



CONCENTRATED INSPECTION CAMPAIGN ON PILOT LADDER TRANSFER/BOARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Reference: SKN Maritime Circular MC 138 25, Dated 14 February 2025

To: Shipowners, Ship-operators, Masters, Recognized Organizations, Surveyors, Marine Superintendents and Masters of Saint Kitts and Nevis-flagged vessels

The St. Kitts and Nevis International Ship Registry (SKAN Reg) has issued Maritime Circular MC 138 25 on 14 February 2025, announcing a Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on pilot ladder transfer and boarding arrangements. The campaign will run for three months, from 1 April 2025 until 30 June 2025, and is intended to verify compliance with relevant international regulations, particularly SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 23. A summary of the principal requirements set out in the circular is provided below for information.

1. Purpose

This Maritime Circular informs Shipowners, Ship Managers, Maritime Registrars, Recognized Organizations and Flag State Inspectors of the Administration's intention to launch a Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on pilot ladder transfer and boarding arrangements aboard Saint Kitts and Nevis-flagged vessels.

2. Application and Scope

- The CIC will be held for three months and will come into effect on 1 April 2025 until 30 June 2025.
- All Saint Kitts and Nevis flagged vessels attending Flag State Inspections during this period will undergo a thorough inspection of their pilot ladder transfer and boarding arrangements, assessing condition, rigging procedures and compliance with SOLAS.
- Attending Flag State Inspectors will assess the crew's knowledge and competency in correctly rigging the pilot ladder arrangement for safe transfer.
- Particular attention will be paid to the integrity of the ropes used to hoist and secure the ladder, checking for damage, wear and tear, and the proper functioning of the steps and spreader.
- Inspectors will verify that the vessel maintains proper documentation related to pilot ladder inspections and maintenance, and that OEM plates match those listed on the

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certificate and carry a MED marking (e.g. wheel mark) with an accompanying ISO standard reference.

3. Key Recommendations for Compliance

(1) Certification

Pilot ladders placed on vessels with keel laid after 1 July 2012, or equipment/components delivered after 1 July 2012, must be certified by the manufacturer as complying with SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 23 and IMO Resolution A.1045(27), as amended.

(2) Onboard Records

A record must be maintained on board of the date the pilot ladder was placed into service and any repairs carried out, together with a record of regular inspections, to ensure the ladder remains safe to use.

(3) Shipside Doors and Mechanical Hoists

Shipside doors used for pilot transfer must open inwards, in accordance with SOLAS Regulation V/23, paragraph 5. The use of mechanical pilot hoists is prohibited on all ships, in accordance with SOLAS Regulation V/23, paragraph 6.

(4) Side Ropes

Side ropes should be manila, or other material of equivalent strength, durability, elongation characteristics and grip, consisting of two uncovered ropes not less than 18 mm in diameter on each side, continuous with no joints, and with a breaking strength of at least 24 kN per side rope.

(5) Ladder Marking

Permanent markings must be provided at regular intervals (e.g. 1 m) throughout the length of the ladder to facilitate rigging to the required height.

(6) Retrieval Line

The retrieval line should be fastened at or above the last spreader step and should lead forward.

(7) Steps

Steps must be hardwood, in one piece and non-slippery, not less than 115 mm wide and 25 mm in depth, and not less than 400 mm between the side ropes. Steps should be equally spaced not less than 310 mm nor more than 350 mm apart, and secured so that each remains horizontal.

(8) Replacement Steps

No pilot ladder should have more than two replacement steps secured by a method different from that used in the ladder's original construction.

(9) Access Arrangements

Safe, convenient and unobstructed passage must be provided between the head of the pilot ladder, or of any accommodation ladder, and the ship's deck, whether by a gateway (fitted with adequate handholds) or a bulwark ladder (with two handhold stanchions rigidly secured to the ship's structure and securely attached to prevent overturning). Securing strong points, shackles and securing ropes must be in good condition.

(10) Accommodation Ladders

Where accommodation ladders are used in conjunction with pilot ladders (ships with a freeboard of more than 9 metres), the accommodation ladder's angle of slope should not exceed 45 degrees and it should be at least 600 mm in width.

(11) Lower Platform

The lower platform of the accommodation ladder should be horizontal and secured to the ship's side when in use, and should be a minimum of 5 m above sea level. The pilot ladder should be rigged immediately adjacent to the lower platform, with its upper end extending at least 2 m above the lower platform, and a horizontal distance of between 0.1 m and 0.2 m between the pilot ladder and the lower platform.

(12) Illumination

The embarkation/disembarkation area must be illuminated for the transfer arrangement over the side and on deck.

(13) Supervision

The rigging of the pilot transfer arrangements and embarkation of a pilot must be supervised by a responsible officer, with associated safety equipment such as life jackets, harness, lifelines and life buoys in place to assure the safety of personnel.

4. Related Circular

Reference is also made to MC 112 22 on Required Boarding Arrangements For Pilot, which reminds all parties concerned of the recommendations of the International Maritime Organization on pilot ladder transfer and boarding arrangements.

5. Action Required

Shipowners, Managers and Masters of SKN-flagged vessels are advised to review their pilot ladder transfer and boarding arrangements against the requirements summarized above ahead of, and throughout, the CIC period (1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025), and to ensure that crew are briefed on correct rigging procedures and safety supervision requirements. Any doubts regarding the requirements should be raised with SKAN Reg or the vessel's assigned Recognized Organization without delay.

6. Comprehension Check

Readers are invited to consider the following questions to check their understanding of the requirements summarized above:

1. Under MC 138 25, what is the duration and effective period of the Concentrated Inspection Campaign on pilot ladder transfer and boarding arrangements?

- A. One month, from 1 March 2025 until 31 March 2025
- B. Three months, from 1 April 2025 until 30 June 2025
- C. Six months, from 1 January 2025 until 30 June 2025

2. What is the minimum diameter and breaking strength required for each side rope of a pilot ladder?

- A. 18 mm diameter and at least 24 kN breaking strength per side rope
- B. 12 mm diameter and at least 15 kN breaking strength per side rope

C. 24 mm diameter and at least 18 kN breaking strength per side rope

3. What is prohibited on all ships under SOLAS Regulation V/23, paragraph 6, as referenced in MC 138 25?

- A. Use of accommodation ladders in conjunction with pilot ladders
- B. Use of mechanical pilot hoists
- C. Use of manila rope for pilot ladder side ropes

For clarification on any of the above, please reach out to:

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