

NOTICE TO MARINERS 8 of 2019

SAFE ACCESS AT TERMINALS

The PLA have a growing concern over the number of reports we are receiving primarily from pilots, regarding access and egress from vessels at berths and terminals on the river. The issues being reported include gangways being unsafe, non-compliant and poorly rigged. This issue has been raised on numerous occasions over the years with berth and terminal operators as well as ship agents. Unfortunately the problem is not being resolved and we continue to receive near miss reports, incident reports and pilots quite correctly refusing to board vessels.

As with most companies, the PLA takes the safety of not only its own personnel but all river users very seriously and the improvement of safety standards is a PLA Board level priority.

Although the issue of safe access is not unique to any one berth/terminal and has been identified at numerous locations, the issue is more prevalent at the oil jetties. To try and find a way forward the main terminal operators were invited to a meeting to discuss the problem raise awareness of the issues and agree a way forward.

It was agreed at the meeting that the issues discussed applied to all berths and terminals, not just those attending the discussions. A number of core principles were agreed:

- It is unacceptable to expect or allow anyone to use an unsafe or non-compliant means of access.
- The reporting of such safety issues should be encouraged and acted on.
- Berth/terminal personnel should challenge and report anyone including PLA staff not complying with safety requirements.
- The problem does not just apply to pilots at the vessels arrival and departure but is an issue of safety throughout the vessels stay at the facility.
- Although the provision of safe access is the responsibility of the ships master, berth/terminal operators are required to comply with the Port Marine Safety Code and therefore have a duty to ensure that safe operations are maintained.

From the discussion the following actions as a way forward were agreed:

- Berths/terminals will make every effort to ensure safe access is managed. Intentions to include identifying issues early on so that alternative plans can be considered.
- Berth/terminals will be proactive and prevent unsafe access being used.
- Ship agents through discussions with the berths/terminal operators/PLA will, where possible, book arrival/sailing times to minimise the potential of access issues.

- The use of a boat to transfer personnel including pilots by the outboard side of the vessel is not an acceptable option and will only be used in extreme cases of safety and not as a replacement for a safe gangway.
- Berth/terminal operators will review their emergency response plans to ensure safe access/egress can be provided to vessels at all times in the event of an emergency on the vessel.

The provision of safe access is required for all personnel who have a requirement to board vessels and all berth/terminal operators and ship agents are requested to note the above and work together to raise safety standards.

3 April 2019

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BOB BAKER
CHIEF HARBOUR MASTER



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