



EMPA RECOMMENDATION ON PILOT BOAT OPERATION AND MANNING

Introduction

The transfer of a Pilot between a pilot boat and ship presents significant risks that need to be carefully addressed. This recommendation provides minimum requirements for establishing safe operating procedures for pilot transfer operations, which should be developed after conducting an appropriate and thorough risk assessment.

Consideration

Taking into account:

- The considerable number of accidents and incidents involving the pilot transfer to and from a vessel;
- The risks involved in pilot transfer operations;
- The safety of maritime pilots and crews;
- A crucial role of the pilot boat crew is the recovery of persons from water;
- The protection of the marine environment;
- The safety and efficiency of the flow of marine traffic;
- IMO Res. A.960(23) – Recommendations on Training and Certification and on Operational Procedures for Maritime Pilots other than Deep-Sea Pilots;
- Local and national requirements regarding pilot transfer to and from vessels, such as the UK MCA Boarding and Landing Code.

Policy

- Drills shall never endanger the Pilots and pilot boat crews;
- Pilot boats should be equipped with minimum equipment taking in consideration European Maritime Pilots' Association Recommendation on Minimum Demands for Life-Saving and Recovering Equipment in Pilot boats;
- Pilots should comply with European Maritime Pilots' Association Recommendation on Fatigue Prevention – especially: "*Pilots should begin their watch period fit for duty; this includes not being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or substances which impair their ability to perform their duty*";

- Pilot boat crews should begin their watch period fit for duty; this includes not being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or substances which impair their ability to perform their duty;
- The pilot boats should be fully equipped and ready for normal transfer and emergency recovery operations. Any deficiency must be reported immediately to the Pilot. After risk assessment, it should be decided whether or not to use the pilot boat;
- Immediately after commissioning, or in the event of using a different pilot boat, all pilots and pilot boat crews should receive appropriate training in pilot boat operations;
- Success or failure of a rescue is related directly to the competence of the pilot boat crew and their familiarity with the recovery equipment, training in the treatment of cold water shock, artificial resuscitation and hypothermia;
- Coxswains and pilot boat crew should be appropriately trained in the operation of the boat, its systems and pilot transfer operations. Competence should be demonstrated, recorded and maintained through a Continuous Professional Development process;
- Before their initial training, Pilots should be familiar with the recovery equipment on their pilot boats. At the same training stage Pilots must receive man-overboard recovery training, that will be updated at intervals not exceeding 5 years.
- All sea going pilotage staff should receive training in resuscitation and the treatment of cold water shock, and hold a Personal Survival Techniques Certificate;
- The authorised service provider of pilot boat operations must develop and have in place, emergency action plans relating to pilot transfer operations;
- Additional specialist training in emergency response and immediate emergency care should also be considered for pilot boat crews and Pilots;
- Training should include but not be limited to:
 - Boarding and landing techniques;
 - Correct positioning of vessel and pilot boat for pilot transfer;
 - Personal safety of crews and pilots;
 - Correct pilot ladder rigging – ref. IMO Res 1045(27) – Pilot transfer arrangements
[http://www.imo.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/Documents/A%20-%20Assembly/1045\(27\).pdf](http://www.imo.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/Documents/A%20-%20Assembly/1045(27).pdf)
 - Safety during transfer operations;
 - Survival techniques at sea;
 - Recovery techniques from sea.
- A retrieval drill for pilot boat crew and check listing of recovery equipment should be carried out on regular basis to ensure a satisfactory level of competence. All drills and checks should be recorded with an appropriate logbook entry;
- Depending on the time of the year, drills must also be performed close to pilotage operational limit levels. Drills in good weather conditions are good policy, but in a harsh environment, other requirements are needed, and must be trained for.

EMPA Recommends:

- In the interest of the safety of pilots, safety and efficiency of navigation, and protection of the environment, the European Maritime Pilots' Association strongly recommends that all Member Associations fully develop a training program that includes survival at sea and recovering techniques.
- Member associations should ensure that pilots and pilot boat crews are competent and trained to provide a safe transfer of pilots. Regular training should include emergency procedures in order to handle Man Over Board situations efficiently.
- Member associations should ensure that the pilot boats are fit for purpose and fitted with sufficient and adequate recovery equipment according to the manning of the boat.
- Pilot boats must be manned by sufficient trained crew so that they can recover persons from the water in all weather conditions they are required to operate.
- A risk assessment involving the pilot boat crew and pilots from the operating area shall be undertaken to determine the appropriate number of pilot boat crew.

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