

UNITED KINGDOM MARITIME PILOTS ASSOCIATION

interactive digital poster to translate technical Pilot Transfer Arrangements regulations into a clear, visual format with step-by-step illustrations of compliant and non-compliant arrangements

the challenge

Pilot transfer remains one of the most hazardous operations in shipping, with an average two fatalities per annum. Each year, over 100,000 vessels call at UK ports, requiring pilots to board safely in all conditions, day and night. Deficiencies in Pilot Transfer Arrangements (PTAs) - particularly ladders - pose serious risks to pilots' lives and threaten port efficiency. Until recently, performance standards under SOLAS V/23 were inconsistently understood and applied, resulting in widespread non-compliance. Unsafe arrangements create a dual challenge: pilots cannot board without endangering themselves, and vessels face costly delays or detentions until issues are resolved. The International Maritime Organisation's adoption of revised standards (MSC 110, June 2025) strengthened accountability, requiring non-compliant PTAs to be reported and rectified.

However, compliance relies on clear understanding at every level - from shipmasters and crews to port authorities. The safety challenge therefore lies not only in tightening regulation, but in equipping a global industry and multinational workforce with accessible, practical tools that help crews identify risks, understand requirements, and implement safe practices consistently.

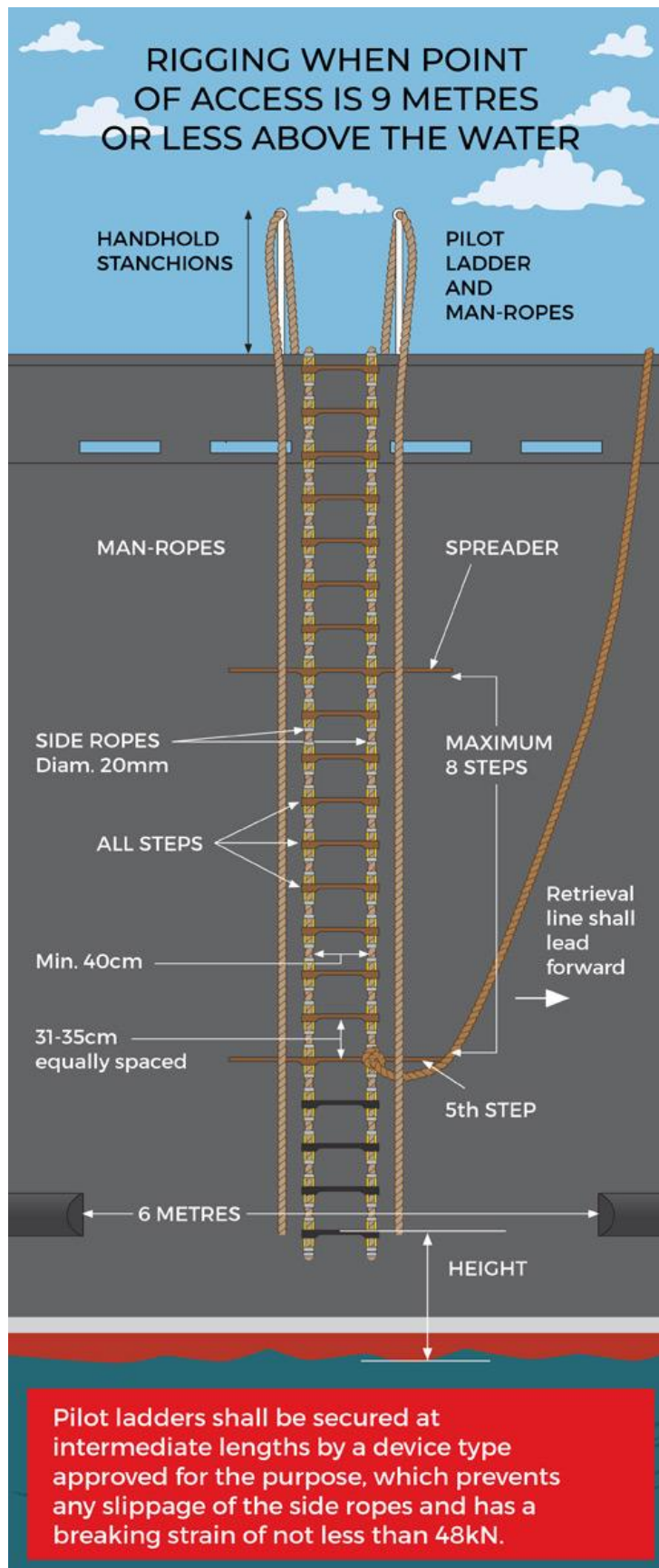
the innovation

