

SOLAS

CHAPTER V/23 : UPDATES : JUNE 2025

United Kingdom Maritime Pilots' Association

At the NSCR11 sub-committee meeting of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee, updates were made to SOLAS Regulation V/23. These changes align with Resolution A.1045(27) and ISO 799 standards for pilot ladders. The revised rules were approved at MSC 110 in June 2025 and take effect on 1 January 2028.

While the IMO encourages early adoption, full compliance may be delayed due to practical challenges. Until then, the current SOLAS V/23 remains in force.

Maritime Pilots still have the authority under SOLAS V/23, Section 2.1, to reject unsafe or non-compliant transfer arrangements. This ensures safe embarkation and disembarkation continue to follow best practices.

Once approved, the new standards will represent best practice. Reporting non-compliance now helps vessels address issues ahead of the 2028 deadline, just as many already follow existing recommended guidelines.

Summary of the main changes

Detailed provisions are established for periodic inspections, maintenance, stowage, care, documentation, records and replacement criteria to maintain the fitness of pilot ladders, manropes and all associated equipment, including:

- Maximum Service Life for Pilot ladders of 36 Months, or 30 Months from the date of entry into service.
- Requirement to carry a spare ladder and manropes
- Repair or replacement of pilot ladder steps or spreader steps is prohibited.
- Instructions shall be supplied by the manufacturers with each pilot ladder, manropes and associated equipment
- The release of a new Pilot Transfer Arrangements poster – MSC.1/Circ 1428

Securing Arrangements

- The required strength for strong points, shackles, and securing ropes has doubled, with the minimum breaking strength increased from 24kN to 48kN. Manufacturers must now provide type-approved devices to secure ladders at intermediate lengths to strong points, preventing side rope slippage and withstanding at least 48kN. Until such devices are approved, the safest interim solution remains 3m, 48kN-rated rope tails, tagged and secured with a properly tied rolling hitch.
- Documentation of the conformance of the strong points, shackles and securing ropes shall be maintained onboard and available for inspection purposes.
- All Pilot ladders and associated equipment must be tagged such that it is clearly identifiable in order that proper records can be kept.

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- The securing arrangements shall be positioned not less than 915 mm, or, if not possible, the maximum permitted by the width of the deck, from the edge of the deck.

Grandfather Rights

- Application to existing ships without grandfathering. This means that ships with pre existing arrangements will have to comply with the new standard by 1st January 2029 at the latest. The loophole with SOLAS II-1/3-9 will be closed.
- Alignment with the trapdoor standard in ISO 799-3, Specifically section 10.3 "The pilot ladder and manropes shall be rigged through the trapdoor extending to a height of at least 2M above the platform"..."The Pilot ladder shall remain in alignment with and against the ships side".

Side Ropes & Steps

- The side ropes shall be not less than 20mm and not more than 22mm in diameter.
- The side ropes shall be a mildew resistant manila rope or a spun thermoset polyester rope with a polypropylene core.
- There can now only be a maximum of 8 steps between spreaders, not 9 as previously allowed.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

The new version of solas V/23 will contain the fundamental provisions for the design, installation, inspection, maintenance and rigging of PTAS. It will incorporate the provisions of the ISO standards applicable to pilot ladders into the regulation, it makes clear that ladders shall be designed, manufactured, constructed, secured and installed in accordance with these ISO standards.

Approval and type approval of PTAS will now be by administrations, manufacturers will not be able to self-certify pilot ladders. Type approval will also be restricted to manufacturers who have a certified QMS.

The implementation schedule is planned as follows:

- Entry into force on 1st January 2028
- Compliance by the first survey after 1st January 2029 (SOLAS ships)

Some Port Authorities have taken a proactive approach towards encouraging ship owners to embrace the new standards. NTMs have been issued and sent as part of the pre-arrival documentation.

NOTICE TO MARINERS

NtM 09 - 2025 Updated

**PORT OF GREAT YARMOUTH
Pilot Ladder Certification**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that for vessels arriving on or after 01/04/2025 and requiring the services of a pilot, the following information must be provided at the time that the booking for the vessel is made via the PortLinks application:

- For each operational pilot ladder on board the vessel –
 - a photograph of the manufacturer's plate attached to the ladder; and
 - a copy of the ladder's certificate (declaration of conformity)
- A copy of the vessel's pilot card

The pilot ladder certificate must confirm:

- Type approval in compliance with SOLAS V, Regulation 23
- Performance requirements in compliance with SOLAS V, Regulation 23, and IMO Resolution A.1045(27)
- Testing standards in compliance with ISO 799-1:2019

Furthermore, if the ladder is more than 30 months old, a certificate of load testing (in compliance with ISO 799-1:2019) that is dated within the past 30 months must also be provided.

Bookings that are submitted without this information being provided will not be accepted. For the avoidance of doubt, vessels that do not normally require the services of a pilot (e.g. ferries navigating under the conduct of PEC holders) do not need to provide this information unless the services of a pilot are required.

Examples of a pilot ladder manufacturer's plate and certificate are shown on the following page.

Queries regarding this requirement should be directed to the Group Marine Planners (GroupMarine.Planners@PortOfYarmouth.com).

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