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| **Pilotage Services** | [Printer friendly version](javascript:void(null)) |

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* [Applying to be a Registered Pilotage Service](http://www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au/Web1/msvhome.nsf/HeadingPagesDisplay/Commercial+VesselsPilotage+Services?OpenDocument#Apply)
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**Introduction**  
Until 30 June 1999, services for the Victorian Ports of Melbourne, Geelong, and Hastings have been delivered under an exclusive agreement between the then Marine Board of Victoria and the Port Phillip Sea Pilots Pty Ltd.  
  
With the expiry of this agreement it is now possible for other providers of pilotage services to enter this market. Whilst no such agreement existed for the Port of Portland, a similar opportunity exists for increased competition.

**Requirement to use pilots**  
Section 96 of the [Marine Act 1988](http://www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubLawToday.nsf/a12f6f60fbd56800ca256de500201e54/bc14b8bf715780d0ca256ef4002224ac?OpenDocument) requires:

* A pilot licensed by Marine Safety Victoria must be engaged for vessels that are 35 metres in length or more, within the port waters of Geelong, Melbourne, Hastings and Portland.
* The only exception is those vessels which are under the control of a Master, who holds a valid pilotage exemption certificate.

There are certain Victorian ports and waterways that are not covered by compulsory pilotage requirements. Local knowledge certificate provisions apply for vessels planning to trade in these locations.

**Laws for providers of pilotage services**

* Part 3B of the Marine Act 1988 requires that the pilotage service providers for the commercial ports of Port Phillip, Geelong, Westernport and Portland are registered with Marine Safety Victoria.
* Schedule 6 of the Marine Act 1988 specifies the minimum Safety Standards for Pilotage Services Providers.

**Definition of a pilotage services provider**

1. The service of providing a licensed marine pilot to navigate a vessel within, into, or out of port waters, or
2. The service of providing transport and transfer of a licensed marine pilot to and from a vessel for which services under a) above are required, or
3. Providing both services described in a) and b) above.

**Applying to be a Registered Pilotage Service**  
Persons or organisations applying to be registered as a pilotage service provider must state what type of pilotage services the person or organisation proposes to provide.   
  
Persons or organisations interested should submit the information specified in [Section 4.3 of Marine Determination 6.5 Application for Registration as a Pilotage Services Provider (PDF, 93 KB, 7 pp.)](http://www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au/doi/doielect.nsf/2a6bd98dee287482ca256915001cff0c/bd7e6b98c65ebef2ca2570830021e9e6/$FILE/6-5%20Application%20Pilotage%20Services%20Provider.pdf)  
  
Corporations should submit the information specified in [Section 4.4 of Marine Determination 6.5 Application for Registration as a Pilotage Services Provider (PDF, 93 KB, 7 pp.)](http://www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au/doi/doielect.nsf/2a6bd98dee287482ca256915001cff0c/bd7e6b98c65ebef2ca2570830021e9e6/$FILE/6-5%20Application%20Pilotage%20Services%20Provider.pdf%5Ct_Blank)

**Compliance monitoring**  
Marine Safety Victoria has the responsibility for setting safety standards and monitoring, and auditing safety performance and compliance with safety standards. In doing so, MSV may conduct inspections or investigations to ensure compliance with the Marine Act and the conditions of registration as a pilotage services provider. Failure to comply with the safety standards could result in a fine and/or suspension or cancellation of registration.

**Safety standards**  
**Compliance with safety standards**  
In addition to the safety requirements of the [Marine Act 1988](http://www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubLawToday.nsf/a12f6f60fbd56800ca256de500201e54/bc14b8bf715780d0ca256ef4002224ac?OpenDocument), pilotage services providers must also comply with the additional safety standards. These are minimum safety standards and there is nothing to prevent pilotage services providers from applying higher standards.  
  
**Alternative safety standards**  
A registered pilotage services provider, or a person seeking registration as a pilotage services provider, may make an application to Marine Safety Victoria for the use of alternative safety standards. Marine Safety Victoria may approve the use of alternative service standards, if it decides that:

* the alternative safety standards substantially comply with safety standards
* the alternative safety standards adequately achieve the purpose of the safety standards
* compliance with the safety standards would, in particular circumstances, be impracticable, unnecessary or inappropriate.

Alternative safety standards approved by MSV may;

* modify the application of the safety standards
* exempt a provider from one or more of the safety standards
* specify a safety standard to substitute for a safety standards

If MSV approves alternative safety standards, it may limit the port waters in which the pilotage services provider may operate under the alternative safety standards.  
Any alternative safety standards approved or limitations imposed by Marine Safety Victoria shall be recorded on the certificate of registration issued to the pilotage services provider.