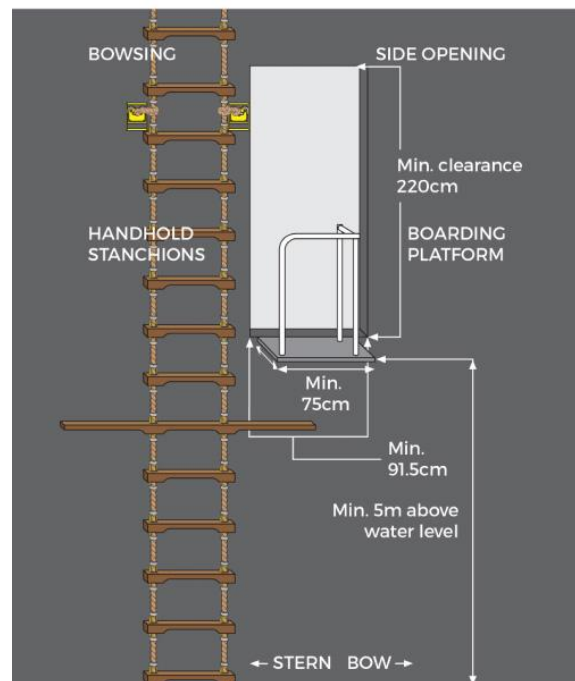
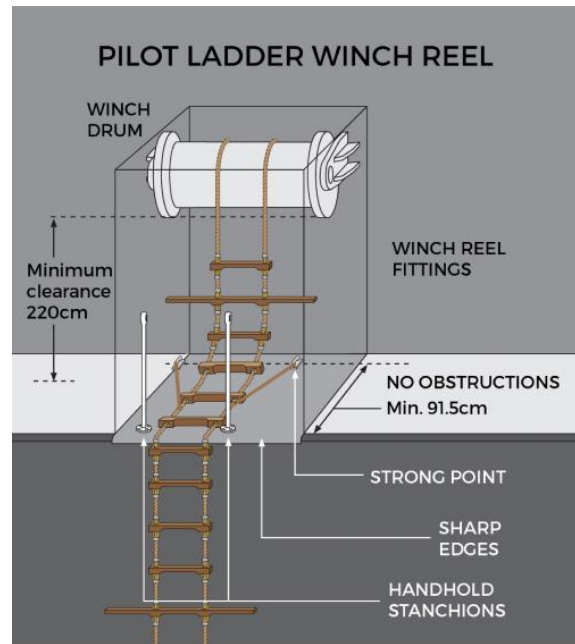
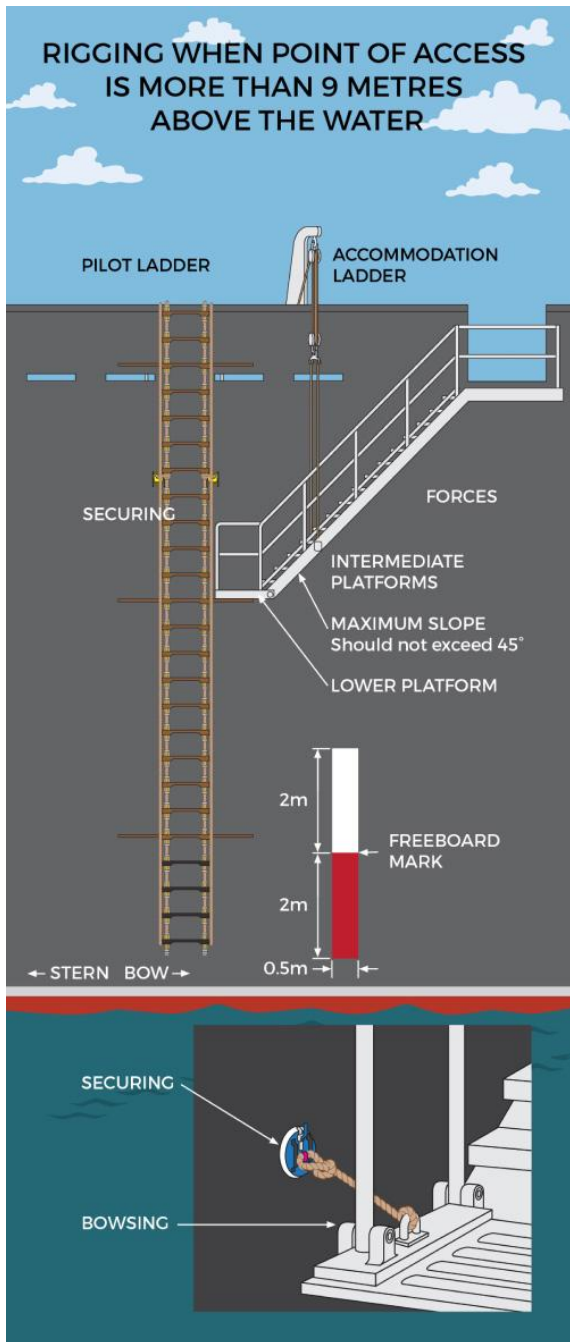
In response, the United Kingdom Maritime Pilots' Association (UKMPA) developed an interactive digital poster to translate technical regulations into a clear, visual format. The tool provides step-by-step illustrations of compliant and non-compliant PTAs, enabling instant comparison and understanding. Unlike static guidance, it is interactive: users can click through diagrams to explore specific arrangements, highlighting common failings versus best practice. Highly visual and designed for universal accessibility, it is freely available online, making use of the now mandatory internet access on ships under the Maritime Labour Convention.

