

Pilot transfer arrangements

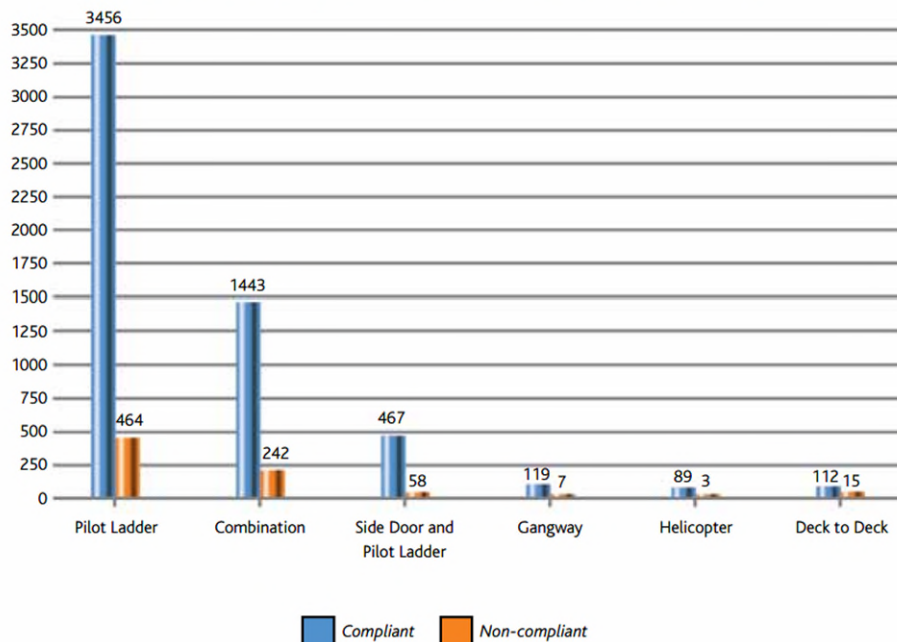
1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Safety Alert is issued by The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) to bring the results of the International Maritime Pilot Association (IMPA) Safety Campaign 2020 to the attention of seafarers, pilots, owners, managers and Classification Societies.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 IMPA represents the international community of pilots. It conducts an annual safety campaign with the objective of reporting pilots' experiences of ladders and boarding equipment to the International Maritime Organization and the wider shipping community. This year's campaign is especially relevant following the tragic death of two pilots, whilst attempting to board vessels using combination ladders, since the last campaign.
- 2.2 2020's campaign received 6394 reports from pilots operating across the world. Broadly in line with previous years' findings, 12.11% of arrangements were reported to be non-compliant with combination ladders and pilot ladders having the most defects by both number and percentage.

COMPLIANCE AND NON-COMPLIANCE BY MEANS OF TRANSFER



3. Common defects

- 3.1 Broadly, reported defects can be categorised in to four areas: design, procedure, rigging and maintenance.
- 3.2 Procedural issues can be avoided through clear communication and implementation of requirements:

SAFETY EQUIPMENT DEFECTS	TOTAL	AS %
Inadequate lighting at night	36	21.43
No lifebuoy with self-igniting light	49	29.17
No VHF communication with the bridge	10	5.95
No heaving line	36	21.43
No responsible officer in attendance	31	18.45
Other	6	3.57
TOTAL	168	

- 3.3 Defects identified in the rigging and maintenance of ladders are generally self-explanatory and can be reduced through an effective planned maintenance regime and consistent application of guidance:

DEFECTS OF PILOT LADDER	TOTAL	AS %
Not against ship's hull	69	10.36
Steps not of suitable material	5	0.75
Poorly rigged retrieval line	138	20.72
Steps broken	22	3.3
Steps not equally spaced	29	4.35
Pilot Ladder more than 9 metres	5	0.75
Steps dirty/slippery	29	4.35
Sideropes not of suitable material	8	1.2
Pilot Ladder too far forward/Aft	17	2.55
Steps painted	19	2.85
Incorrect step fittings	34	5.11
No bulwark ladder	7	1.05
Steps not horizontal	121	18.17
Other	163	24.47
TOTAL	666	

- 3.4 Many of the common issues found with securing of pilot ladders are steps taken by crews as a way to work around constraints imposed by deck cargo, loading or other prevailing circumstances. Attention is drawn to the following common issues that should be avoided.

