

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 during Pilot transfers to and from a vessel;
- The risks involved in Pilot transfer operations;
- The safety of Maritime Pilots and pilot boat crews;
- The crucial role of the pilot boat crew in the recovery of persons from the water;
- The protection of the marine environment;
- The safe and efficient flow of marine traffic;
- EMPA Recommendation on Pilot's Training;
- EMPA Recommendation on Fatigue;
- EMPA Recommendation on Situational Awareness;
- EMPA Recommendation on Minimum Demands for Lifesaving and Recovering Equipment in Pilot boats
- 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 transfers to and from vessels, such as the UK MCA Boarding and Landing Code.

Policy

- The role of EMPA is to facilitate the exchange of information between its members to continuously improve the professional and technical proficiency of Maritime Pilots in its Member Associations, Pilots within the EU, and in neighbouring countries.
- EMPA aims to assure the safety of all Maritime Pilots in the EU and neighbouring countries by increasing the safety and efficiency of navigation, thereby enhancing environmental protection from ship-borne pollutants.
- EMPA strongly defends and advocates that pilotage as an essential and unique service to the shipping industry, can only be performed in an environment free from competition.
- EMPA aims to work at the forefront of our profession and collaborate with all stakeholders.
- EMPA recommendations offer practical advice, drawing from its members' collective knowledge and experience, to be read in addition to local, national, and international regulations. These recommendations provide information to Pilots, shipowners, and Captains, advising also, stakeholders that directly or indirectly impact the maritime industry.
- EMPA recommendations should be read in conjunction with equipment instructions and manuals. These recommendations are to support training, not replace training and are not to be interpreted as conflicting with local, national, or international regulations.

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.
- Drills are not to endanger the Pilot and pilot boat crew;
- Pilot boats to 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;
- That Pilots and Pilot boat crew comply with European Maritime Pilots' Association Recommendation on Fatigue Prevention;
- 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;



- That the pilot boats are fully equipped and ready for normal transfer and emergency recovery operations. Any deficiencies must be reported immediately to the Pilot;
- Immediately after commissioning, or in the event of using a different pilot boat, all Pilots and pilot boat crews 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 is paramount;
- Coxswains and pilot boat crew are 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 the initial training, Pilots are familiar with the recovery equipment on their pilot boats. At the same training stage Pilots are advised to receive man-overboard recovery training, that will be updated at regular intervals.
- That all sea going pilotage staff receive training in resuscitation and the treatment of cold-water shock, and hold a Personal Survival Techniques Certificate;
- Pilot boat operator needs to develop and has in place, an emergency action plan relating to Pilot transfer operations;
- Additional specialist training in emergency response and immediate emergency care is considered for pilot boat crews and Pilots;
- Training to include at least the following:
 - 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
 - Safety during transfer operations;
 - Survival techniques at sea;
 - Recovery techniques from sea.
- A MoB recovery drill for pilot boat crew and maintenance check list of recovery equipment is carried out on a regular basis, preferably not exceeding a month. It is recommended the drill routine to be carried out by all crews and on all pilot boats, as rescue equipment may vary from pilot boat to pilot boat, ensuring a satisfactory level of competence on all boats. Drills and checks should be recorded with an appropriate logbook entry;
- That depending on the time of the year, drills are performed as close to pilot transfer operational limits as possible. Drills in fine weather conditions are good policy, but in a harsh environment, other requirements are needed, and crew must be trained for those circumstances. It is recommended, in order to avoid the increase of risks in poor weather conditions, to use MoB dummies.

- Training in poor weather conditions can highlight limitations with boats, and equipment as well as highlight any shortcomings in training.
- 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;
- Pilot transfer limitations can only be established through thorough risk assessment and training in poor weather conditions. Pilot transfer operations should not take place outside of established operational limitations.
- 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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