



L'ASSOCIATION DES PILOTES MARITIMES DU CANADA  
CANADIAN MARINE PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

**GUIDELINES  
MASTER-PILOT INFORMATION EXCHANGE ("MPX")**

In accordance with Annex 2 of the International Maritime Organization's Resolution A960 on Pilotage – "Recommendation on training and certification and on operational procedures for maritime pilots other than deep sea pilots" – each pilotage assignment should begin with an information exchange between the pilot and the master.

Each pilot group is encouraged to develop, in collaboration with its regional pilotage authority, a standard practice for the exchange of information, taking into account statutory requirements and best practices in the pilotage area. Pilots should consider using an information card or checklist (a "MPX Card") to ensure that essential exchange items are covered. The card should supplement and assist, not substitute for, the verbal information exchange.

The following is offered as guidance for the development of standard practices for the exchange of information between the master and the pilot regarding navigational procedures, local conditions and rules, and the ship's characteristics.

Initial conference

- The initial conference is an opportunity not only to exchange information that the pilot and master each needs, but also for the pilot and the master to establish an appropriate working relationship.
- The amount and nature of the information to be exchanged in the initial conference should be determined by the specific navigation demands of the pilotage assignment. This information should typically include: the ship's navigational characteristics and equipment; plans and procedures for the anticipated passage, special conditions that may be expected during the passage; the characteristics and number of tugs to be used, as appropriate; and the language to be used on the bridge and with external parties.
- For some assignments, particularly those involving a long run or difficult maneuvers at the beginning, not all relevant information must, or should, be exchanged in the initial conference. Additional information can be exchanged as the assignment proceeds and communication should be understood as a continuous process that generally continues for the duration of the assignment.

MPX Card

- The pilot should give the MPX Card to the master at the time of the initial conference and use it as the basis for discussion during the conference.



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- The Card should include information specific to navigation in the local pilotage area as well as the instructions or requests concerning the pilot's needs from the master and crew.
- When presented by the master and crew with "pilot cards" containing the characteristics or operational condition of the vessel, pilots should keep in mind they are under no obligation to sign or initial such documents and that a signature could be construed as a form of confirmation of the condition of the vessel.

Absent or unwilling master

- An effective exchange requires the participation of a master who is present and willing to provide the information needed by the pilot and to understand the pilot's instructions.
- If the master or bridge crew fails to provide all the information needed by the pilot to perform the navigation duties normally expected during the assignment, the pilot should use his best professional judgment to determine whether it is safe to proceed with the assignment.
- If a pilot determines that an assignment can safely proceed despite an unsatisfactory exchange, the pilot should adjust his pilotage practices accordingly and report the master's refusal to engage in an exchange or to provide required information.
- If a pilot determines that it is not safe to proceed with an assignment due to an unsatisfactory exchange, the pilot should refuse to proceed, advise the master/bridge crew, take steps to secure the vessel's safety, and notify appropriate authorities by the best means available.

Conduct of the vessel

- The MPX Card and the initial conference should clearly convey that, under Canada's *Pilotage Act*, no person other than a pilot licensed for the compulsory pilotage area where the assignment takes place may conduct the vessel (Sub-section 25 (1)).
- The exchange should also underline that the only situation where a person other than the pilot – this being the master – can legally take conduct of the vessel is if he has reasonable grounds to believe that the pilot's actions are endangering the safety of the vessel. It should be added that, in this event, the master must file a report with the pilotage authority within three days, setting out his reasons.
- The exchange may also emphasize that, with the exception of the singular situation described above, the authority to make decisions related to the conduct of the vessel is entrusted solely with the pilot and that no other person, including representatives of the owner, the charterer, the underwriter, the shipper, or their agents, may interfere with the conduct of the vessel by the pilot and related decisions or hinder the discharge of his duties.



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Use of auto-pilot and auto-tracking systems

- The MPX Card and initial conference should clearly convey that an autopilot or auto-tracking system may only be used with the express consent of the pilot and that, in those situations when such systems are used, a qualified helmsman shall be ready, at all times and without delay, to take over steering control.

Passage planning

- In accordance with the IMO's Resolution A960, plans and procedures for the anticipated passage should be discussed during the initial conference, with the understanding that any passage plan is only a basic indication of preferred intention and that – pilotage being a dynamic exercise – both the pilot and the master should be prepared to depart from the plan when circumstances so dictate.

Portable pilot units (PPU)

- In those cases where pilots carry aboard a portable pilot unit, they should advise the master and bridge crew of how the system will be used.

Ships calling on a regular basis

- The information exchange should not be abandoned for vessels that call on a frequent basis; such vessels have the potential to induce complacency.

Pilot-to-pilot transfer

- The transferor pilot should request the master's presence during the transfer.
- Recognizing that the circumstances of many pilot-to-pilot transfers do not allow much time for extensive discussion among the pilots and the master, pilots should focus on quickly exchanging the most critical information, including any unusual handling or operational characteristics of the vessel.
- Where practical, the transferor pilot should repeat to the transferee pilot information previously provided to the master, in the master's presence, and ask the master to confirm that the information is correct.

**Training in the Master-Pilot Information Exchange**

- The master-pilot information exchange should be an important focus of initial and continuous training for pilots.
- Initial training should cover statutory requirements, recognition of language and cultural impediments to effective communication and techniques for overcoming those, and best practices in the pilotage area.
- Continuous training should review initial training items and examine new practices and studies dealing with the subject.