**Failure to comply with safety standards**  
A pilotage services provider must comply with the safety standards applicable to its registration. Failure to do so is an offence with a fine of up to $6000.

**Maintenance of records**  
A pilotage services provider must maintain records that contain the following information:

* the name and licence number of each pilot employed or engaged by the provider, and if the pilotage services provider is a licensed pilot, the number of that licence
* the number of hours worked by each pilot in any period of 24 hours, indicating the starting and finishing times for work and rest
* annual recreation leave taken by each pilot

Failure to do so is an offence and could result in a fine of up to $2000.

**Pilotage: Frequently Asked Questions**  
**What alternatives are there to the use of a pilotage services provider?**  
The [Marine Act 1988](http://www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au/Web1/msvhome.nsf/AllDocs/00BF43C99524AE4ACA256F9E0012524E?OpenDocument%5ClMarineAct) provides for masters of vessels to apply for a pilotage exemption certificate. Companies employing pilotage exempt masters that hold current certificates of exemption for the port waters of Melbourne, Geelong, Hastings or Portland do not need to use the services of a pilotage provider. Otherwise, licensed pilots must be used.  
  
**What do these laws mean for port users?**  
Shipping owners and agents contracting pilotage services are able to negotiate pilotage rates, services and service levels directly with the pilotage services provider.  
  
**Can an individual become a pilotage services provider?**  
Yes. Both individuals (natural persons) and organisations (bodies corporate) can apply for registration.  
  
**Can a pilot also be a pilotage services provider?**  
There is nothing to prevent a pilot, who is employed or engaged by a pilotage services provider from also applying to be registered as a pilotage services provider  
  
**Must a pilotage services provider also be a pilot?**  
There is no prerequisite that a pilotage services provider must also be a pilot.  
  
**Must a pilotage services provider own a vessel?**  
Whether a provider owns, charters or leases a vessel or contracts another provider to supply a vessel to transport pilots is purely a commercial decision for the provider. The law only requires that the vessel's details are supplied to Marine Safety Victoria, it is under survey and meets the specified safety standards.  
  
**What class of vessel can be used?**  
Any vessel used by a pilotage services provider to transport pilots must meet the requirements of the [Uniform Shipping Laws Code](http://www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au/Web1/msvhome.nsf/AllDocs/00BF43C99524AE4ACA256F9E0012524E?OpenDocument%5ClUSL) for a Class 2C vessel at a minimum. In addition, the vessel must be under survey with Marine Safety Victoria and comply with the safety standards.   
  
**Can pilots be transported by means other than a vessel?**  
The safety standards provide for alternative means of transport, such as helicopter.

A ***pilot*** is a [mariner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mariner) who guides [ships](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ship) through dangerous or congested waters, such as [harbours](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harbour) or [river mouths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_mouth). However, the pilot is only an advisor, as the master remains in legal, overriding command of the vessel.

Pilotage is one of the oldest, least-known professions, and yet it is one of the most important in maritime safety. The economic and environmental risk from today's large [cargo ships](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cargo_ship) makes the role of the pilot essential.

## History

Wooden [pilot cutter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilot_cutter) *Lizzie May* under sail in [Brest, France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brest,_France)

The origins of the word *pilot* probably disseminates from the [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) word *pilota,* a variation of *pedota,* the plural of *pēdón* which translates as [oar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oar). There is also evidence the word *pylotte* was also used, again a variation from *pedota.* The word originated from around 1520-1530.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime_pilot#cite_note-0)

However, the work functions of the pilot go back to [Ancient Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece) and [Roman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome) times, when locally experienced [harbour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harbour) captains, mainly local [fishermen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishermen), were employed by incoming ships captains to safely bring into port their trading vessels. Eventually, in light of the need to regulate the act of pilotage and ensure pilots had adequate insurance, the harbours themselves licensed pilots for each harbour.

Although licensed by the harbour to operate within their jurisdiction, pilots were generally self-employed, meaning that they had to have quick transport to get them from the port to the incoming ships. As pilots were often still dual-employed, they hence used their own [fishing boats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_boat) to reach the incoming vessels. But fishing boats were heavy working boats, and filled with fishing equipment, and so hence a new type of boat was required.

Early boats were developed from single masted [cutters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cutter_(boat)) and twin masted [yawls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yawl), and latterly into the specialist [pilot cutter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilot_cutter). These were effectively light-weigh and over powered single masted boats with large steeply angled keels, making them deep [draft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draft_(hull)) under power and shallow draft in lighter sail.

