Canada

Administration de Pilotage des Laurentides
Laurentian Pilotage Authority

SAFETY STANDARDS, MEASURES AND PRACTICES CURRENTLY APPLICABLE IN DISTRICT NO. 2

BACKGROUND

The Laurentian Pilotage Authority (the Authority) is a Crown corporation established in February 1972 pursuant to the *Pilotage Act* (the Act). Its mission is to operate, maintain and administer, in the interests of navigation safety, an efficient pilotage service on the St. Lawrence River and Saguenay River.

The *Laurentian Pilotage Authority Regulations* stipulate that the presence of a licensed pilot is required on Canadian ships that are over 3,300 tons gross tonnage and 80 metres in length and on foreign-flagged vessels exceeding 35 metres in length.[1]

In District No. 2, compulsory pilotage service is covered under a service contract between the Authority and the Lower St.Lawrence River Pilots Corporation. Pilots licensed by the Authority and members of the Corporation are responsible for the safe operation and navigation of ships in the area between Les Escoumins and the Port of Quebec, including the Saguenay River.

PURPOSE

The Laurentian Pilotage Authority and the Lower St.Lawrence River Pilots Corporation wish to provide general information on specific safety practices and standards currently in effect in District No. 2 between Quebec City and Les Escoumins, including the Saguenay River.

Additional safety "standards and measures" are required in order to reduce risk in some specific situations in which accidents are more likely to occur. The master of the ship and the pilot must implement these standards and measures in the interests of navigation safety. The measures and standards set forth below reflect current practices and may be subject to change.

[1] Unless otherwise indicated in the regulations or in the event a regular member of the ship's complement holds a pilotage certificate for the area.

1. Communications

The pilot is in charge of radio communications with MCTS and other vessels. The pilot must inform the commanding officer or the officer of the watch about traffic conditions, meeting and passing arrangements made with other ships and all other relevant details.

2. Steering

The commanding officer must ensure that there are qualified, well-rested helmsmen on duty at all times. The use of an AutoTrack system or another automatic steering and speed control system is not permitted.

3. Operating speed

Pilots must continuously adapt the ship's speed to prevailing conditions, taking into account *Collision Regulations*, Notices to Mariners, Notices to Shipping, temporary slow orders for safety reasons and the protection of marine mammals, infrastructure and other works, shorelines, ice cover and so forth. Special attention must be paid to ships that operate at high speeds and those that generate large waves.

The use of an automatic speed control device designed to regulate speeds on certain types of vessels (mainly passenger ships) is prohibited for ships in transit in the district if a pilot is on board. A device of this nature is designed to ensure a ship reaches its destination at a precise time. Licensed pilots, however, armed with their vast knowledge of water currents, can navigate the ship with the same degree of precision, while adapting to prevailing conditions as they arise.

4. Restrictions concerning air draught

Passage under overhead cables in the district must abide by safety clearance requirements as published by the Canadian Hydrographic Service. This information is published by the CHS for a free height and in the middle of the cable, at higher high water large tide (HHWLT).

The ship's master must ensure that the air draught does not exceed these requirements, factoring in for tide allowance. For higher air drafts, arrangements must be made between the ship and the Corporation.

5. Use of tugboats

Wind force and direction, the vessel's manoeuvring options and under-keel clearance, the strength and direction of the current during berthing and unberthing, the positioning of wharf-side cranes or loading arms, the presence of nearby vessels and ice conditions are among the most common factors that influence whether one or more tugboats are required.

6. Use of a second pilot

The *Laurentian Pilotage Authority Regulations*[2] outline certain situations where two pilots are assigned to a vessel. These include conditions related to trip duration, ship type and size, tug operations and the winter navigation period (January 1 to March 15). There are also other circumstances in which a second pilot may be called in for safety reasons, without generating direct costs for the user, even when it is not strictly required under the regulations[3]:

- During pre- and post-winter periods,[4] for less ice-capable ships travelling on the St. Lawrence River between Quebec City and Les Escoumins;
- Between Les Escoumins and Cacouna, when there is ice cover on the harbour;
- During trips on the Saguenay River, starting at Les Escoumins, when a temporary slow order has been issued by the Canadian Coast Guard to protect ice cover;
- At any time during the year on a slow-speed ship that is likely to be underway for more than 11 consecutive hours, or more than 10 consecutive hours between 7:00 p.m. and 00:59 a.m.;
- When leaving from Quebec City if the ship's draught exceeds 11.5 metres;
- For all tugboats heading for a ship to be towed within the district.

7. Berthing and unberthing

There are specific risks associated with berthing and unberthing operations, depending on the physical, hydrographic, weather, hydrological and geographical features of the ports in the district. A specialized, experienced pilot is therefore recommended to oversee these operations.

8. Restrictions on the use of cellular and electronic devices

Electronic devices other than navigation aids (cell phones, radios, etc.), which pilots and other crew members on the deck may use while a ship is underway and under the conduct of a pilot, must be used wisely and selectively, in a manner that does not compromise vessel safety.

[2] http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.%2C_c._1268/
[3] This is a list of current practices only. It is not intended to justify the need for two pilots in these situations.
[4] Between the lifting of priority buoys and January 1, and again between March 16 and the mooring of priority buoys.

9. Maximum draft in the North Traverse Channel

As indicated in the under-keel clearance table for the North Traverse in the ATL 111, published by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, an appropriate under-keel clearance must be maintained at all times for all ships travelling in the North Traverse.

- The maximum allowed draught for ships travelling from Les Escoumins to Quebec City is 15.5 metres in summer and 15.0 metres in winter. However, upon consultation with the Corporation, it may be possible to exceed these clearances.

- The maximum allowed draught for ships travelling from Quebec City to Les Escoumins is 15.0 metres in summer and 14.5 metres in winter. However, upon consultation with the Corporation, it may be possible to exceed these clearances.

- The minimum under-keel clearance specified in the ATL 111 table for any given trip may be increased by no more than 0.5 metres, based on the acting pilot's judgement, onboard equipment, navigation aids, and ice and weather conditions.

When a Canadian Coast Guard notice indicates the presence of shoals that reduce the minimum depth of water in a given location, the maximum draught will be lowered accordingly if the navigable width is under 150 metres.

These standards are subject to review in the event maintenance dredging operations are cut back or there is a significant change or reduction in existing navigation aid equipment, e.g., during the winter months.

10. Restricted passage in the North Traverse Channel

If the combined width of two ships meeting in the North Traverse exceeds 81.3 metres, as specified in Canadian Coast Guard standards, a plan must be made to establish right-of-way. Generally speaking, vessels anchored at Saint-Jean that are waiting for a sufficiently high tide to get underway will have priority, in accordance with a protocol established by the Lower St.Lawrence River Pilots Corporation.

11. Restricted passage in secondary channels

Ships being piloted must avoid travelling in secondary channels of unverified depth unless their destination requires it or unless it can be shown that such channels are safer than a main channel in the current conditions.