



# **EMPA RECOMMENDATION ON MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR LIFE-SAVING AND RECOVERY EQUIPMENT ON PILOT BOATS**

## **Introduction**

The transfer of a Pilot between a Pilot boat and ship presents significant risks that need to be carefully addressed, but when managed correctly these risks are reduced to a reasonable level that provides a safe means of access.

Formal and frequent training of Pilots and pilot boat crews is imperative to ensure familiarity with the MOB recovery and lifesaving equipment carried, greatly improving the chances of survival in case of an accident.

Pilot boats must be manned by a sufficient number of trained crew so that they can recover persons from the water in all weather conditions they are required to operate. The owners/managers of the Pilot boat must assure the competence and fitness for duty of the crew.

This recommendation provides minimum requirements for life saving and recovery equipment in Pilot boats, which must be further developed by each Member Association after conducting a thorough risk assessment.

## **Consideration**

Taking into account:

When any person accidentally falls into the water wearing/and or carrying all their working and personal protective equipment, they may experience a greatly reduced capacity of movement due to, but not limited to, an increase in weight, ambient and water temperature, weather conditions, cold shock or becoming unconscious as a result of the fall into the water

- Accidents and incidents during the Pilot transfer.
- The risks involved in Pilot transfer operations.
- The safety of Maritime Pilots and crews.
- The crucial role of the Pilot boat crew in the recovery of persons from water.
- The protection of the marine environment.

- The safety and efficiency of the flow of marine traffic;
- EMPA Recommendation on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Clothing for the Maritime Pilots.
- EMPA Recommendation on Pilot Boat Operation and Manning.
- EMPA Recommendation on Pilots' Training.
- Local and national requirements regarding Pilot transfer 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.
- Pilot boats must always be equipped with the adequate equipment according to the risk assessment performed.
- Pilot boats need to be designed and constructed to enable the safe and swift boarding and landing of Pilots to take place while protecting the safety of personnel working on the open deck and must be fully equipped and ready for normal transfer and emergency recovery operations. Any deficiency must be reported immediately to the Pilot. After risk assessment, it should be decided whether or not to use the Pilot boat.

- Immediately after commissioning, onboarding, or in the event of using a different type of Pilot boat, all Pilots and Pilot boat crews should receive appropriate training in Pilot boat operations, its safety- and emergency recovery equipment;
- Success or failure of a rescue is directly related to the competence of the Pilot boat crew and their familiarity with the recovery equipment, training in the treatment of cold-water shock, resuscitation and hypothermia.
- Coxswains and Pilot boat crews should be appropriately trained in the operation of the boat, its systems and Pilot transfer operations.
- Before their initial training, Pilots should be familiar with the recovery equipment on their Pilot boats. At the same training stage Pilots must receive man-overboard recovery training.
- A retrieval drill for Pilot boat crew and check listing of recovery equipment should be carried out on a regular basis to ensure a satisfactory level of competence. All drills, maintenance and checks list of the equipment should be recorded with an appropriate logbook entry.

## **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 minimum requirements for Life-Saving and Recovering Equipment on Pilot Boats.
- 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 and the environmental conditions.
- A risk assessment involving the Pilot boat crew and Pilots from the operating area shall be undertaken to determine the minimum crewing, as well as the appropriate life-saving and recovering equipment to be on board.
- Pending on local risk assessment EMPA recommends that Pilot boats must be equipped with the following equipment:
  - Lighting
    - Strong working deck lights fitted fore and aft, and a search-light which is permanently mounted so as to be capable of illuminating the ships side in way of the Pilot ladder or the sea area around the boat and at a considerable distance. Adoption of "intelligent search lights"<sup>i</sup> will be able to lock the man overboard – MOB,

- assisting in locating and speeding up the recovery process.
- Side decks should be adequately illuminated.
  - Life-saving equipment
    - Quick-release lifebuoys with floating light/smoke signals, or appropriate system to help locate the MOB.
    - At least a buoyant lifeline secured to the boat and linked to a U-shaped lifebuoy designed for MOB recovery.
    - Remote controlled buoys<sup>ii</sup> can allow the buoy to reach the MOB faster and even bringing the casualty closer, safely and faster to the Pilot boat side.
  - Recovery equipment
    - Efficient mechanical means for the retrieval of any person who falls overboard and the means to bring the person in the water to the retrieval point.
    - Where practicable, the arrangement should enable the person to be retrieved in a horizontal position, in order to reduce the risk of heart failure associated with hypothermia.
    - This may include:
      - A drop-down permanent stern platform or other permanent arrangement suitable to enable a crewmember to recover an unconscious MOB<sup>iii</sup>.
      - The retrieval from the side can also be recommended using a "cradle"<sup>iv</sup> or a scrambling net which extends at least 600mm below the waterline, or other means to aid the recovery of an unconscious person from the water.
      - Derricks can be also used but additional care should be paid due to the risks associated with hypothermia mentioned above.
      - Rescue platforms<sup>v</sup> can also be a good option to bring the MOB into a more sheltered area.
      - Transom steps and/or ladder or equivalent overside boarding ladder which extends at least 600mm below the waterline. Boarding the Pilot boat with this equipment by the stern needs to be carefully analysed as with bad weather it is really difficult to board, and may increase the risk of the Pilot boat hitting the MOB.

- The use of liferafts should also be considered. In case of harsh environment, it may be easier for the MOB to board this equipment being safe and protected than trying to recover the casualty to the Pilot boat
    - Specialized MOB hooks<sup>vi</sup> with blunt ends are very light and can reach long distances (between 3 to 5 mts) helping to move the MOB to the recovery area of the Pilot boat. The use of “Boat hooks” needs to be carefully addressed as it may be sharp and can injure the Pilot or deflate the air from the lifejacket.
      - The quality of materials, design and workmanship of construction of the mechanical means of retrieval should ensure that it can be rapidly deployed and will operate efficiently in an emergency.
  - First aid
    - In addition to the medical equipment required by the Administration a compact stretcher should be carried when possible.
    - Savior Medical<sup>vii</sup> and the UKMPA developed an Immediate Emergency Care program designed specifically for maritime boat crews and dock personnel, with an intuitive check-card system and extensive list of medical equipment.
  - Communications
    - Intercom system if possible “hands free” should be made available so that coxswain deckhand and Pilot are all the time in contact with each other.
    - Sign language should also be considered.
    - AIS/other homing devices to be installed onboard the Pilot boat to operate in conjunction with the Pilots Pilot Locator Beacon – PLB as referred to EMPA Recommendation on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Clothing for the Marine Pilot
- The efficiency of the equipment should be ensured by regular maintenance and testing.
- Reference to equipment manufacturers mentioned below at the endnote **DO NOT IMPLY EMPA’S APPROVAL**. These are only examples of different life-saving and recovery equipment available so that Member Associations can obtain knowledge of different options and kinds of equipment available. The equipment needs to be approved locally after conducting a thorough risk assessment and proper testing and training.

Revised 12/05  
Revised Rome GM 04/2023

- 
- i <https://searchmaster.dk/>
  - ii <https://www.usaferescue.com/>
  - iii <https://www.safehavenmarine.com/a-builders-perspective>
  - iv <https://www.jasonscradle.co.uk/>
  - v <https://www.surviteczodiac.com/LRDocs/Datasheets/RescueRamp.pdf>
  - vi <https://reachandrescue.com/carbon-composite-telescopic-poles/>
  - vii <https://www.saviourmedical.com/ukmpa-maritime-iec-course>