

# FATHOM SAFETY



## A Guide to Pilot Ladder Securing

As per SOLAS Regulation 23  
Chapter V, IMO Resolution A.1045(27)

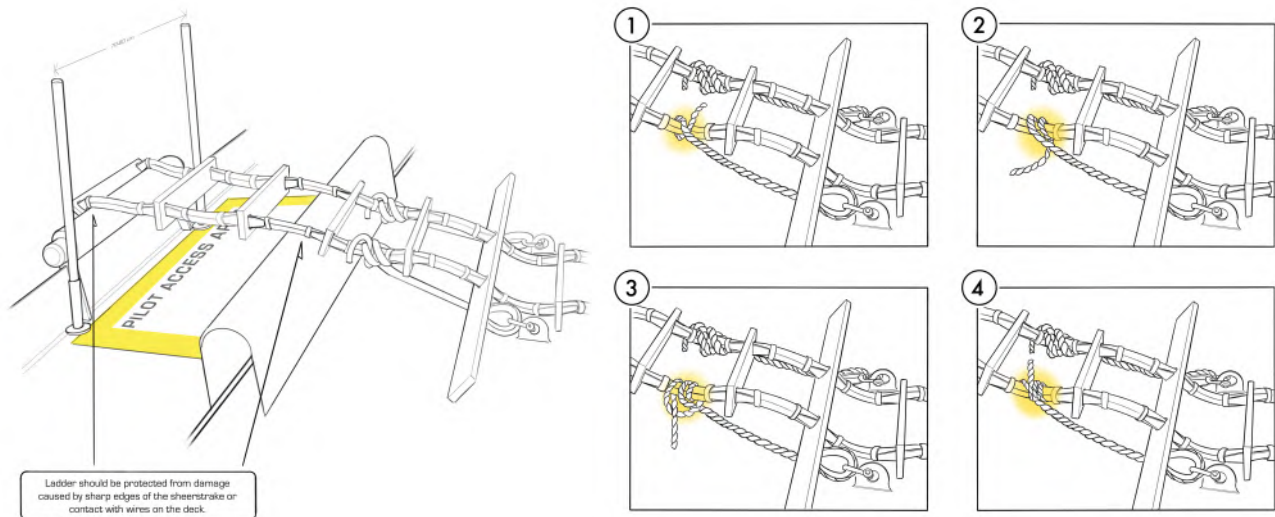


# Introduction

This document is designed to give clear illustrated instructions on how pilot ladders MUST be secured in order to comply with SOLAS Regulations & IMO Resolutions. Failure to comply with the regulations may cause delays, PSC inspections and ultimately lead to serious incidents due to compromising pilots safety. For further education regarding pilot safety please visit [www.fathomsafety.co.uk](http://www.fathomsafety.co.uk)

## For vessels with a HEPASS less than 9m

For vessels with a height of embarkation point above sea surface (HEPASS) of 9m or less only a pilot ladder is required. The pilot ladder should be at a height above the water as stipulated by the pilot/VTS and secured at the designated pilot boarding area to the approved deck strong points via the thimbles at the top of the side ropes or by 2 rope strops if the ladder is longer than required. These rope strops should be constructed from manila rope with a breaking strength of not less than 2.4 metric tonnes/24 Kilo Newtons (typically 18mm diameter). The strops should be secured to the deck strong points and then secured around the side ropes of the ladder between the steps by means of a rolling hitch as per the diagrams below. If the strong points on deck have sharp edges the strops can be spliced to shackles or thimbles to prevent chafing. The strops should be clearly identified and only used for securing the pilot ladder. When not in use the strops should be stowed inside away from paints, chemicals or any other substance that could damage them.



The securing knot should be tied between 2 steps of the pilot ladder. All the weight should be taken by the securing strops and the side ropes.

The steps and chocks are NOT designed to take the weight of the ladder so tying around or over the steps will not give additional strength but only reduce the effectiveness of the knot and possibly damage the steps and chocks.

