

Requirements for the Safe Use, Care and Maintenance of Pilot Ladders, Man Ropes, and Associated Equipment

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Former Notice:	N/A
Charts & Publications:	N/A
Further Notice:	N/A
Attachment:	Attachment 1: Frequently Asked Questions

The Pilbara Port Authority has become aware of several recent incidents related to the failure of pilot ladders and their associated equipment. Investigations have revealed that poor condition, improper rigging, lack of supervision and awareness of safety requirements, inadequate maintenance and other factors caused these incidents.

Incorrectly rigged pilot ladders or pilot ladders that are in poor condition can have serious consequences, including the possibility of severe injuries or the loss of life for personnel using such ladders.

From 1 May 2023, all vessels calling the Port of Port Hedland must comply with the following requirements.

- 1) Pilot ladders must not be used for pilot transfers beyond 30 months from the date received on board. Pilot ladders should be inspected by the vessel's crew before every use and should be replaced if found to be unsuitable, even if the pilot ladder is less than 30 months old, from the date received on board.
- 2) To use a pilot ladder beyond 30 months from the date received on board, the ladder must pass a ladder and step attachment strength test as per ISO - 799-1.
- 3) Pilot ladder repairs and testing must be carried out by the manufacturer or at a facility approved by the manufacturer, the vessel's Flag State or Classification Society.
- 4) Man ropes must not be used for pilot transfer beyond 30 months from the date received on board or beyond 12 months from the date of first use, whichever is earlier. The man ropes should be inspected by the vessel's crew before every use and should be replaced if found to be unsuitable, even if the age of the man ropes is less than 30 months old from the date of manufacture or less than 12 months from the date of first use.

Additionally, Vessel operators, Masters and crew should ensure that:

- All pilot ladders in use onboard are SOLAS compliant and are in good condition, with certification, inspection and maintenance records available upon request
- The man ropes must be of the correct diameter and construction, in good condition and properly secured to the vessel's deck.
- Rigging of pilot ladders must be carried out by properly trained and competent crew. After being rigged, the pilot ladder arrangement must be inspected by a responsible officer.
- Crew members involved in rigging a pilot ladder must be appropriately trained in rigging, testing and inspecting pilot ladders.
- Adequate guidance is to be provided in company procedures for the vessel crew to rig pilot ladders, carry out proper inspections and remove pilot ladders from service when defects are found.
- Maintenance routines for the pilot ladders and all associated equipment like stanchions, shackles, manropes, deck fittings etc., should be included in the vessel's Planned Maintenance System (PMS).

Any vessel which has a poorly rigged or damaged pilot ladder or a non-compliant pilot ladder or associated equipment, will not be permitted to berth at Port Hedland, until rectified to meet the requirements

For additional guidance for rigging and maintenance of Pilot ladders, man ropes, and associated equipment, the following documents should be referred to:

- ISO 799 -1 Pilot Ladders - Design and Specification
- ISO 799 -2 Pilot Ladders - Maintenance, Use, Survey, and Inspection
- ISO 799 -3 Pilot Ladders: Attachments and associated equipment
- AMSA Marine Notice 03/2022—Pilot transfer arrangements
- AMSA Marine Order Part 21 (Safety and emergency arrangements) paragraph 12
- SOLAS Chapter V Regulation 23
- IMO Circulars MSC.1/Circ.1428 and MSC.1/Circ.1495
- IMO Resolution A.1108(29) and IMO Resolution A.1045(27)

Any questions or feedback regarding this Local Marine Notice should be addressed to the Port Hedland Marine Operations Team.



Heathcliff Pimento
Harbour Master (Port Hedland)

Frequently Asked Questions

Can the pilot ladder be used after 30 months from the date it is received on board?

Yes, the pilot ladder can be used after 30 months from the date it is received on board if it passes a ladder and step attachment strength test as per ISO -799-1.

The pilot ladder is more than 30 months old before 1 May 2023, can it be used for pilot transfer?

The ladder may be permitted for use up to 1 May 2023, subject to the Master providing the PPA with a signed declaration confirming that the Pilot ladder and all associated equipment have been properly maintained, inspected, are free from defects and are fit for use.

The Pilot ladder has been onboard for more than 30 months and the vessel has not been able to conduct a ladder and step attachment strength test as per ISO -799-1. Can the pilot ladder be used?

In cases where the ladder and step attachment strength test has not been conducted due to reasons beyond the operator's control, the vessel may be granted a one-time exemption subject to the PPA being provided with a written endorsement of the condition and suitability of the pilot ladder by:

- The vessel's Classification Society or
- A company authorised by the pilot ladder manufacturer to inspect, assess and endorse the condition of the pilot ladder.

Who can carry out the ladder and step attachment strength test?

The ladder and step attachment strength test must be carried out by the manufacturer or at a facility approved by the manufacturer, the vessel's Flag State or Classification Society.

What is the validity of the ladder and step attachment strength test?

The ladder and step attachment strength test must be carried out at intervals not exceeding 30 months. The pilot ladder will be considered unacceptable if the ladder and step attachment strength test is older than 30 months.

Can the vessel crew carry out repairs to the pilot ladder?

Pilot ladder repairs must only be carried out by the manufacturer or at a manufacturer-approved repair facility, or a facility approved by the flag state or a classification society

What is the replacement period for man ropes?

The man ropes must be replaced before 30 months from the date of receiving on board or before 12 months from the date of first use, whichever is earlier or whenever the manropes are found to be unsuitable by the vessel's crew. Use of man ropes 30 months after the date of receiving on board or 12 months after its first use is not permitted.

If the vessel carries out marine pilot transfer by helicopter, is a compliant pilot ladder still required?

Marine pilot transfers can be carried out by pilot boat or helicopter, as per operational requirements and the method of pilot boarding can change at short notice. Therefore, all vessels are required to comply with this Local Marine Notice.