitude 19° 13.539' south, longitude 146° 51.450' east
 - then in a north-easterly direction to latitude 19° 11.789' south, longitude 146° 52.750' east
 - then in a north-easterly direction to latitude 19° 06.949' south, longitude 146° 55.050' east
 - then in a north-westerly direction to latitude 19° 04.909' south, longitude 146° 52.070' east
 - then west to latitude 19° 04.909' south, longitude 146° 45.070' east
 - then south to the high-water mark on the mainland at longitude 146° 45.070' east
 - then by the high-water mark along the shoreline of the mainland to the starting point; and

- b) the navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters referred to 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.

4.4 Load lines

Townsville is in the tropical load line zone

4.5 Maximum vessel size

The maximum size of ships visiting the Port of Townsville is limited by the width and depth of the Platypus and Sea channels. The maximum size of a ship for the port are:

Length overall: 306 metres

Extreme Beam: 43.0 metres

Maximum Draft: 13.1 metres *

Note: The design depth of the channel is 12.5 metres but may be less between scheduled dredging. Consult the [Notices to Mariners](#) for the latest port depth information.

** All ships must comply with the minimum under keel clearance rules for the port – refer section 7.7 Draught restrictions and Under Keel Clearance*

Deep draft ships will be tidal restricted

4.5.1 Vessels exceeding the maximum vessel size.

Vessels exceeding length overall (LOA) or extreme Beam specified in section 4.5 may be considered, subject to simulation and special conditions. Ship owners/Ship operators should approach the RHM or Port of Townsville as early as possible to determine acceptability.

4.6 Trim requirements

The safe handling of ships within the confines of the channels and swing basins requires certain conditions of trim. Ships should be ballasted or loaded in order to have an even keel or trimmed by the stern with:

- a) the propeller fully submerged; and
- b) the forward draft not less than 2% of overall length.

Ships not meeting this requirement may experience considerable delays until a solution is identified and implemented.

Ships trimmed by the head or listing may be subject to restrictions. The Regional Harbour Master and Manager (Pilotage Services) are to be informed when bookings are made.

Masters should pay special attention to their loading/ballasting plans to ensure that their ships are suitably trimmed and able to put to sea at short notice, especially during the cyclone season from November to April.

4.7 Time zone

UTC + 10 hours throughout the year

4.8 Working hours

Port service providers are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Normal business office hours are Monday-Friday, 0900–1700 hours.

Stevedoring companies labour force is generally available 24 hours a day, seven days a week with the exception of the following official holidays:

- from 1500 hours (24 December) to 0700 hours (26 December)
- from 1500 hours (31 December) to 0700 hours (1 January).

4.9 Charts and books

Master's shall have the latest edition charts (paper and electronic) with temporary and permanent corrections not exceeding three months. For navigation in pilotage areas, masters should refer to the nautical charts produced by the Australian Hydrographic Office and Admiralty Sailing Directions NP15 (Australian Pilot Volume III/IV)

4.9.1 Notices to Mariners

Maritime Safety Queensland promulgates marine safety information to mariners, organisations and other interested parties, in the form of Notices to Mariners and Advices to Mariners. The Notices to Mariners are posted on the MSQ website. Link: [Townsville: Notices to Mariners](#).

[Notices to Mariners](#) provide advice on:

- navigation warnings and hazards (such as aids to navigation which may have been destroyed, missing or unlit);
- changes to the uniform buoyage system (which assists with the correction and updating of marine charts);
- navigation depths (necessary when navigating in channels with depth restrictions); and
- any other works which may affect the safe navigation of vessels in Queensland coastal waters and ports (such as dredging operations and construction works).