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# Shipping Industry Guidance on Pilot Transfer Arrangements

Ensuring Compliance with SOLAS



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## Shipping Industry Guidance on Pilot Transfer Arrangements Ensuring Compliance with SOLAS

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Cover: Pilot embarking a ship, courtesy International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA)

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The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the global trade association representing national shipowners' associations from Asia, the Americas and Europe and more than 80% of the world merchant fleet.

Established in 1921, ICS is concerned with all aspects of maritime affairs particularly maritime safety, environmental protection, maritime law, employment affairs and trade.

ICS enjoys consultative status with the UN International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Labour Organization (ILO).

The International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA) represents the international community of pilots. We use the resources of our membership to promote effective safety outcomes in pilotage as an essential public service.

## Introduction

The following guidance is intended to remind seafarers and companies of the vital importance of adhering to the rules and established procedures concerning the provision of safe boarding arrangements for pilots.

Pilots have the right to decline to board vessels offering defective boarding arrangements, which can result in serious delay. Pilots are also entitled to report defects in boarding arrangements to port state control authorities, which could lead to a full port state control inspection with the risk of delay and financial penalties.

A pilot who has climbed a correct ladder, well rigged, and attended by an officer and a deck party will be in the right frame of mind to give their best attention to the safety of the vessel.

First impressions are important.

## New in this version

A new section outlining the International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidance on combination embarkation platform arrangements has been added.

## Acknowledgements

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## General

Pilots join vessels to assist the Master and crew during critical and potentially hazardous phases of navigation.

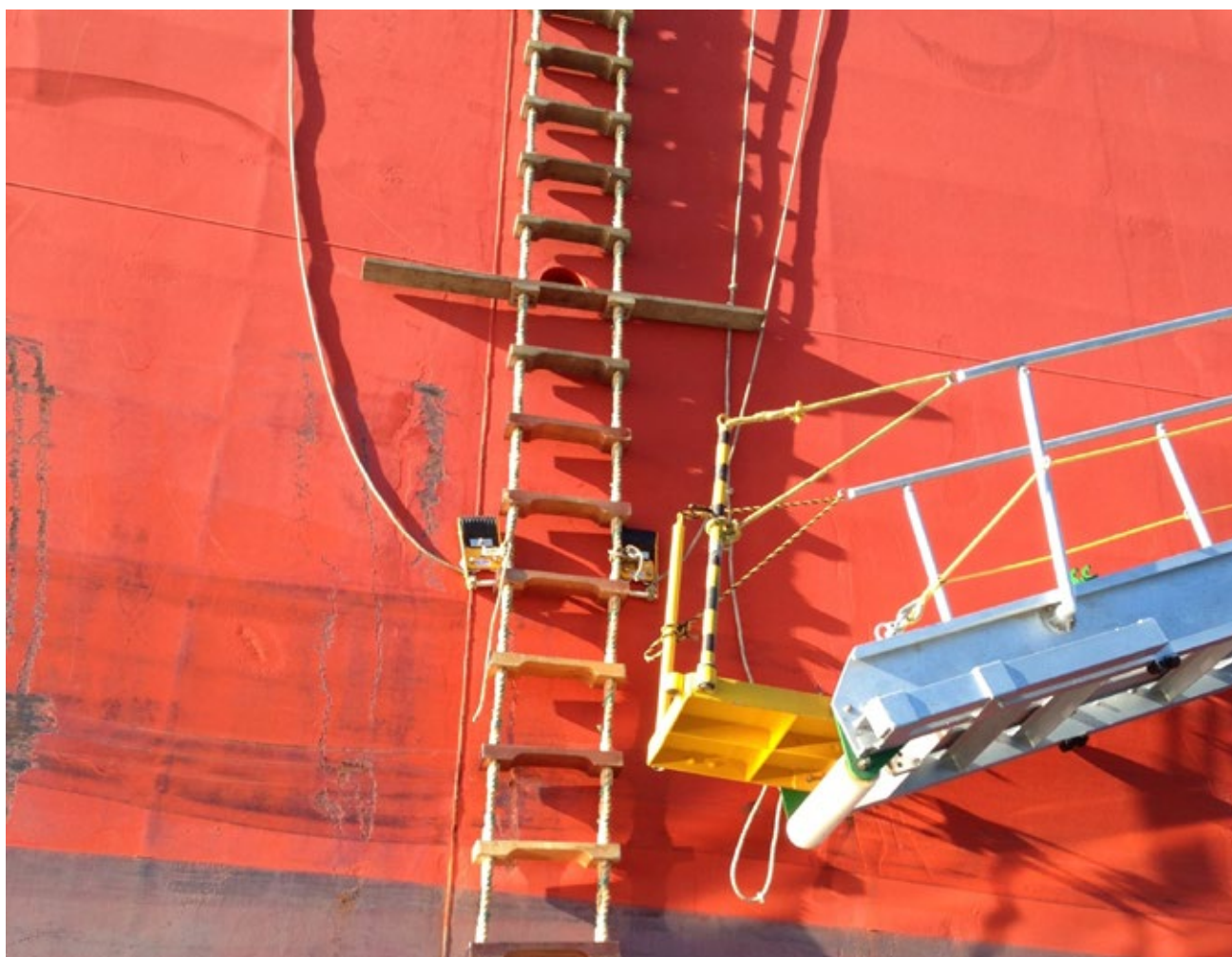
Qualified pilots possess particular local knowledge pertinent to the voyage, and have the necessary ship-handling skills to assist the safe arrival and departure of vessels.

