

4. Port Description

4.1 General Information

The port operates 24 hours a day seven days a week.

4.2 Pilotage area

The Cairns Pilotage Area (see section 16.3) is described in Schedule 2 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) as the area of:

- a) Waters bounded by an imaginary line:
 1. starting at the high-water mark on the north–western extremity of Cape Grafton then in a northerly direction to latitude 16° 49.875' south, longitude 145° 54.954' east
 2. then in a west-north-westerly direction to the high-water mark on the northern extremity of Taylor Point
 3. then by the high-water mark in a southerly direction along the shoreline of the mainland returning 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).

4.3 Load lines

The Cairns area is situated in the tropical load line zone when a vessel is inside the Barrier Reef and the south pacific seasonal tropical area outside the reef.

Tropical: from 1st April to 30th November.

Summer: from 1st December to 31st March.

4.4 Maximum vessel size

The port limits ship size to 200m LOA, beam 36m, except for Passenger ships.

Further exceptions to these limits may be allowed, but only after a successful assessment through receipt of vessel owner/operators risk assessment and the successful completion of full bridge simulation exercises conducted by Ports North pilots and assessed by the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

Consult the [Notices to Mariners](#) for the latest port depth information.

4.5 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 the forward draft not less than 2% LOA and the propeller fully submerged. Vessels trimmed by the head or listing may be subject to restrictions; ships not meeting this requirement may experience considerable delays until the problem is rectified.

Passenger vessels may have to trim by the head up to one meter.

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 – November to April.

4.6 Time zone

All Queensland ports: UTC + 10 hours throughout the year.

4.7 Working hours

Port service providers are available 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

4.8 Charts and books

For navigation in pilotage areas, masters should refer to the nautical charts produced by the Australian hydrographic office and Admiralty Sailing Directions.

4.9 Shipping announcements

4.9.1 Notices to Mariners

Maritime Safety Queensland circulates marine safety information to mariners, organisations and other interested parties, in the form of [Notices to Mariners](#).

Notices to Mariners advise of:

- 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)
- any other works which may affect the safe navigation of vessels in Queensland coastal waters and ports (such as dredging operations and construction works).