

**Title:** Safe Marine Pilot Transfer (MPT) Arrangement - Pilot Ladder

**Reference:** *IMO Res. A.1045(27)*  
*SOLAS Chapter V Reg.23*  
*AMSA Marine Notice 04/2023 – Pilot Transfer Arrangements*  
*ISO 799-1:2019 (as amended) – Design and specification.*  
*ISO 799-2:2021 (as amended) – Maintenance, use, survey, and inspection.*  
*ISO 799-3:2022 (as amended) – Attachments and associated equipment.*  
*ARCSOPT Marine Pilot Transfer Arrangements – 03/2023*

**Scope:** Vessel Masters and Operators – All vessels arriving and departing ports in New South Wales.

### Background

The substandard condition of the pilot ladders and their associated equipment, inadequate maintenance regimes, incorrect rigging, and a lack of awareness have been established as the major contributors to several significant incidents during pilot transfers.

To ensure the potential risks and the safety concerns surrounding the marine pilot transfers are effectively addressed and to ensure a standardised approach to marine pilot transfer arrangements, the Port Authority of New South Wales has mandated the below minimum safety criteria which would come into force on **01 October 2023**.

### Minimum Safety Criteria

- 1) Maximum permissible age of pilot ladders – 30 months from the date of manufacture unless the ladder has been subjected to the ladder and step attachment strength test (as prescribed in ISO 799-1:2019) at not more than 30-month intervals.
- 2) Maximum permissible age of the manropes – 12 months from the date of manufacture. Grade 1 manila rope, diameter 28–32 mm to be used with pilot ladders.
- 3) Vessel operators to provide ship-specific guidance to the vessel's crew on:
  - a. Storage, care, inspection and maintenance of the pilot ladders, manropes, and all the other associated equipment including combination (pilot assist) ladders.
  - b. Rigging and securing of the pilot ladders and combination ladder arrangement, the acceptable securing method for pilot ladders mounted on reels, acceptable material, and sizes for securing ropes.
- 4) All Pilot ladders, manropes and associated equipment are to be used exclusively for marine transfers and to be marked as 'For Marine Transfers only'.
- 5) Original certificates issued by the certifying authority for all the pilot ladders, manropes, securing and lifting arrangements to be retained onboard.

Any questions regarding this Harbour Master Instruction should be addressed to the [Harbour Master Team](#)

For a list of Harbour Master Instructions currently in force, please see:

[Harbour Master's Instructions - External | Port Authority New South Wales \(portauthoritynsw.com.au\)](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can the pilot ladder be used after 30 months from the date of manufacture?**

Yes, the pilot ladder can be used after 30 months from the date of manufacture if it passes a ladder and step attachment strength test as per ISO -799-1:2019(as amended). In extenuating circumstances the Port Authority may permit the pilot ladder to be used following a risk-based approach.

### **If the pilot ladder is more than 30 months old before 1 October 2023, can it be used for pilot transfer?**

The ladder may be used up to 1 October 2023, provided that the Pilot ladder and all associated equipment have been properly maintained, inspected, are free from defects and are fit for use.

### **Who can carry out the ladder and step attachment strength test?**

The ladder and step attachment strength test must be carried out by the manufacturer or at a facility approved by the manufacturer or the vessel's Flag State or a Classification Society.

### **What is the validity of the ladder and step attachment strength test?**

The ladder and step attachment strength test must be carried out at intervals not exceeding 30 months. The pilot ladder will be considered unacceptable if the ladder and step attachment strength test is older than 30 months.

### **Can the vessel crew carry out repairs to the pilot ladder?**

Pilot ladder repairs must only be carried out by the manufacturer or at a manufacturer-approved repair facility, or a facility approved by the flag state or a classification society.

### **Can an exemption be given for the use of manropes older than 12 months from the date of manufacture?**

The man ropes must be replaced before 12 months from the date of manufacture. Use of man ropes 12 months after the date of manufacture is not permitted.

### **If the vessel carries out marine pilot transfer by helicopter, is a compliant pilot ladder still required?**

Marine pilot transfers can be carried out by pilot boat or helicopter, as per operational requirements and the method of pilot boarding can change at short notice. Therefore, all vessels are required to comply with this Harbour Master Instruction.