

8. Pilotage

8.1 Vessels That Require a Pilot

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 for:

- a ship that is 50 metres or more;
- a vessel towing another vessel where the combined length of the vessels is 50 metres or more;
- a ship whose owner or master asks for the services of a pilot;
- a ship whose master is directed by the harbour master to use the services of a pilot; and
- LNG vessels will require two pilots for the transit.

8.1.1 Standby Pilot Requirements

- Pilots will not be required to remain on-board an LNG vessel whilst alongside but must be available within 60 minutes of being summoned by VTS;
- Barney Point Wharf Passing vessel interaction: A pilot is to be on-board 30 mins prior to the vessel passing ([Barney Point Wharf](#)); and
- Clinton Coal Facility vessel interaction: A pilot is to be on-board 30 mins prior to the vessel passing ([Clinton Coal Facility](#)).

8.2 Pilotage Area

See (16.12)Pilotage – Gladstone Port and Pilotage Areas and 4.1 Pilotage Area description.

8.3 Night Pilotage

The port of Gladstone is open 24 hours per day.

8.4 Request for Pilot

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

Requests for pilotage services are described in QSHIPS booking procedures.

8.4.1 Notice Required

Ships requiring the services of a pilot in the port of Gladstone are required to submit arrival, removal and departure notices no less than the indicated number of hours prior to the desired movement:

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| Arrivals: | 48 hours |
| Removals: | 24 hours |
| Departures: | 24 hours |

Initial notification must be made via the QSHIPS website.

8.5 Pilot Boarding Positions A, B, C, D and LNG

The pilot boarding grounds are located as follows:

A 23° 51.00' S, 151° 31.50' E – approximately two miles north of Fairway Buoy.

B 23° 51.90' S, 151° 32.70' E – approximately two miles north east of Fairway Buoy.

C 23° 53.00' S, 151° 33.00' E – approximately two miles east of Fairway Buoy.

D 23° 55.00' S, 151° 31.00' E – approximately two miles south of Fairway Buoy.

LNG 23° 50.09' S, 151° 34.67' E – approximately 4.5 miles North East of Fairway Buoy.

Ships should make their way to the pilot boarding ground as advised by Gladstone VTS prior to embarking their pilot. Ships are not to proceed beyond their designated boarding ground without a pilot on board. During pilot transfer, operations instructions from either pilot helicopter or launch must be fully complied with (16.8) [Pilot Boarding Grounds \(Gladstone\)](#).

8.6 Pilot Boarding Arrangements

Ships with a minimum clear landing area and flight path of 22 metres approved for use will generally board and disembark the pilot by helicopter. During periods of restricted visibility or other unsuitable flying conditions, helicopter operations will cease. When conditions prohibit helicopter transfer, the pilot will transfer by pilot launch.

8.6.1 Pilot Boarding Radio Frequency

All radio communications for vessels embarking and disembarking a pilot at the pilot boarding area will be carried out over VHF channel 10. Vessels will be advised by Gladstone VTS when they are required to change from VHF channel 13 to VHF channel 10.

8.6.2 Helicopter Preparation

Ships must comply with AMSA Marine Orders regarding Helicopter Operations and complete the Gladstone Pilot Helicopter Operations Declaration ([Gladstone Pilot Helicopter Operations Declarations](#))

All ships should be familiar with the requirements of the ICS Guide to Ship Helicopter Operations. The helicopter maintains a listening watch on VHF channel 10 and may be contacted on this channel once airborne. The pilot helicopter is fitted with a position indicating radio transponder which is monitored by Gladstone VTS.

8.6.3 Pilot launch preparation

Ships pilot ladders must comply with the requirements of SOLAS CH V – Regulation 23 – Pilot Transfer Arrangements Resolution A.1045(27). Ships must complete the Gladstone Marine Pilot Services – Pilot Ladder Checklist (see Section 16.41). The checklist must be submitted to ships agent no later than 12 hours prior to arrival to the pilotage area, as detailed within [Section 2.2, Table 1](#).

8.6.4 Pilot Launch Boarding Arrangements

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

- pilot boarding time;
- restrictions/requirements (by the Regional Harbour Master);
- boarding position; and
- 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 ground 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 as required by AMSA and Boarding Arrangements for Pilot. At night, a forward facing light is required to illuminate the ladder in full compliance with IMO Res A667 (16) and IMPA recommendations.

8.7 Requirements for The Issue of Pilotage Exemption for The Ports of Gladstone, Bundaberg and Port Alma

Refer Pilotage – Gladstone Port and Pilotage Areas.

8.8 Passage Planning – Bridge Resource Management (BRM)

The master and pilot should exchange information regarding navigational procedures, local conditions and rules and the ship's characteristics. This information should be a process that generally continues for the duration of the pilotage.

The proposed manoeuvre should be well discussed with the master and any doubts/queries he/she may have should be resolved prior to commencement of pilotage.

The exchange of information should include at least:

- The presentation of a completed standard pilot card (by ship). In addition, information should be provided on rate of turn at different speeds, turning circles, stopping distances and, if available other appropriate data;
- General agreement on plans and procedures including contingency plans for the anticipated passage ([Pilotage passage plans](#));
- Discussion of any special conditions such as weather, depth of water, tidal currents and marine traffic that may be expected during the passage;
- Discussion of any unusual ship-handling characteristics, machinery difficulties, navigational equipment problems or crew limitations that could affect the operation, handling or safe manoeuvring of the ship;
- Information on berthing arrangements – use, characteristics and numbers of tugs, mooring boats and other external facilities;
- Information on mooring arrangements; and
- Confirmation of the language to be used on the bridge (normally English) and with external parties.

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.

8.8.1 Fatigue Management

Gladstone Ports Corporation provides professional pilotage services for the port of Gladstone. The service is provided on a 24 hour basis but is not an 'on-demand' service. A pilot fatigue management plan is followed to ensure that adequately rested pilots are assigned to ships.

8.8.2 Alcohol Consumption

National Law and the Navigation Act 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 in Gladstone, or about to depart. Severe penalties apply to infringements.

8.9 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), Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2016 (the regulation), Maritime Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012, Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, Transport Operation (Marine Pollution) Regulations 2008 and Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012.

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 Services Officer (VTSO) is delegated to exercise the relevant functions of the Regional Harbour Master.

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

All merchant vessels 70 metres in length and over and all oil, gas and chemical tankers irrespective of size are required to take a licensed marine pilot when transiting the Torres Strait and Great North East Channel. Pilotage is also required for these vessels transiting the Inner Route from Cape York to Cairns Roads and for transit of Hydrographers Passage.

Significant penalties apply for non-compliance.

Full details can be found in Marine Order 54 (located on [AMSA website](#)). Maximum draft for transit is 12.5 metres. Vessels with a draft >10 metres will be advised of the required tidal window by the pilotage company.