THIS SECTION IS FROM CHAPTER 6 OF THE NAVGUIDE, ALL NUMBERING SHOULD HAVE THE NUMBER 6 INSERTED AS THE FIRST IN ALL LABELLING

## Pilotage

### Pilotage as a Service to Safe Navigation

Pilotage is a specialised, and usually, licensed service to navigation, specifically in restricted waters. The skill of the pilot draws on local knowledge of the relative positions of geographic points, aids to navigation, submerged features, and waterway limitations. Pilots must also possess a high degree of ship handing skills, be cognisant of the local tides, currents, and climatic conditions, as well as the handling characteristics for the specific ship receiving the pilotage services.

Pilotage may be required in coastal waters, estuarial waters, rivers, channels, ports, harbours, lakes, canals, or enclosed dock systems or any combination of these areas. In addition, deep sea pilotage services are provided in some international waters, such as the North Sea, English Channel, Entrances to the Baltic Sea and the Baltic Sea.

When a pilot boards a vessel, he / she is given **"conduct of the vessel"**,but not **“command”**. The role of the pilot often includes:

* giving necessary instructions to the ships personnel operating equipment essential to the safe navigation and manoeuvring of the vessel;
* assisting local communication with a VTS centre, port control and other vessels;
* communicating instructions to tugs and linesmen if berthing or sailing;
* providing current and specialist knowledge of;
* local conditions and traffic;
* operational status of aids to navigation;
* sailing directions;
* restrictions applicable to the piloted vessel;
* being able to quickly adapt to:
* operational culture aboard the vessel;
* the vessel’s handling characteristics;
* the state of the navigation equipment aboard

A Portable Pilot Unit (PPU) can be generally described as a portable, computer-based system that a pilot may bring onboard a vessel to use as a decision-support tool for navigating in confined waters. Interfaced to a positioning sensor such as GPS/DGPS and using some form of electronic chart display, it shows the vessel’s position/movement in real-time. In addition, PPUs provide information about the location/movement of other vessels via an AIS interface. Increasingly, PPUs are being used to display other types of navigation-related information such as soundings/depth contours from recent hydro surveys, dynamic water levels, current flow, ice coverage, and security zones.

### Types of Pilotage

Pilotage services exist within declared ports but may also exist in some coastal areas, lakes and inland waterways. These areas would normally fall within the definition of restricted waters.

Where pilotage services are licensed, it is usual for the applicable pilotage area to be stated on the licence. The service provider may then be described as a port pilot or a coastal pilot etc.

Various levels of enforcement can be applied to a pilotage area:

* **Compulsory (Mandatory) pilotage:**  Applicable vessels must take a pilot when entering a declared area.

Some Competent Authorities require compulsory (mandatory) pilotage for vessels of certain characteristics and/or carrying specific types of cargo when entering a declared area.

In Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA) approved by IMO, Additional Protective Measures may be applied to shipping, which could include compulsory pilotage arrangements.

* **Recommended pilotage:**  An authority can promulgate notices recommending that masters of applicable vessels, who are unfamiliar with a particular area, should engage a licensed pilot.



Photo courtesy of Instituto Hydrografico (Portugal)

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### Other Pilotage Considerations

Pilot Services can be provided by public or private operators. However, generally the pilot licensing authority should be government-regulated to maintain the highest standards of service.

The IMO has set the minimum standards for pilots and includes recommendations on the qualification and training of pilots other than deep sea pilots[[1]](#footnote-1). However individual countries may impose more stringent standards.



Photo courtesy of Swedish Maritime Administration

When developing proposals for marking restricted waterways, the requirement for pilotage services should be considered concurrently with the selection of the aids to navigation.

### Simulation Pilot training and certification

The IMO Assembly in 2003 adopted Resolution A.960(23) Recommendations on training and certification and operational procedures for maritime pilots other than deep-sea pilots. IMO Resolutions encouraging the use of pilots on board ships in certain areas are:

* Resolution A.480(IX) (adopted in 1975) recommends the use of qualified deep-sea pilots in the Baltic and Resolution A.620(15) (adopted 1987) recommends that ships with a draught of 13 metres or more should use the pilotage services established by Coastal States in the entrances to the Baltic Sea;
* Resolution A.486(XII) (adopted 1981) recommends the use of deep-sea pilots in the North Sea, English Channel and Skagerrak;
* Resolution A.579(14) (adopted 1985) recommends that certain oil tankers, all chemical carriers and gas carriers and ships carrying radioactive material using the Sound (which separates Sweden and Denmark) should use pilotage services;
* Resolution A.668(16) (adopted 1989) recommends the use of pilotage services in the Euro-Channel and IJ-Channel (in the Netherlands);IMO Resolution MEPC.133(53), which recommends that Governments recognize the need for effective protection of the Torres Strait and inform ships flying their flag that they should act in accordance with Australia’s system of pilotage for merchant ships 70m in length and over or oil tankers, chemical tankers, and liquefied gas carriers, irrespective of size, when navigating the Torres Strait and the Great North East Channel.
* Resolution A.827(19) (adopted 1995) on Ships' Routeing includes in Annex 2 Rules and Recommendations on Navigation through the Strait of Istanbul, the Strait of Canakkale and the Marmara Sea the recommendation that "Masters of vessels passing through the Straits are strongly recommended to avail themselves of the services of a qualified pilot in order to comply with the requirements of safe navigation.";;
* Resolution A.889(21) on Pilot Transfer Arrangements gives recommendations on the construction of pilot ladders;
* Resolution A.960(23) gives recommendations on training and certification and operational procedures for Maritime Pilots other than Deep Sea pilots.

1. IMO Resolution A.960(23). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)