

25 Information Concerning Pilot Transfer Arrangements on the St. Lawrence River

All ships must have pilot transfer equipment and arrangements that are compliant and deployed in accordance with the regulations, regardless of sea and swell conditions.

Pilot transfer is the responsibility of the transferring ship.

On the St. Lawrence River, between Les Escoumins and Saint-Lambert, the pilots would like ships to deploy their accommodation ladder in addition to a pilot ladder, regardless of the distance between the water and the point of access to the ship. However, this method will be considered only if the equipment is available on board.¹

In order to minimize the vertical distance to be climbed on the pilot ladder, and where this is possible, the position of the pilot ladder will be adjusted in such a way as to lower the point at which the pilot moves between the pilot ladder and the accommodation ladder (Figure 1).

As requested by the pilots and after consultations,² it was determined that, alternatively, under certain conditions, it would be safe to lower the accommodation ladder to allow the pilot to move directly onto or off the pilot boat, provided the ship has the requisite equipment (Figure 2). Transport Canada, Marine Safety and Security, recognizes this as equipment that is “equally safe and convenient” as set out in the Regulations, provided that the following conditions are met:

1. Embarkation from the pilot ladder must be possible at all times.
2. When the pilot boat approaches the ship, the accommodation ladder is raised so that there is no risk or obstacle for personnel on the deck or for the superstructures of the pilot boat.
3. Once the pilot boat is in position, and under the supervision of personnel on the deck of the pilot boat and the ship's officer in charge of the transfer, the accommodation ladder is moved to its final position:
 - a) at the place where the pilot will move between the accommodation ladder and the pilot ladder, depending on sea and swell conditions, or
 - b) if there are no waves or swell, at a minimum distance of about 350 mm (the distance between two rungs of the ladder according to SOLAS) so that the pilot can embark directly from the deck or from the platform of the pilot boat.
4. The pilot(s) remain(s) inside the pilot boat or on the deck of the ship until all equipment is in final position and supported against the side of the ship.

The above transfer procedure also applies under winter conditions.

Lowering the point of transition between the accommodation ladder and the pilot ladder is thought to be an effective way of reducing the risks involved when transferring pilots in winter. Direct embarkation from the accommodation ladder will also be considered when a tug is being used instead of a pilot boat for transferring pilots in winter.

¹ Note that ships are not required to have accommodation ladders installed for this purpose if the distance between the water and the point of access is 5 metres or less in the case of Canadian ships, or 9 metres or less in the case of other ships.

² Working Group on Pilots' Transfer during winter.

FIGURE 1: LOWERING THE POINT OF TRANSITION BETWEEN THE PILOT LADDER AND THE ACCOMODATION LADDER

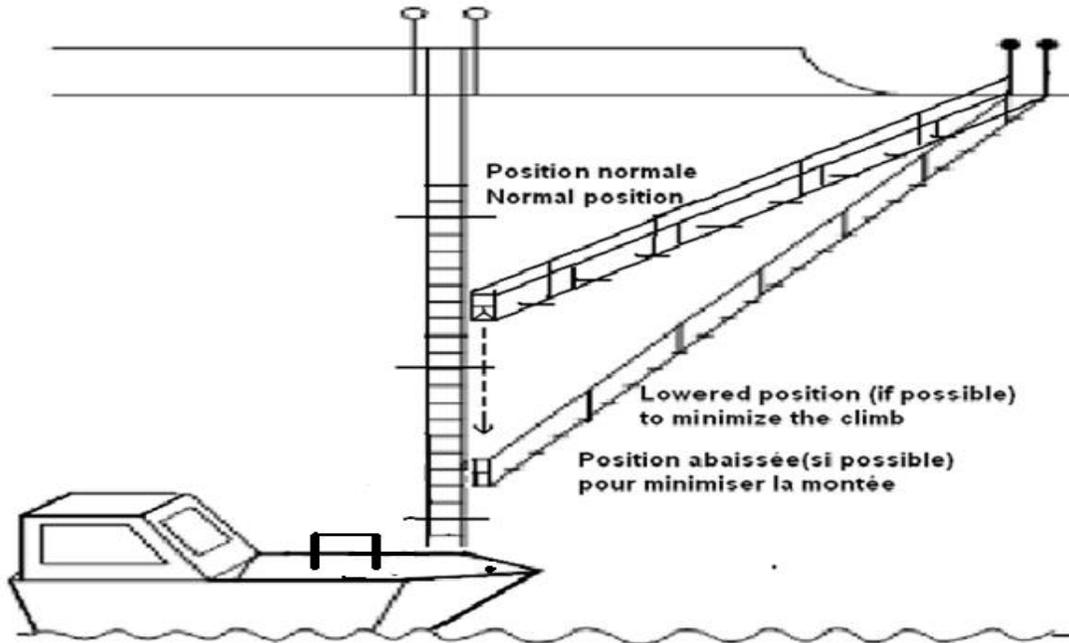
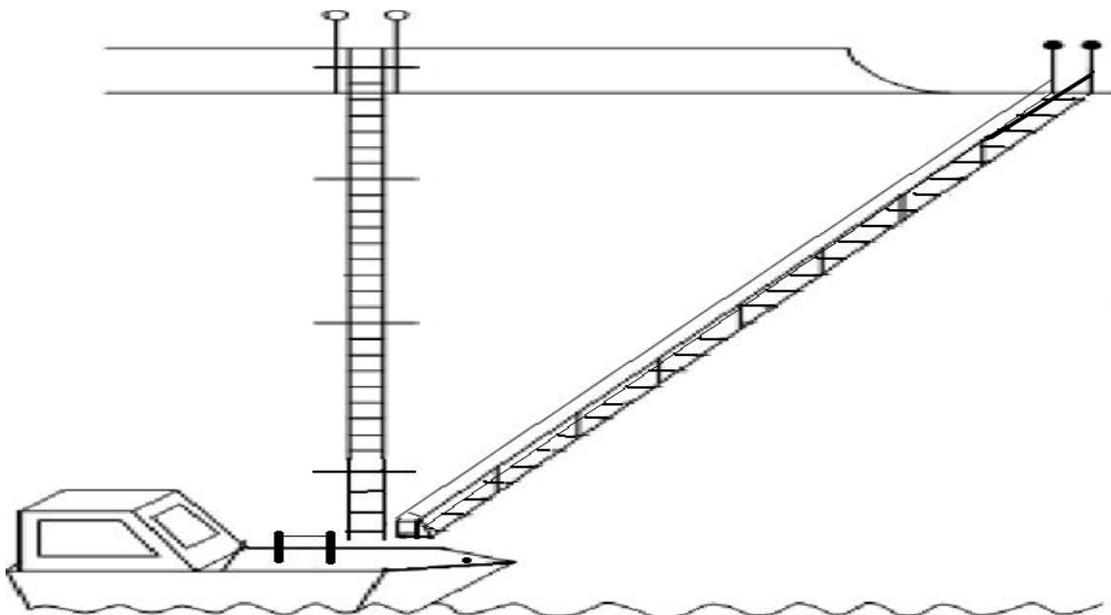


FIGURE 2: ACCOMODATION LADDER LOWERED TO ALLOW DIRECT BOARDING FROM THE PILOT VESSEL UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS



Authority: Transport Canada