

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 in the "Compulsory Pilotage Area" for:

- a ship that is 50 metres or more in length
- a vessel towing another vessel where the combined length of the vessels is 50 metres or more
- a ship whose owner or master requests the services of a pilot; and
- a ship whose owner or master is directed by the RHM to use the services of a pilot.

8.1.1 Night Pilotage

The Port of Mackay is open for pilotage and exempt ship movement 24 hours per day, weather and tidal conditions permitting.

8.1.2 Request for Pilot

The requirements of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) shall be observed for all bookings. NQBP provides a pilotage service for ship arrivals, departures and removals. All pilot transfers are carried out by helicopter or pilot launch.

Requests for pilotage services are described in QSHIPS booking procedures (3.7 QSHIPS (Queensland Shipping Information Planning System)).

8.1.3 Notice Required

Pilotage Services require 24 hours advance notice of all movements requiring pilot attendance, including arrivals, departures and removals.

These notifications should be made via [QSHIPS](#).

8.1.4 Instrument Navigation – Portable Pilot Units

The use of independent high precision instrument navigation (Portable Pilot Units (PPU)) is mandatory to support all piloted movements within Port of Mackay. This is to ensure the safe movement of all vessels including passing, swing and docking. In the event of failure of the PPU, VTS is to be advised and a vessel defect risk assessment for the movement to

be conducted. Vessel movements conducted by local master under Pilotage Exemption and tug and barge operations are not required to have PPUs.

8.2 Pilotage Area Limits

Pilotage areas are fully described in section 4.3 [Pilotage area — port limits](#). Vessels required to engage a port pilot must not approach closer to the harbour than the pilot boarding position without a port pilot on board.

8.3 Pilot Boarding Position

The Mackay Pilot Boarding Place has been relocated to approximate position latitude 21° 06.73' S, longitude 149° 18.50' E. This position is approximately 4.0 nm from the Southern Breakwater bearing 277.5° (T) along the sea lead when approaching the harbour.

Generally, ships should be making way at the pilot boarding place for pilot embarkation and follow instructions from Mackay VTS. During pilot transfer operations, instructions from either pilot helicopter or launch must be fully complied with.

8.4 Pilot Boarding Arrangements

Pilot transfers at the Port of Mackay are by pilot launch. Pilot transfer by helicopter are by exception only and at the approval of the RHM and Manager Pilotages Services>

8.4.1 Pilot transfer safety

MSQ considers the safety of pilots and other personnel boarding underway absolutely critical. Responsibility for safe practices for personnel transfers rests with each person involved in the activity including the ship owners, operators, master and crew, pilotage providers, pilots and pilot boat crew, as well as the person being transferred. All parties should observe both the spirit and intent of the regulations, to ensure safety is not compromised.

Where a Pilot suspects that the pilot transfer arrangement provided are unsafe, they should refuse to board the vessel until the matter is resolved and is made safe by the master and crew. If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the pilot, then the movement will be aborted until such time that the Pilot boarding arrangement is made to safe.

Additionally, the matter must be reported immediately to AMSA, VTS and the pilot's employer.

8.4.2 Pilot Launch Boarding Arrangements

Pilot transfer instructions will be advised to the ship prior to the pilot boarding by Mackay VTS. The instructions may include:

- pilot boarding time,
- restrictions/requirements (by the RHM),
- boarding position,
- desired course and speed to conduct the transfer (this is best done by the pilot or the pilot launch).

Ships are to be at the pilot boarding place at the notified time of pilot boarding, with all preparations for boarding completed in accordance with the instructions in this section. Ships should be underway, proceeding at six knots and providing a good lee. The pilot ladder is to be rigged two metres above the water, with two manropes and a heaving line standing by. At night, a forward-facing light is required to illuminate the ladder in accordance with IMO requirements and IMPA recommendations. See [Pilot Boarding Ladder Arrangement](#) and [Pilot transfer arrangements – Marine Notice 04/2023. \(Pilotage - boarding ladder arrangements\)](#).

8.4.3 Passage Planning — Bridge Resource Management (BRM)

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 Pilot Licence

A person must hold a current pilot license with a current pilotage area endorsement (relevant to the pilotage area of operation) in order to have the conduct of a ship of 50 metres or more LOA within the pilotage area for Mackay.

Pilot licences are valid for a period of five years.

Pilot Area Endorsements are valid for a period of two years.

8.6 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 regulations in relation to the navigational conduct of the vessel, 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 RHM. The duty VTSSO is delegated to exercise the relevant functions of the RHM.

Whilst every effort is made to maintain schedule integrity, safe movements are the priority. Once boarded, an allocated pilot may make a further safety assessment which could result in a movement being unable to be completed. In this case, the movement will still incur a full pilotage fee.

8.6.1 Fatigue management

Pilotage services are provided to the port of Mackay on a scheduled basis utilising QSHIPS. A pilot Fatigue Management Plan is followed to ensure that adequately rested pilots are assigned to ships. Mackay licensed pilots also work at the port of Hay Point, adequate notice of shipping movements is a base requirement of fatigue management.

8.6.2 Alcohol consumption

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

8.7 Pilotage Requirements for Torres Strait and Great Barrier Reef (GBR)

For information on pilotage requirements for Torres Strait and Great Barrier Reef (GBR) refer to; [Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Vessel Traffic Service \(Maritime Safety Queensland\) \(msq.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/great-barrier-reef-and-torres-strait-vessel-traffic-service).