

## 3. Movement notification and traffic procedures

### 3.1 General

Maritime Safety Queensland, through the authority of the Regional Harbour Master, has jurisdiction over the safe movement of all shipping within the pilotage area.

The scheduling of ship movements is initiated by the agent submitting movement details for a vessel to Cairns Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) via the QSHIPS ship planning programme in accordance with this section.

All vessels, whether commercial or recreational, are to maintain a listening watch on VHF16 and if equipped on VHF09, whilst within the Skardon River Pilotage Area.

All vessels within the Skardon River Pilotage Area are to listen out on VHF16 for announcements made by the Skardon River port control, regarding movements within the port. These announcements will be advised on VHF16 and full details are given on VHF09.

### 3.2 Port control

Port Control (Skardon River Port control) is a local port service and is the principal tool by which the Regional Harbour Master manages the safe and efficient movement of vessel traffic approaching, departing and operating within the Skardon River pilotage area.

Port Control (call sign “Skardon River Port control”) is delivered from the VTS centre at Cairns and is manned by trained and qualified Vessel Traffic Service Operators, under the management of the Manager (Vessel Traffic Management) and the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

#### 3.2.1 Port control role

Maritime Safety Queensland provides a Port Control as a traffic information service in accordance with International Maritime Organization guidelines.

The Port Control will:

- wherever possible interact with vessel traffic by VHF radio
- interact with port services
- inform participating vessels of current traffic and safety information pertaining to the pilotage area
- where necessary communicate the directions of the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) or delegate
- monitor compliance with the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) and [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#)
- record the details of shipping movements in the QSHIPS programme in real time
- maintain a situational awareness of traffic in the pilotage area to the extent of the available information
- participate in emergency procedures.

- In the event Cairns VTS deems that a situation demands a higher level of interaction, the functions of a traffic organisation and navigational assistance may be enabled.

### 3.3 Port control communications

Ships of ten metres and over in length are not to move within the pilotage area unless satisfactory two-way communications are maintained with Skardon River Port control.

Skardon River Port control maintains a continuous listening watch; contact can also be made with the Regional Harbour Master's office and pilot station via VHF radio, telephone, facsimile and email.

Ships are required to establish two-way radio communications with Skardon River Port control on VHF channel 16 or VHF channel 09.

Channel	Call sign	Service
VHF 16	User	Distress and initial calling
VHF 09	Skardon River Port control	Port control calling/port operations
VHF 6	User	Tug operations
VHF 8	User	Auxiliary channel tug operations

**Table 3 – Vessel traffic service**

The Cairns VTS centre has telephone, fax and email services for administrative and emergency purposes. Any marine incident, for example a collision, grounding or fire, occurring within the port should be reported immediately to Skardon River port control on VHF channel 16.

### 3.4 Language

The English language is to be used in all communication. The International Maritime Organization's Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) 2001 will be used.

### 3.5 Voice recordings

All voice communications with the VTS centre and all radio communications on the channels monitored are recorded against a date and time stamp.

### 3.6 Distress and emergency

Skardon River port control (Cairns VTS) is not a coast radio station; Maritime Safety Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) and the Australian Coastguard have an agreement that the VTS will monitor channels 16 when VMR is not operational for emergency and distress calls only. A distress call should, in the ordinary course of events, be referred to the Queensland Police Service.

Any marine incident, for example a collision, grounding or fire, occurring within the port should be immediately reported to Skardon River port control on:

VHF radio: channel 16  
 Phone: +61 7 4033 3670  
 Fax: +61 7 4052 7460

## 3.7 Queensland Shipping Information Planning System (QSHIPS)

The movement of all vessels of LOA 35 m or more arriving at Skardon River is recorded in an Internet-based program known as [QSHIPS](http://www.qships.tmr.qld.gov.au/webx/): [www.qships.tmr.qld.gov.au/webx/](http://www.qships.tmr.qld.gov.au/webx/).

The program is operated from the Cairns VTS centre; shipping agents submit booking information online in accordance with the reporting requirements and record their requisitions for tugs, pilot and linesmen. The ancillary services respond online to acknowledge the booking and allocate their resources; the movement then assumes the confirmed status. Permit requests should be submitted via QSHIPS and to the respective agencies if required (see section 10 [Work permits](#)) QSHIPS will indicate when the approval has been granted and the agent is then able to print the permit for the vessel.

Since the program is live, port service providers, agents, government agencies and the general community are able to view scheduled movements in any Queensland port in real time.

## 3.8 Ship movement reporting requirements

**All movements of ships 35 metres LOA or more are to be reported** and all [Vessels that require a pilot](#) (section 8.1) including those ships whose master holds a pilotage exemption certificate for the Skardon River pilotage area.

Sections 171 to 176 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) require that all ship movements for vessels 35 metres in length or more within the Skardon River pilotage area are reported to Maritime Safety Queensland.

The use of the QSHIPS program is **mandatory** for notification of the impending arrival and subsequent movements of a vessel unless exceptional circumstances preclude this.

The report shall be made using the QSHIPS program and be submitted to Cairns VTS at least 72 hours before the arrival movement and at least 72 hours prior to any subsequent movement.

If an agent is unable to submit a booking via QSHIPS the [Arrival / Departure Report](#) must be faxed or emailed to the VTS centre on +61 7 4033 3670 (24/7) or email [vtscairns@msq.qld.gov.au](mailto:vtscairns@msq.qld.gov.au).

Arrival advice should be confirmed to Cairns VTS centre 24 hours prior to the start of the movement.

At the time of booking a vessel an agent acknowledges the following conditions:

They have read, understood and are in compliance with the current version of the Skardon River port procedures manual.

That all required resources will be available at the time of a movement occurring and that in the event of a resource (for example, tugs) becoming unavailable prior to a movement taking place, the agent will immediately inform the Regional Harbour Master's office in Cairns.