The poster is a life-saving tool with wide application:

- **training resource** for seafarers, naval architects, and pilots.
- **inspection aid** for port authorities, surveyors, and classification societies.
- **operational checklist** for crews preparing vessels for port calls.

By simplifying complex regulation, it bridges the gap between policy and practice, empowering frontline crews and decision-makers alike to reduce risks.



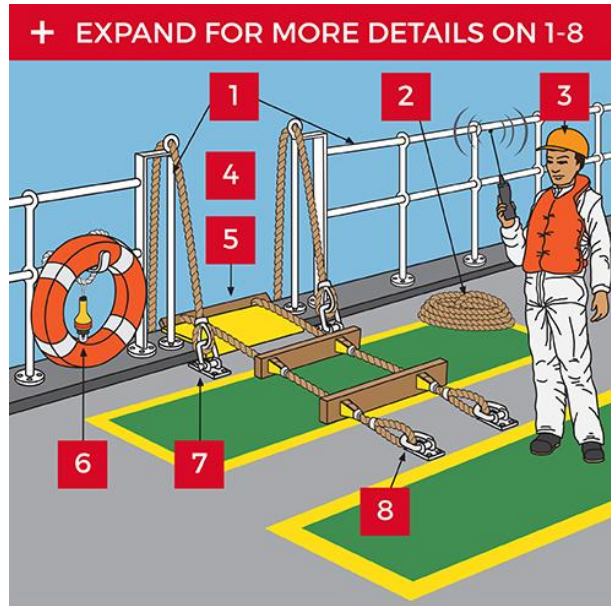


how it was implemented

The tool was conceived and developed by the UKMPA Technical & Training Committee, led by expert maritime pilots with decades of operational experience. Contributors included Technical Chair John Slater, Committee members Jonathan Smith and James Musgrove, and Kevin Vallance, author of *The Pilot Ladder Manual*. The team distilled updated SOLAS V/23 requirements into an intuitive, visual design, then collaborated with digital specialists to create the interactive functionality. The project was launched publicly on the UKMPA website, ensuring free global access. Key stakeholders - including pilots, masters, port and harbour authorities, naval architects, classification societies, and relevant trade associations - were targeted for engagement. The interactive poster was designed for immediate

operational use but also to support early adoption ahead of new compliance deadlines (2028-2030). Implementation was underpinned by strong advocacy and communication: press releases, presentations at maritime safety forums, and outreach to industry stakeholders helped embed awareness. Importantly, the format was designed to integrate seamlessly into daily vessel operations - accessible from the bridge, training rooms, or handheld devices - without requiring specialist software. This low-barrier, high-impact approach ensured rapid uptake.

+ EXPAND FOR MORE DETAILS ON 1-8



DUTIES OF THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

- 1** Have knowledge of the correct use of Pilot Transfer Arrangements.
- 2** Establish direct communication with the bridge.
- 3** Communicate with the bridge during boarding process.
- 4** Oversee/check compliant rigging of the ladder.
- 5** Test safety equipment in place and ready for use.
- 6** Arrange for the pilot to be safely guided to/from the bridge via a clear illuminated route.

All companies shall have an approved safety management system which includes ship-specific procedures for the safe conduct of pilot transfers. The ISM Code requires that these procedures comply with SOLAS Chapter V regulation 23 and conform to IMO recommendations, international standards and guidance from marine industry organisations.

Pilot transfer arrangements for trap door and side door diagrams can be viewed [here](#).

result

Since its launch in July 2025, the interactive poster has been recognised as a practical, life-saving tool by industry stakeholders. Pilots and crews report that the visual, clickable design enables immediate recognition of compliant versus unsafe arrangements, reducing ambiguity in decision-making. Its use has already prevented unsafe boarding by giving pilots and crews a clear, shared reference point. For ship operators, the tool helps minimise costly delays: deficiencies can be identified and corrected before a vessel arrives in port, reducing the risk of inspections or costly detentions. As a training resource, it supports consistency in safety practices across diverse crews and vessel types. Beyond immediate benefits, the poster reinforces cultural change: by clearly showing "what good looks like," it raises expectations of compliance across the industry.

Feedback from port authorities and insurers indicates that the tool is strengthening accountability and trust between ship operators and pilots. In short, it addresses the safety challenge at scale - supporting both lives and supply chain continuity.

conclusion

The UKMPA's interactive poster represents a low-cost, high-impact innovation with far-reaching benefits. It tackles a critical safety challenge with a solution that is accessible, practical, and universally scalable. Unlike traditional regulatory documents, which can be complex and text-heavy, this tool communicates essential information visually and interactively, ensuring clarity in high-pressure multinational operational contexts. Its success lies in its simplicity: a global resource that can be accessed by any vessel, anywhere, at any time. By bridging the gap between international regulation and frontline practice, the poster has accelerated early adoption of new SOLAS V/23 standards ahead of the 2028-2030 enforcement deadlines. The initiative also highlights the leadership of UK maritime pilots in driving safety innovation, while recognising the vital role of the International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA), whose advocacy laid the groundwork for these regulatory changes. Ultimately, this innovation protects lives, safeguards port efficiency, and strengthens the resilience of global supply chains- making it a model of best practice in maritime safety.

LINK: <https://ukmpa.org/public-documents/interactive-pilot-transfer-arrangements/>



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