

Forth Pilotage Service

1 General

Ship owners and Masters of vessels subject to compulsory pilotage must employ the services of an authorised pilot whilst navigating within that part of the Authority's area of jurisdiction as detailed in Pilotage Direction No. 6 or any subsequent Pilotage Directions and, in the case of passenger carrying vessels, throughout the complete area.

Failure to comply with this requirement renders the Master liable to prosecution under Section 15 of the Pilotage Act, 1987.

2 ETA's and Confirmation

It is imperative that good notice is given of the requirement for a pilot's services. To comply with the compulsory procedure an ETA must relate to the time of arrival in the normal boarding and landing location. If the pilot boat is unable to supply a pilot in the normal location due to stress of weather or other unforeseen circumstances due allowance will be made.

In the case of a vessel engaged in the short-sea trade, the time of passing the compulsory ETA will be accepted as the time of leaving the previous port of call if this is less than the time stated below in the ETA requirements.

Forth Pilot Station

Inward bound vessels requiring a pilot for any of the ports or harbours within the Forth should give prior notice to the Pilot Station 24 hours in advance. They should communicate their ETA, gross tonnage, maximum draft and port of destination. A compulsory ETA must be given 12 hours in advance. Anything less than the required notice of compulsory ETA could involve vessels in delay, as well as the imposition of a surcharge on pilotage dues.

Confirmation of the compulsory ETA should be given by VHF radio contact direct with the Pilot Station two hours before arrival.

Vessels having complied with the above then having anchored in one of the designated anchorages (i.e. Aberlady, Kirkcaldy, or a small vessel anchorage) must give the Pilot Station notice of requirement of the services of a pilot four hours in advance. Failure to give such notice accurate within 2 hours either side could involve vessels in delay, as well as the imposition of a surcharge on pilotage dues.

3 Communications

Long range ETA's may be passed by e-mail or through the vessels agent.

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The shore Pilot Stations and pilot boats are equipped with VHF radio but attempts to establish direct communication at extreme ranges cause much unnecessary interference. On their final approach to the boarding point, all vessels should, if possible, remain in direct contact with the pilot boat as this facilitates shipping the pilot.

Forth Pilot Station

The Forth Pilot Station is manned by a Duty Pilot from 0700 hours to 1900 hours and is equipped with telephone, VHF and fax.

Tel. No: 0131 552 1420

Fax: 0131 551 5869

E-mail: forthpilots@forthports.co.uk

VHF Radio - Call Sign is "FORTH PILOTS"

Between the hours of 1900 hours and 0700 hours the above contact details are monitored by Forth and Tay Navigation Service who will deal with pilotage communications between these hours.

A 24 hour listening watch is maintained on Channel 72 (VHF). This is also the working frequency for the exchange of operational messages.

4 Boarding Points

Pilot boats having a black hull and flying the pilot flag and at night exhibiting lights and signals in accordance with Rule No. 29 of the International Rules for prevention of Collisions at Sea, operate from their respective stations to board and land pilots under normal circumstances in the following areas:-

FAIRWAY BUOY – vessels 150m in length and over inbound passing either north or south of Inchkeith should board their pilot at the Fairway Buoy.

INCHKEITH BOARDING STATION – vessels less than 150m in length inbound passing north of Inchkeith should board their pilot at a position north of No 3 Deep Water Channel Buoy.

NARROW DEEP BOARDING STATION – vessels under 150M in length inbound passing south of Inchkeith should board their pilot at a position north east of the Narrow Deep Buoy.

KIRKCALDY ANCHORAGES – vessels 150m in length and over inbound from the Kilo Anchorages to embark a pilot must not proceed south of the line of 56⁰ 05’N until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel.

ALPHA ANCHORAGES – vessels 150m in length and over inbound from the Alpha anchorages must not proceed west of 3⁰ 00’W until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel. All vessels anchored in A4 and A5 should remain in the anchorage until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel.

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INCHKEITH SMALL VESSEL ANCHORAGE – vessels should remain in the anchorage until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel.

METHIL ROADS – Position 56⁰ 10'N 003⁰ 00'W – vessels should remain in the anchorage until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel.

COCKENZIE SMALL VESSEL ANCHORAGE – vessels should remain in the anchorage until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel.

Adverse Weather Conditions

If the pilot boat is unable to operate in the normal location due to adverse weather conditions and other unforeseen circumstances, information on the service available may be obtained from the relevant Pilot Station.

ETD's and Confirmations

In the case of vessels departing from any port, harbour or terminal within the Forth it is also imperative that adequate notice is given of the requirement for a pilot's services. An ETD must relate to the time when the vessel is ready to leave her berth. The master or Agent must communicate their ETD to the Duty Pilot at the Pilot Station at the earliest possible opportunity but not later than 4 hours before the ETD. A compulsory ETD must be given two hours in advance. Anything less than the required notice of compulsory ETD could involve vessels in delay, as well as the imposition of a surcharge on pilotage dues.

5 Boarding and Landing Pilot

Mariners will appreciate the need to provide a satisfactory lee when boarding or landing a pilot and may be requested by the pilot vessel to change speed and heading to enable the operation to be carried out safely.

Boarding Submarines

Submarines are difficult to board owing to the nature of their construction and how they lie in the water. Manoeuvring the pilot cutter and transferring the pilot should be pre-determined. Therefore procedures for boarding should be as follows:

- Agent/Navy Liaison to confirm the boarding procedure and boarding position in advance
- Darkness boarding should be discouraged, but if necessary, an extra pilot vessel crewman will be required to operate searchlight
- There is to be a pre-boarding discussion between cutter and submarine
- Confirmation from submarine that there is a suitably prepared person on board to assist pilot as required.

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