## 3.9 Reporting defects

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulations 2016](#) requires the master of a ship that is

- underway and entering, or about to enter a pilotage area; or
- navigating a ship from a berth or anchorage,

must report to VTS by VHF radio details of damage to, defects and deficiencies in, the ship that could affect the safety of the ship, a person or the environment;

VTS will notify the Regional Harbour Master and AMSA of the damage to, defects and deficiencies.

In addition, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) requires notification of any deficiencies or suspected deficiencies on ships visiting Australian ports. Deficiencies are to be reported to AMSA using AMSA [Form 18](#) and [Form 19](#). Reports of suspected non-compliance with Navigation Act or safety/pollution Conventions –

[Report of marine safety concern \(form 355\) | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)  
Deficiencies are also to be reported to the Regional Harbour Master, VTS Centre.

Vessels without serviceable bridge equipment will not be allowed to enter the port until assessed and authorisation given by the Regional Harbour Master – Cairns.

## 3.10 Reporting requirements

### 3.10.1 Reporting Requirements – Arrival reporting requirements

All ships greater than 24m LOA shall obtain approval from Skardon River port control before entering, leaving or manoeuvring within the Cairns pilotage area.

All ships greater than 10m LOA and less than 24m LOA must advise Skardon River port control before entering, leaving or manoeuvring within the Skardon River pilotage area.

The master of a ship entering, or about to enter the pilotage area must report to Skardon River port control by VHF radio according to the following table.

Report	Information to report	
1	<b>Ship master to Port control</b> Two hours prior to entry into the pilotage area or for pilot exempt vessels two hours prior to fairway beacon Entry to VTS/Port limits	Ships name, position, fore & aft draft, changes to ship details, defects, ETA to pilot boarding ground Master advises VTS passing limits
2	<b>Port control or pilot to ship master</b> Pilot transfer instructions Anchoring instructions	Instructions will include boarding side, course, speed, ETA and anticipated conditions. Instructions will include anchorage allocation and latitude/longitude if required
3	<b>Ship master to Port control</b> Arrival at pilot boarding ground	Ships name, at pilot boarding ground, time of arrival

Report	Information to report	
4a	<b>Ship master to Port control</b> On anchoring	Ships name, anchor position, time of anchoring.
4b	<b>Ship master to Port control</b> Departing anchorage	Ships name, anchor aweigh time
5	<b>Port control or pilot to ship master</b> Confirmation of pilot transfer and instructions for the ship	Instructions will include boarding side, course, speed, ETA and anticipated conditions.
6	<b>Pilot to Port control</b> Pilot transfer (when the pilot transfer has been completed)	Ships name, pilot onboard, pilot onboard time, pilot name, ETA at entrance beacons, Ships fore and aft draft, changes to ship details
7	<b>Pilot to Port control</b> Entering Entrance Channel	Time ship abeam entrance beacons
8	<b>Ship master to Port control</b> Secured alongside	Ships name, secured at (berth name), first line time, side to, all fast time

**Table 4 – Inbound reporting requirements**

Exempt masters must call Cairns VTS before proceeding past the pilot boarding ground to obtain clearance before entering the channel and then report their movements as per the above table.

### 3.10.2 Departure and removal reporting requirements

The master of a ship that is departing, moving or about to depart or move within the pilotage area must report to Thursday Island port control by radio according to the following table requirements.

Report	Information to report	
1	<b>Ship master/pilot to Port control</b> Pilot on board and ship ready to depart (not less than 30 minutes prior to ETD)	Ships name, pilot on board time, pilot name, fore and aft drafts, changes to scheduled movements
2	<b>Ship master/pilot to Port control</b> Departing berth	Ships name, anchor aweigh/last line time, destination
3	<b>Ship master /pilot to Port control</b> Exiting Entrance Channel	Time ship abeam entrance beacons or port limits

Report	Information to report	
4	<b>Ship master to Port control</b> Pilot transfer (when the pilot transfer has been completed)	Ships name, pilot disembarked, pilot off time
5	<b>Ship master to Port control</b> Exiting port limits	Ships name, vessel clear of port limits

Table 5 – Departure and removal reporting requirements

## 3.11 Schedule Movement scheduling

### 3.11.1 Confirmation of schedules

On receipt of an intended vessel movement, Skardon River port control will cross check for vessel suitability in the port and verify the movement in QSHIPS is in accordance with the parameters of the Port Procedure Manual.

Vessels that do not meet Port Procedure Manual parameters are to be referred to the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) for approval.

### 3.11.2 Schedule changes

Changes requested by the master/agent to scheduled movements must be made via QSHIPS, phone or email and are to be communicated to the vessel traffic service centre and marine services as soon as practicable advising the revised schedule. Changes to QSHIPS will be made as they occur. Changes within 24 hours of the scheduled start time must be made by phone.

## 3.12 Movement clearance notification

All ships require a clearance from the Regional Harbour Master in order to enter, depart or move within the pilotage area. It is the responsibility of the master or pilot to contact Skardon River port control to obtain the necessary clearance and information prior to the movement.

Clearances are valid for uninterrupted passage to a specified location or until the voyage is interrupted, completed (for example, by anchoring, berthing or due to a breakdown) or cancelled by the Regional Harbour Master. Ships will require a new clearance for any subsequent movement.

Refer to arrival / departure and removal reporting requirement table for applicable timings.

## 3.13 Master/Pilot responsibilities

Masters and owners of vessels are responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the [\*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994\*](#) (the Act) and [\*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016\*](#) (the Regulation).

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, 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 Regional Harbour Master. The duty Vessel Traffic Service Operator (VTSO) is delegated to exercise the relevant functions of the Regional Harbour Master.