Normally, pilots board and disembark using a traditional pilot ladder from and to an awaiting pilot boat. However, this can be a dangerous procedure if those involved do not adhere to IMO standards or fail to practise acceptable seamanship skills.

A number of pilots have died as a result of accidents while boarding/disembarking from vessels, and many have been seriously injured.

Furthermore, deficiencies with regards to the boarding arrangements and unsafe rigging of pilot ladders continue to be detected during port state control inspections, resulting in delays and financial penalties for the operator.

Nevertheless, pilot ladders remain the safest and most efficient way to board vessels at sea and there is often no alternative, except on occasion when a helicopter can be used.



**Figure 1: Correctly rigged pilot ladder**



## Ensuring safe rigging for pilots

The IMO International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 23) sets out the principal requirements for the rigging of pilot ladders.

These provisions are set out in figure 3, the IMO/IMPA Required Boarding Arrangements for Pilot poster. This poster can be downloaded at [www.impahq.org](http://www.impahq.org) (on home page, click 'Publications').

It is also reproduced in the ICS Bridge Procedures Guide: [publications.ics-shipping.org](http://publications.ics-shipping.org)

Further detailed technical specification for pilot ladders is provided in IMO Resolution A.1045(27). Shipping companies have a legal obligation to provide a conforming ladder and ship-borne fittings.

If seafarers are uncertain about any of the requirements, they should always ask their supervising officer for advice.

Seafarers should always check the condition of the ladder before it is rigged and ensure it is secured to the ship. While this is done, seafarers should always take care of their own safety, wearing all appropriate PPE (a life jacket and lifeline if necessary).

## Management responsibilities

Shipping companies should ensure that:

- All ladders are SOLAS compliant;
- The inspection regime and records are adequate and maintained;
- Replacement ladders are quickly and readily available on board; and
- Seafarers involved receive the necessary training and have a full understanding of the requirements.

## On board responsibilities

The Master and officers should:

- Closely supervise the rigging of pilot ladders;
- Closely observe the boarding and disembarkation of pilots from ladders, ensuring that SOLAS requirements are met; and
- Maintain a lee until the pilot vessel is well clear.

At all times during the rigging, use and de-rigging of any pilot transfer arrangements there should be no risk to the ship's crew. Crew members should not normally be required to leave the protection of the ship's safety rails or bulwarks. A life line or safety harness should be worn if there is any risk of falling.



## Combination embarkation platform arrangements

IMO Resolution A.1045(27) regarding 'Pilot Transfer Arrangements' makes provisions for a 'trapdoor arrangement' in combination ladders.

The resolution states the minimum size of the opening (750mm by 750mm) and that it should open upwards and be secured flat on the platform or against the rails. The pilot ladder should extend above the platform to the handrail and remain aligned against the ship's side.



**Figure 2: Compliant combination 'trapdoor'**

**Figure 3 (next page): IMO/IMPA Required Boarding Arrangements for Pilot poster**



# REQUIRED BOARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PILOT



In accordance with SOLAS Regulation V/23 & IMO Resolution A.1045(27)  
INTERNATIONAL MARITIME PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

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