

GUIDELINES
COMMERCIAL VESSEL WAIVERS



The [General Pilotage Regulations](#) state that every vessel (or combination of vessels) over 350 gross tons (ITC) is subject to compulsory pilotage.

Under the [Interim Order Respecting Waivers of Compulsory Pilotage Granted by the Pacific Pilotage Authority](#), the Pacific Pilotage Authority (PPA) may, on application, waive compulsory pilotage provided that the following conditions are met:

1. The vessel is under 10,000 gross tons (ITC).
2. As of the day on which the application is made, every person in charge of the deck watch:
 - (a) holds the Certificate(s) of Competency that are required by Part 2 of the [Marine Personnel Regulations](#) or, if the ship is not Canadian, equivalent certificates; i.e. Certificate of Competency must be appropriate for the vessel
 - (b) has regularly completed, within the preceding 60 months, voyages in that Authority's region or engaged in the [coastal trade](#)
 - (c) has completed documented return voyages associated with the Areas for which the waiver is being sought, as follows:

Area 1	<i>Fraser River, west of the New Westminster railway bridge: 5 return voyages</i> <i>Fraser River, east of the New Westminster railway bridge: 10 return voyages</i>
Area 2	<i>General: 10 return voyages</i> <i>Inside Passage: 10 return voyages</i> <i>Second Narrows: 6 return voyages</i>
Area 3	<i>West of Vancouver Island: 10 return voyages</i>
Area 4	<i>Pine Island to Dixon entrance: 10 return voyages</i>
Area 5	<i>Haida Gwaii: 10 return voyages</i>

Important Notes:

1. For **Area 1**, all return voyages must have been completed within the **preceding 24 months**.
2. For **Areas 2–5**, all return voyages must have been completed within the **preceding 60 months**, with at least **one voyage completed in the preceding 24 months**.
3. For vessels transiting **Second Narrows**, refer to Section 25.10(5) of the Interim Order for additional details on ships carrying dangerous goods.

Voyages may be accumulated as any member of the deck watch provided they are completed under the supervision of a person in charge of a deck watch who has previously completed the required number of voyages, or under the supervision of a pilot.

The following describes the necessary documentation and process in order for the PPA to assess a *new* waiver application:

1. **Cover letter:** a cover letter on company letterhead stating that your company wishes to operate one or more commercial vessels over 350 gross tons and that you are requesting a pilotage waiver for the purpose of transiting through compulsory pilotage waters.
2. **Owner/Operator Waiver Compliance:** this form (available on the PPA website) must be completed in full and signed to confirm your company's understanding of the PPA's waiver requirements.
3. **Deck officer credentials:** for each deck watch officer who will navigate the vessel in compulsory pilotage waters you must provide,
 - a copy of a valid Canadian or U.S. issued certificate of competency appropriate to the vessel size.
 - a completed “Officer Compliance and Voyage Record” form for each officer (available on the PPA website) signed by an authorised representative.
 - Additional proof of return voyages, if the voyages were completed while employed by another operator.
4. **Vessel documentation:** for all vessels (including barges) that the company wishes to operate in compulsory pilotage waters, you must provide copies of Certificates of Registry (Canada) or Certificates of Documentation (U.S.).

Applications should be submitted through the PPA’s waiver portal: <https://ppaportal.portlink.co/>

If you do not have registered access to the waiver portal, please e-mail waivers@ppa.gc.ca for further information.

A formal waiver application must be made with the required documentation at least two weeks prior to the planned sailing date through compulsory pilotage waters.

Please note:

- Due to the high volume of waiver applications, the PPA will only review applications that contain all the required documentation; incomplete applications will be rejected.
- “Deck watch officer” means a person who has the immediate charge of navigation, maneuvering, operation or safety of a ship, but does not include a pilot. The definition thus refers to the master and the officers, as the master will have charge of the navigation and maneuvering during the berthing and unberthing of the vessel.
- Commercial waivers are valid for a one-year period ending on March 1st for U.S. operators and May 1st for Canadian operators.
- **The waiver is not granted until a waiver letter is issued by the Pacific Pilotage Authority.**

Operators are reminded of the following regulations and best practices, which experienced and prudent maritime professionals should follow to ensure safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible maritime operations:

- i. Deck Watch requirements under the *Marine Personnel Regulations*, sections 213 – 216.
- ii. Vessels are fitted with the following systems, in accordance with the Navigation Safety Regulations 2020, and that these systems comply with SOLAS V:

- a. Bridge Navigational Watch Alarms System (BNWAS)
 - b. Automatic Identification System (AIS)
- iii. For vessels carrying or pushing/towing oil cargoes, except those engaged in delivering fuel to BC coastal communities or to remote work sites, operators are asked to consider avoiding, *when safe to do so*, the following areas:
- Fitz Hugh Sound
 - Lama Pass
 - Seaforth Channel
 - Boat Bluff and Heikish Narrows
 - Princess Royal Channel
 - Grenville Channel
 - Laredo Sound
 - Principe Channel
- iv. The [Interim Guidelines for Seymour Narrows and Johnstone Strait](#) and the [North Coast Waterway Management Guidelines](#).