



Office of
Deputy Commissioner
of Maritime Affairs

THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
LIBERIA MARITIME AUTHORITY

Marine Notice

SAF-014
Rev. 08/24

**TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF
MERCHANT SHIPS, AGENTS AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

SUBJECT: Pilot Transfer Arrangements

References: (a) **Maritime Regulation 2.35**
(b) **SOLAS 1988, as amended, Chapter V**
(c) **Resolution A.1045(27)**
(d) **MSC.1/Circ.1375/Rev.1**
(e) **MSC.1/Circ.1428**
(f) **MSC.1/Circ.1495/Rev.1**

PURPOSE:

This Notice provides guidance to vessel owners, operators and managers on compliance and maintenance of pilot transfer arrangements, including notification on counterfeit products and the latest developments from IMO.

APPLICABILITY:

This Notice applies to all ships to which the SOLAS Convention applies.

1.0 REQUIREMENTS:

1.1 The current requirements for pilot transfer arrangements in Regulation 23 of SOLAS applies to “equipment and arrangements for pilot transfer which are installed on or after 1 July 2012”. **MSC.1/Circ.1375/Rev.1** provides IMO’s interpretation of this statement.

This also includes compliance with the standards in **Resolution A.1045(27)**.

1.2 Equipment and arrangements for pilot transfer which are provided on ships before 1 July 2012 shall at least comply with the requirements of regulation 17 or 23 of Chapter V of SOLAS, as applicable, along with the standards adopted by IMO prior to that date.

1.3 All arrangements used for pilot transfer shall efficiently fulfil their purpose of enabling pilots to embark and disembark safely. The appliances shall be kept clean, properly maintained and stowed and shall be regularly inspected to ensure that they are safe to use. They shall be used solely for the embarkation and disembarkation of personnel.

- 1.5 The rigging of the pilot transfer arrangements and the embarkation of a pilot shall be supervised by a responsible officer having means of communication with the navigation bridge and who shall also arrange for the escort of the pilot by a safe route to and from the navigation bridge. Personnel engaged in rigging and operating any mechanical equipment shall be instructed in the safe procedures to be adopted and the equipment shall be tested prior to use. The requirements for boarding arrangements for pilots is contained in [MSC.1/Circ.1428](#).
- 1.6 Pilot ladders shall be certified by the manufacturer as complying with Regulation 23 of SOLAS or with ISO 799:2004, *Ships and marine technology – Pilot ladders* and inspected on a periodical basis. All pilot ladders used for pilot transfer shall be clearly identified with tags or other permanent marking to enable identification of each appliance for the purposes of survey, inspection and record keeping. A record shall be kept on the ship as to the date the identified ladder is placed into service and any repairs effected.

2.0 PILOT TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS WITH EMBARKATION LADDER AND TRAPDOOR SYSTEM

Where the distance from the surface of the water to the point of access to the ship is more than 9 meters, an arrangement consisting of an accommodation and pilot ladder shall be carried on each side, unless the equipment is capable of being transferred for use on either side.

When an accommodation ladder lower platform with a trapdoor system is used, the pilot ladder shall extend above the lower platform of the accommodation ladder, to the height of the handrails.

Trapdoor systems where the pilot ladder extends to only the height of the accommodation ladder lower platform will not be accepted.

3.0 COUNTERFEIT PILOT LADDERS

Several advisories have been issued recently concerning counterfeit pilot and embarkation ladders. In one case, a company copied a certified product and created their own counterfeit certificate for their pilot ladder and then sold the counterfeit product to customers who thought they were purchasing the genuine item.

The advisory can be found at the below link:

<https://www.amsa.gov.au/safety-navigation/navigating-coastal-waters/counterfeit-pilot-ladders-and-certificates-advisory>

In another case, a failed embarkation ladder, which caused serious injury to a surveyor, was found to be counterfeit and included incomplete markings and the use of step fixtures of poor quality.

It is recommended that vessel owners, operators and managers inspect all pilot and embarkation ladders on board their vessels to ensure they are genuine, approved products.

4.0 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT IMO

At the eleventh meeting of IMO’s Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) draft amendments to regulation 23 of Chapter V of SOLAS, along with a draft MSC Resolution for “Performance Standards for Pilot Transfer Arrangements”, were agreed. These amendments will make the current recommendatory requirements for pilot transfer arrangements mandatory under SOLAS. It is anticipated that these amendments will come into effect on 01 January 2028, subject to approval and adoption by IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee.

The draft mandatory performance standard includes a requirement for pilot ladders including spare ladders and manropes to be removed from service, either:

- (i) at any time they are found not to be complying with the performance standards, or,
- (ii) within 36 months after the date of manufacture, or,
- (iii) within 30 months after the date of being placed into service, whichever comes first.

The draft mandatory performance standard also includes requirements for periodic maintenance and inspections to be carried out for pilot transfer arrangements, instructions to be supplied for the care, maintenance, inspection and stowage of pilot ladders, manropes and all associated equipment, and that a maintenance plan be developed and available for inspection.

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