



INTERNATIONAL PILOTS WELCOME STEP CHANGE IN SOLAS REQUIREMENTS FOR PILOT TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

The International Maritime Organization has adopted amendments to SOLAS and a new mandatory performance standard to enhance the safety of pilot transfer operations. The step change to a mandatory regime is the most significant regulatory contribution to the safety of maritime pilots on duty in a generation.

London, 26 June 2025: Maritime pilots around the world make a critical contribution to the safety of navigation, the prevention of waterborne pollution and the efficiency of maritime trade. Pilots directing the navigation of ships during over 3 million acts of pilotage every year deliver a x528 reduction in risk (TEMS, 2022). Delivering this public benefit is now made safer by the adoption of amendments to SOLAS and a new mandatory performance standard for pilot transfer arrangements.

Captain Simon Pelletier, President of the International Maritime Pilots Association (IMPA), said “Maritime pilots deliver an extremely effective public service. The IMO has taken the most significant step in a generation to make doing that work safer. IMPA appreciates the support we have received across member States at IMO, and the outcome is testament to what can be achieved when pilots’ organisations around the world work together.”

The amendments to SOLAS build on existing requirements, recommendations and industry standards, whilst introducing critical changes. For example, pilot ladders and manropes will now be treated as consumables, to be replaced automatically no later than 36 months after the date of manufacture, and self-certification by manufacturers is no longer an option due to a tighter type-approval regime. The new performance standards also align with ISO 799 parts 1, 2 and 3 in key areas, including the design, arrangement and rigging of trapdoors. In response to [a study by NC² and commissioned by IMPA](#), the new performance standards also require dedicated means of securing pilot ladders at intermediate lengths.

The results of IMPA’s [2025 Annual Safety Survey](#) serve as a timely reminder of the importance of these changes. Observed non-compliance remains high, at 14%, based on over 5,000 reports received in May 2025. Captain Pelletier emphasised that the new performance standards will help change this situation and encouraged flag States to pursue voluntary early implementation, and maritime pilots to continue to educate shipboard personnel where they can. “We are ready to assist member States, shipowners, operators, seafarers and equipment manufacturers to implement the new requirements.”

IMPA Secretary General, Matthew Williams, highlighted that the new performance standards are not just for the benefit of maritime pilots. “Seafarers, inspectors, surveyors, and other personnel using pilot transfer arrangements should also benefit from the changes.”

The new requirements enter into force on 1 January 2028. To help seafarers, the new performance standards are supported by a revision of the IMO circular on required pilot transfer arrangements (MSC.1/Circ.1428). The illustrations prepared by IMPA and approved by IMO now contain a QR Code, which allows access to a resources page on the [IMPA website](#) to support Companies and seafarers in presenting compliant pilot transfer arrangements.

About IMPA

The International Maritime Pilots’ Association (IMPA), established in 1970, represents pilots’ organisations in over 50 countries and a professional community of over 8,000 maritime pilots. The Association is a not-for-profit organisation which uses the resources of its membership to promote effective safety outcomes in maritime pilotage as an essential public service. It achieves this objective by bringing together pilots’ associations from around the world to share knowledge, expertise and experience on matters affecting maritime pilotage.



The Association is also the active, formal voice of maritime pilotage and pilots in relevant international fora and has been a non-governmental organisation with consultative status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) since 1973. IMPA delegates make lasting contributions to different aspects of the technical work of the IMO.

<https://www.impahq.org/>

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