

Marine Safety Alert



Alert No: 25

Date: 2nd March 2023

Pilot Ladders – Safe Rigging

Recently, there have been increasing numbers of reports regarding Pilot Ladders being rigged incorrectly.

In one instance, a ladder rope parted while there was a Pilot climbing the ladder in a Forth Ports facility due to a lack of edge protection at the point where the ropes passed over the edge of the vessel. It has been noted that it is a common occurrence for vessels to have no edge protection in place which causes a significance safety risk for Pilots. Without any protection in place, the ropes can chafe on sharp right angle sections where the rope goes from the deck, over the side of the vessel. Over time, as a pilot puts weight on each rope, the ropes can become worn and eventually cut, potentially causing a very serious incident.



Pilot Ladders should always be rigged with a form of edge protection to stop the ropes from chafing. An Arrangement such as a rounded bar, permanently fixed at the embarkation point should be in place.



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It has also been noted that many vessel do not have stanchions/handholds fitted at the embarkation point as per requirements. Adequate stanchions should be in place to provide a secure handhold for the pilot to pull themselves onto the vessel or to assist with disembarking the vessel as per SOLAS Chapter V Reg. 23 and IMO Resolution A.1045(27) :

- Stanchions to be at least 1.2 metres above the deck/bulwark.
- To be minimum 70 cm and maximum 80 cm apart.
- Stanchions are to have a minimum diameter of 32mm in order to provide a firm grip.
- Each stanchion to be rigidly secured at or near the base and at a higher point.

