

Commonwealth of Dominica



Office of the Maritime Administrator

- TO:** ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS, OFFICERS, MARINE PERSONNEL AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS
- SUBJECT:** Protection of the Great Barrier Reef Region – Compulsory and Voluntary Pilotage Programs.
- REFERENCE:** (a) Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment Act 1991
(b) Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972)
(c) IMO Resolution MEPC.44 (30) and MEPC.45 (30), adopted 1990
(d) IMO Resolution A.710 (17), adopted 1991
(e) IMO Ship’s Routing
- PURPOSE:** This Circular advises those involved with the operation and navigation of Dominica vessels of the action taken by the IMO and the Commonwealth of Australia toward minimizing the risk of vessel source pollution in the Great Barrier Reef Region through the implementation of voluntary and compulsory pilotage schemes.
- APPLICATION:** Under the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment Act 1991, enacted by the Australian Parliament, ships of 70 meters in length and over, as well as all oil tankers, chemical tankers, and gas carriers, irrespective of size.

REQUIREMENTS:

1.0 Compulsory Pilotage

All vessels meeting these criteria are required to carry a duly licensed pilot while navigating the inner route of the Great Barrier Reef between the northern extreme of Cape York Peninsula (10° 41’ South) and the vicinity of Cairns Roads (16° 40’ South); and in Hydrographers Passage. Noncompliance with this Act leaves the master and owner each liable for a penalty of \$50,000 (US) and prosecution may commence within three (3) years after the offense has been committed.

2.0 Non-Compulsory Pilotage Areas:

Due to their extensive use for international navigation, the Torres Strait and Great North East Channel were not included in the compulsory pilotage requirements. Nonetheless, these waters are also difficult to navigate and IMO Resolution A.710 (17) specifies the use of a licensed pilot when navigating the Torres Strait and the Great North East Channel between Booby Island (10° 36' South, 141° 54' East) and Bramble Cay (09° 09' South, 143° 53' East).

3.0 Areas To Avoid:

Furthermore, being aware of the close relationship between the safety of navigation and the prevention of pollution from ships, and recalling the latest Amendment to the General Provision's on Ships Routing, which states that Ships Routing may be used to reduce the risk of pollution caused by ships colliding or grounding in or near environmentally sensitive areas; navigators are reminded that the Capricornia Section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is designated as an "AREA TO BE AVOIDED".

4.0 Additional Hazards:

The Great Barrier Reef Region of Australia contains a scattered maze of submerged shoals and reefs. Added to these hazards are strong trade winds and occasional cyclones that are prevalent in the region. When all of these factors are combined with intense fishing activity peaking from April to October, the result is a significant obstacle to the safe navigation of a vessel.

5.0 Administrative Requirements:

In light of this, the Dominica Maritime Administrator requires the following from the vessels in its registry:

- 1.) Absolute compliance with the Australian Pilotage Requirements;
- 2.) Regular use of properly licensed pilots in those areas where it is specified that pilotage is necessary; and
- 3.) The use of sound judgment and caution when navigating in or near this particularly sensitive area.

6.0 Recommended Publication:

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority produces a publication entitled “Reef Guide – A Shipmaster’s Handbook to the Torres Strait and the Great Barrier Reef”. The booklet could be of invaluable assistance for mariners navigating through these areas. Mariners, ship owners and operators are encouraged to obtain copies from the following offices:

Maritime Division
Queensland Transport
GPO Box 2595
Brisbane 4001
Australia
Phone: +61 7 3224 2832
Fax: +61 7 3221 7179

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