If legend is to believed the first official [Bristol Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol_Channel) pilot was barge master George James Ray, appointed by the Corporation of Bristol in May 1497 to pilot [John Cabot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Cabot)'s [*Matthew*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_(ship)) from [Bristol Harbour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol_Harbour) to the open sea beyond the [Bristol Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol_Channel). In 1837 Pilot George Ray guided [Brunel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isambard_Kingdom_Brunel)'s [*SS Great Western*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Great_Western)*,* and in 1844 William Ray piloted the larger [*SS Great Britain*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Great_Britain) on her maiden voyage.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime_pilot#cite_note-1)

On June 20, 1885, Joseph Henderson was expressly selected to escort the French Steamer Isère, laden with the [Statue of Liberty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statue_of_Liberty) into the New York Harbor to [Bedloe's Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bedloe%27s_Island). This event and Pilot Henderson's appearance was printed in the New York Times: "*Old Pilot Henderson, who jumped from the skylight down on the quarter deck of the Isère*." [[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime_pilot#cite_note-2)

## Duties involved

Boarding is tricky, as both vessels are moving and cannot afford to slow down

Their size and mass makes large ships very difficult to maneuver; the stopping distance of a [supertanker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supertanker) is typically measured in miles (kilometres) and even a slight error in judgment can cause [millions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Million) of [dollars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dollar) in damage. For this reason, many years of experience in an operating area are required to qualify as a pilot.

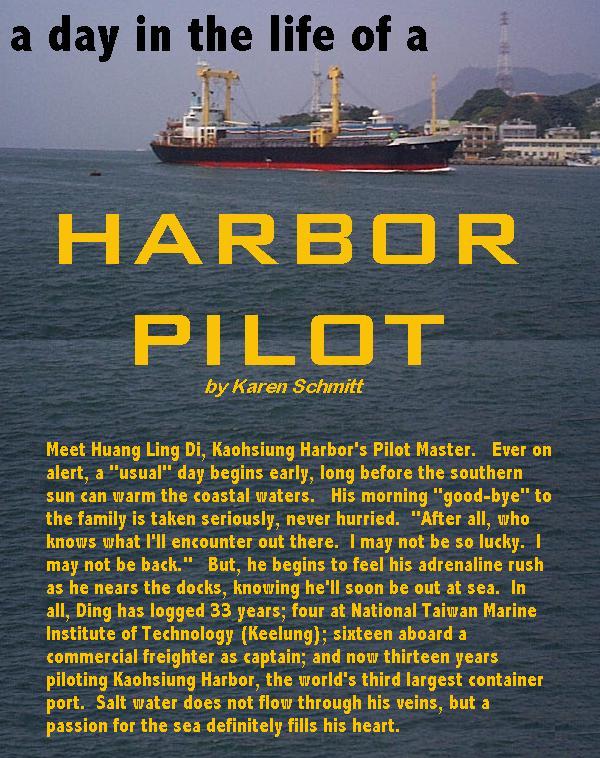
By far the most challenging part of any ship's voyage is the passage through the narrow waterways that lead to [port](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port) and the final [docking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dock_(maritime)) of the ship. The pilot brings to the ship expertise in handling large vessels in confined waterways and expert local knowledge of the port. In addition to bringing local maritime expertise on board, the pilot also relieves the [captain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_(nautical)) from the economic pressures that can compromise safety. Instead of being part of the ship's crew, pilots are employed locally and therefore act on behalf of the public rather than of the shipowners. However, the master of a ship that calls at only a few ports, such as a [ferry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferry), may be licensed as a pilot for those ports- such ships do not need to carry a pilot.

[Signal flag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_maritime_signal_flags) H(hotel) - Pilot on Board

Normally the pilot joins an incoming ship at sea via helicopter or [pilot boat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilot_boat) and climbs a swaying [Jacob's ladder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob%27s_ladder_(nautical)) sometimes up 40 feet (~12 metres) to the [deck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deck_(ship)) of the largest [container](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Container_ship) and [tanker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank_ship) ships. With outgoing vessels, a pilot boat returns the pilot to land after the ship has successfully negotiated coastal waters.

Pilots specifically use [pilotage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilotage) techniques relying on nearby visual reference points and local knowledge of [tides](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tide), swells, [currents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ocean_current), depths and [shoals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoal) that might not be readily identifiable on [nautical charts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nautical_chart) without first hand experience in the waters in question.