Common defect	Why non-compliant
Use of deck tongue	If weight is momentarily removed due to swell or interaction with the launch the ladder, and pilot, may be lost. Weight of ladder (and user) is on a single step, which may not have sufficient strength to comply with loading requirements.
Ladder rigged over railings	Pilot needs to climb over railing or manoeuvre sideways to reach opening in railings, increasing risk of falling. Railings are generally not certified to comply with loading requirements.
Ladders secured to deck fittings	Vents, sounding pipes and other non-load tested fittings are not certified to comply with loading requirements.
Ladder reel on winch brake only	Ladder not secured to a strongpoint independent of the winch. Increases risks due to single point failure.

3.5 Combination ladders continue to be problematic, especially on vessels with a large range of operating freeboards. Attention is drawn to the following common issues that should be avoided.

Common defect	Why non-compliant
Incorrect set-up for freeboard	Combinations with too much (or not enough) climb from <u>water level</u> to accommodation ladder platform (maximum 9m, minimum 1.5m) increase risk of injury.
Accommodation or pilot ladder not secured to hull	Both pilot ladder and accommodation ladder must be secured to the hull, they must also be secured independently to avoid the entire arrangement collapsing in the event of a single failure.
Unsafe platform	Stanchions are required on both sides of the accommodation ladder's platform to allow safe transfer and reduce risk of falling.
Accommodation ladder on winch brake only	When the ladder is not secured to a strongpoint independent of the winch it increases risks due to single point failure.
Non-compliant trapdoor system	If the ladder does not run through the platform it increases difficulty to climb and therefore risk of falling. When the ladder is not attached to the hull independently of the accommodation ladder it increase risks due to single point failure. Trapdoor openings should be of a sufficient size to allow safe passage.

4. Design Approval

- 4.1 It should be noted that there are many trapdoor systems and other means of transfer that have been identified as non-compliant despite Class approval. Seafarers, owners, managers and Classification Societies are urged to check that pilot transfer arrangements onboard their vessels meet statutory requirements.

5. Reporting

- 5.1 In order to further understand the scale and the consequence of such issues affecting safety during transfer, pilots and crews are encouraged to report non-compliant pilot transfer arrangement on Bahamas registered vessels to casualty@bahamasmaritime.com. Please include photographic evidence of the non-compliance and steps taken to facilitate safe transfer.

6. Further reading

- 6.1 SOLAS Chapter V, regulation 23, provides the basis on requirements for pilot boarding arrangements, associated equipment, clear access and lighting as well as responsibilities of ship's personnel in rigging pilot transfer equipment. Further detail is given in IMO Resolution A.1045(27)¹ and ISO 799-1(2019)² is the international standard specifying requirements for construction of pilot ladders. Bahamas National Requirements section 4.6.14 specifies national requirements.
- 6.2 The full results of the IMPA safety campaign can be found at: www.IMPAhq.org
- 6.3 There are several published guides to safely rigging a pilot ladder:
International Chamber of Shipping *Pilot Transfer Arrangements* available from:
www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/resources/safety-security-and-operations/shipping-industry-guidance-on-pilot-transfer-arrangements.pdf
Fathom Safety *A Guide to Pilot Ladder Securing* available from:
www.fathomsafety.co.uk
New Zealand Maritime Pilot Association *A Guide for Pilot Boarding Operations in New Zealand When Using Combination Arrangements with a Trapdoor* available from:
<https://pilotladdersafety.com/nzmpa-issues-clear-guidelines-on-trapdoor-pilot-boarding-arrangements/>

7. Validity

- 7.1. This Safety Alert is valid until further notice.

¹[wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1045\(27\).pdf](http://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1045(27).pdf)

²www.iso.org/standard/68808.html