

PACIFIC PILOTAGE AUTHORITY

1000 – 1130 West Pender Street
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NOTICE TO INDUSTRY

Date Issued: 4 March 2020

Notice Number: 02/2020

Subject: Standards for Pilot Transfer Arrangements

Geographic Area: BC compulsory pilotage waters

Background

On 30 December 2019, a New York marine pilot fell and sustained severe injuries when he endeavored to transfer from the pilot ladder to the accommodation ladder through a trapdoor in the platform of the accommodation ladder. The pilot subsequently died of his injuries.

The pilot ladder was rigged in a manner whereby it was hanging from a bar near the bottom of the platform. The top step of the pilot ladder was significantly below the level of the platform. In such cases, pilots must pull themselves through the trapdoor while twisting to get a secure footing on the accommodation ladder platform.

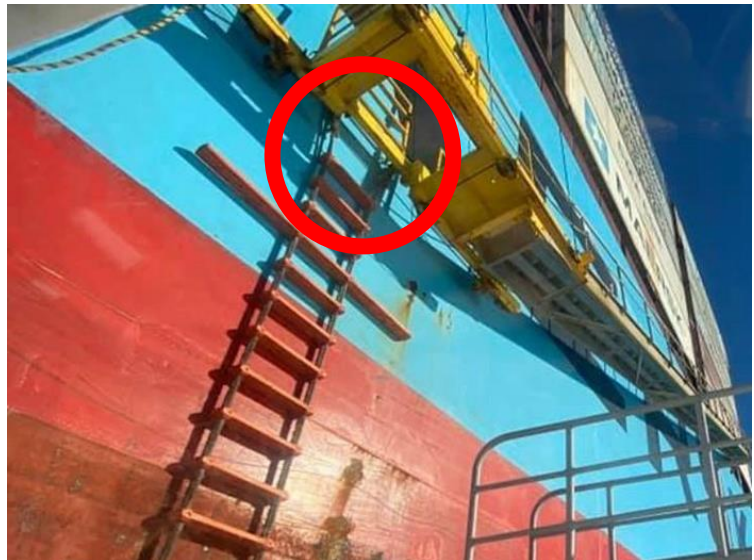


Figure 1 - Improperly rigged pilot transfer arrangement

Standards for Pilot Transfer Arrangements

The standards for pilot transfer arrangements are defined in SOLAS Chapter V – Regulation 23. In addition, the International Maritime Organization has issued several circulars with respect to pilot transfer arrangements, the latest being Resolution A.1045(27).

The use of trapdoors on accommodation ladders is not new and is mentioned both in SOLAS and the IMO Circular. When a trapdoor is used there are clear requirements which include:

- the aperture should not be less than 750 mm x 750 mm;
- the trapdoor should open upwards and be secured either flat on the embarkation platform or against the rails at the aft end or outboard side of the platform and should not form part of the handholds. In this case the after part of the lower platform should also be fenced as specified in Circular A.1045(27);

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- the pilot ladder should extend above the lower platform to the height of the handrail and remain in alignment with and against the ship's side.

There is a common misunderstanding amongst vessel operators that vessels built prior to 2012 are exempt from some of the requirements for pilot transfer arrangements. This is incorrect; the rules for trapdoors have been in place since 1979 and the requirement for the pilot ladder to extend above the lower platform to the height of the handrail has not changed.

Action to be Taken

The combined arrangement of the pilot ladder and accommodation ladder were contributing factors in the recent death of the US pilot. The Pacific Pilotage Authority requires that pilot transfer arrangements be in full compliance with both SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 23, and IMO Circular 1045(27). If trapdoors are used, the pilot ladder steps **must** extend above the platform up to the height of the handrail and securely fastened to a strongpoint on deck. Vessels with pilot transfer arrangements that do not meet these standards are at risk that the pilot may not board until the transfer arrangement has been corrected and complies with the above requirements.

All member agencies, ship owners, and masters should be advised accordingly.

Please contact PPA at marineops@ppa.gc.ca for queries or concerns.