Beyond the experience and training of regular ship's captains, pilots also receive special, ongoing training to stay on top of their profession. Pilots are required by law in most major sea ports of the world for large ships.



**Currently, forty dedicated individuals serve to pilot, or guide, ships in and out of the port city.  Their charter can be simply stated: safe and efficient movement for those afloat and protection of the environment.  In actuality, the responsibility is enormous.  On any given day, approximately 1 - 20 craft crowd the waters.  It's a curious mix.   Military, commercial, tourist and fishing vessels command serious attention.  The unique configuration of Kaohsiung Harbor must also be reckoned with.  The natural but narrow entrance formed by Chihchin Island and Longevity Mountain is picturesque but it doesn't provide much leeway.  Further complicating the issue is that fact that neither the ship's cargo nor the ship's systems can be inspected.  The potential for explosion or collision is all too often present, endangering crew and families ashore.  Considering that it would take months, rather than hours, to recover from a serious accident, the harbor could be blocked for a long time putting the economy at risk.  In fact, Keelung is still coping with a tanker incident that happened four years ago.**

**For the moment, Pilot Ding is focused on the task at hand....meeting the "MV" OOCL American which has arrived from the United States.  Aboard his pilot boat, he moves swiftly to station.  He scales the rope ladder dangling alongside the hulking bow up to the main deck.  Finally, he climbs onto the bridge where he takes the helm.  His actions are instinctive, testimony to an extensive background.  He does admit it takes time to become familiar with the different types of ships.  *"A ship is like a woman.  No two are the same.  Some large, some small, and each one has a distinct personality.  I just look at the ship's name and her shape.  Chances are we've met before.  I know how she'll respond.  It helps make the job easier."***

**Weather conditions are fickle, too.  Imagine the strength it takes to muster rope ladders blowing in gale force winds as the waves tickle your toes.  The job requires talents that few posses.  This year, 26 applicants took the pilot exam.  Only 2 made the grade.  *"It may seem harsh, but actually it's best in terms of training.   We're able to work one-on-one to bring our newest partners up to speed".* There's much to learn.  Hydrology, navigation, systems management, and on and on.  In spite of his senior rank, Master Pilot Ding regards his comrades as equals.  They work together as a team, and a successful mission is anchored on mutual respect under complete direction of the pilot in charge.  There's no room for consensus.  Action must be swift to avoid tragedy.**

**Today's mission is a success.  The ship did not capsize, there was no explosion on board, the berthing was clean and contained, and the environment was saved from toxic spill.  Communication was a contributing factor.  *"Everyday we face different languages, cultures and attitudes.  Sometimes we need a translator.  But that can be risky.  Critical messages require split second reaction.  If time is lost in interpreting, it may be too late.  We could run aground, or worse!"* Three years ago, Ding organized the Kaohsiung Interpreter's Society to provide opportunities for language practice. Presentation is not limited to English; participation is open to anyone eager to develop communication skills for on the job purposes.**

**Harbor pilots also tackle problems ashore.  The most pressing issue to date involves owners of commercial shipping companies.  They have proposed a change in regulations, which would allow private hire of pilots who in turn would be obligated to the needs of the company.  This would create unhealthy competition as well as jeopardize port safety. Presently, all eighty of Taiwan's pilots are organized under the International Marine Pilot Association (IMPA) and are governed by the "Pilots Act".  They are firm when it comes to safety, yet flexible when it comes to ships' schedules. (Compared to others, Kaohsiung's harbor pilots are available at a moment's notice. In Singapore, pilots require four hour advance notice; two hours in Los Angeles)  In May 2000, Pilot Ding represented Taiwan together with 400+ harbor pilots worldwide.  Changes in regulation were discussed, as well as programs to educate the public on the nature of the pilot's profession.**

**The day ends late.  The sunset casts a nostalgic mood upon the Straits and Pilot Ding is free to reflect.  He recalls ancient Chinese ships that once sailed all the way to Africa during the Ming Dynasty.  He remembers Kaohsiung's first harbor pilot, Mr. Wen, now in his 90's, and imagines what his days were like. The bonds are strong among the unique breed of harbor pilots.  The work is demanding.  But,  there's always time to remember**

# Pilotage services

**Pilotage Aims**  
To promote safety of navigation within the CHA area of jurisdiction by providing a pilotage service capable of supplying, on demand, the services of a trained and authorised pilot whose local knowledge and skill enable them to conduct the navigation and manoeuvring of a vessel safety within the limits of the Humber Pilotage District.