



Coronavirus Resilience: Maritime Pilot Transfer Arrangements - suggested procedure at UK ports

31 March 2020

This guidance note has been prepared in consultation with a collection of UK maritime trade associations and is designed to give some non-prescriptive options to help pilotage authorities remain resilient. There are a wide variety of pilotage options around the UK and our approximately 500 maritime pilots are an important component in facilitating a wide number of shipping movements, helping to maintain supply chains and trade. Pilots and other port and maritime operatives have been identified as 'Key Workers' by the Government and therefore expected to carry out their roles in as normal a way as possible whilst being mindful of advice on limiting the potential spread of COVID-19. The guidance is intended to supplement other local transfer advice such as already exists or be integrated, either in full or in part, where appropriate. It does not attempt to alter or replace the safety advice contained in the Pilotage Boarding and Landing Code or any Workboat Codes merely highlight procedures that will contribute to limiting the risks presented by infectious diseases such as COVID-19. The guidance is non statutory and harbour authorities may wish to use sections as appropriate.

Suggested procedures:

Like many Key Workers in other occupations, it will not always be practically possible to follow the Government's guidance to maintain a two-metre distance at all times during pilotage and pilot cutter operations. However the following measures could greatly reduce the likelihood of spreading COVID-19 if followed closely as far as practically possible but subject to review:

- Prior to boarding a cutter, the coxswain and crew should ensure they are not suffering with any of the symptoms of COVID-19 nor are any members of their household, i.e. the people they live with (in this case they should self-isolate in line with Government guidance)
- The cutter crew shall have all washed their hands thoroughly prior to boarding the cutter
- The coxswain/crew shall ensure that the cutter is clean and that appropriate areas such as handrails and seats are wiped down with a soap-based or disinfectant solution or wipes after each run. They should also aim to have an on board supply of hand sanitiser/wipes which are used regularly, especially on entry into the cabin
- Where possible the cutter should be as ventilated as possible with fresh air
- The pilot shall also be symptom free, having thoroughly washed their hands prior to boarding
- If the pilot is joining from a ship, the cutter crew should where possible provide disposable hand wipes to the pilot and have a suitable way to dispose of them after use
- Pilots should observe the highest precautions with their own health and to minimise exposure whilst on board the cutter, and minimise physical contact with cutter crew members if not essential or use of gloves where possible, maintaining as much distance as practical
- To aid physical distancing, for some operations the Competent Harbour Authority may wish to limit the number pilots transferred on a single cutter and, subject to boat size and seating arrangements attempt to maintain as close as is possible to a 2 metre space for those on board
- Consumption of food or drink whilst on board the cutter should be avoided unless essential
- Prior to boarding or landing the Pilot, the coxswain can, if possible, confirm via radio with the master of the ship that previous advice provided to the harbour authority/VTS that all on board are healthy. Some authorities may choose to seek this confirmation through their VTS.

There could be differences on the rare occasions a pilot may be asked/required to board a visiting ship that has, or suspects it has a member/s of crew experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. The industry is seeking advice from the UK Government about how this should be approached and what procedure including the specification of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) might be required. Separate advice as how to dress and de-clothe this PPE is also being sought.