

PILOTAGE

The work functions of the pilot go back to Ancient Greece and Roman times, when locally experienced harbour captains, mainly local fishermen, were employed by incoming ships' captains to bring their trading vessels into port safely.

A pilot is a mariner who guides ships through dangerous or congested waters, such as harbors or river mouths. Pilots are expert shiphandlers who possess detailed knowledge of local waterways. Pilots are responsible under the law and maritime custom for conducting the safe navigation of the vessel. With the exception of the Panama Canal, the pilot is only an advisor, as the captain remains in legal command of the vessel.

In the United Kingdom pilotage is regulated by the Pilotage Act 1987. The Act gives powers to Competent Harbour Authorities to make pilotage compulsory within their pilotage district, to grant pilotage exemption certificates and to authorise pilots within their district; the Act also allows the Secretary of State to authorise other bodies to grant deep sea pilotage certificates in respect of such part of the sea falling outside the harbour of any competent harbour authority. Prior to this Act Trinity House was responsible for the provision of local pilots for entering ports, Trinity House still remains the authorised body responsible for deep sea pilotage.

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source: Wikipedia