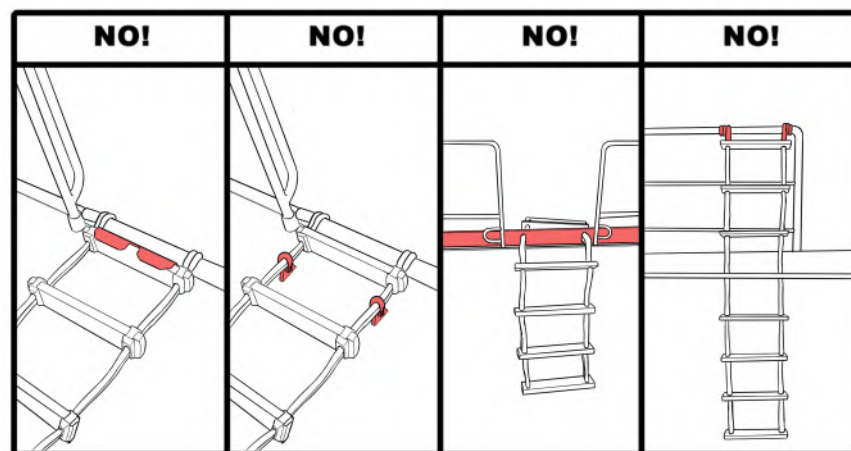
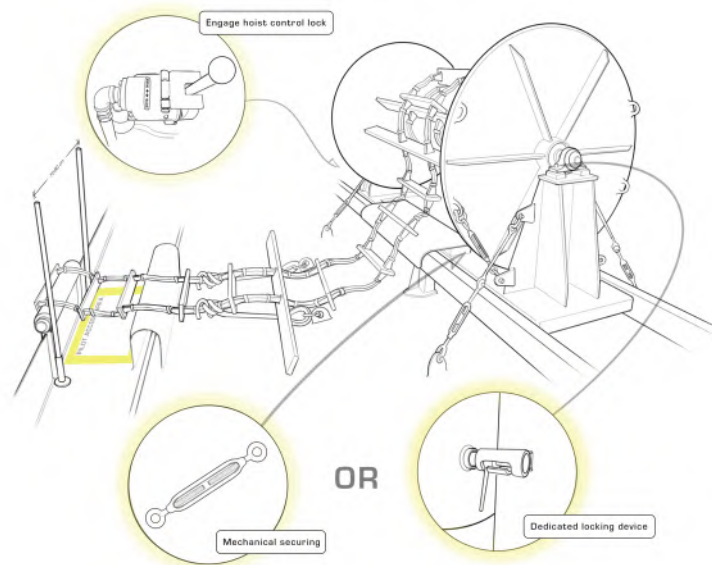
**For the same reason shackles should never be used to secure a pilot ladder!**



## Additionally For Vessels With A Pilot Ladder Reel/Winch

For vessels with a pilot ladder reel/winch there are additional measures that need to be observed.

1. The pilot ladder must be secured to the deck as per the above guidance. The winch reel should not take the weight of the ladder.
2. As an additional safety measure the winch reel should be secured by a mechanical fastening or via a dedicated reel bolt.
3. Additionally the hoist controls should either be locked to prevent accidental use or if no lock is present then the air supply should be isolated from the reel.



When securing the ladder the following arrangements are **NON COMPLIANT** and could lead to pilots refusing to board, vessel delays and/or PSC inspections.

- Deck Tongues (Angle irons) used to hold the pilot ladder by clamping/hooksing a step.
- Shackles used over side ropes as previously mentioned
- Use of the spreader to restrain the ladder against the ships railings
- Securing the ladder to the ships railings rather than the dedicated deck strong points.

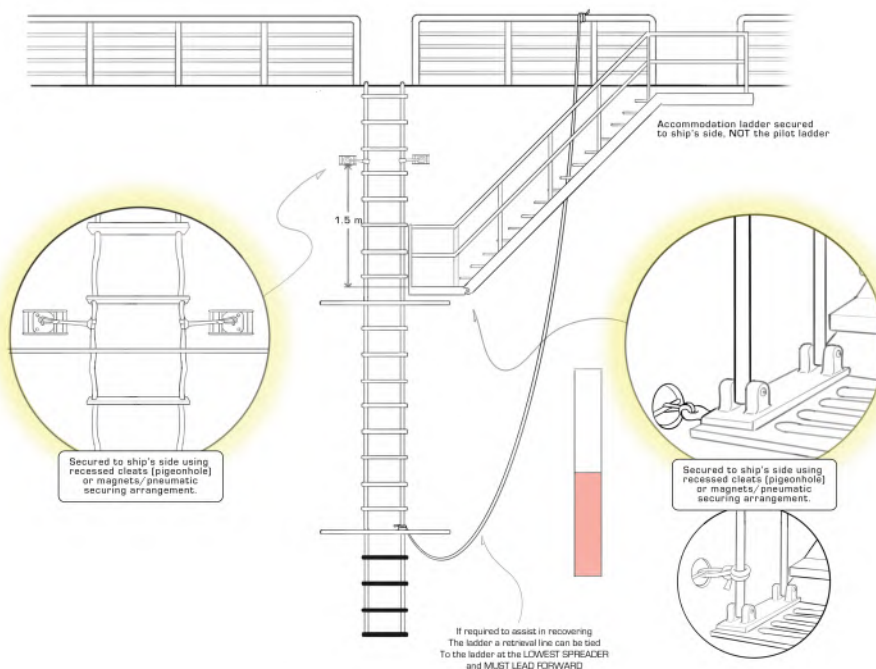
## For vessels with a HEPASS greater than 9m

For vessels with a height of embarkation point above sea surface (HEPASS) of more than 9m a combination ladder is required using both the pilot ladder and the ships accommodation ladder. The platform of the accommodation ladder should be between 5-9m above sea level to prevent danger to the pilot launch. The platform should sit horizontally to allow an easy transfer between pilot ladder and accommodation ladder.

The accommodation ladder should be secured to the ships side using dedicated pigeon hole lashing points or magnets.

The pilot ladder should extend a minimum of 2m above the platform level and be secured to the ships side via pigeon hole lashing or magnets at a height of 1.5m above the platform.

If the ladder is on a reel the same additional precautions should be taken as per vessels with a HEPASS of 9m or less.



## Securing checklist

1. Calculate the HEPASS. Do we need a combination ladder?
2. Obtain the rigging side and required height above the waterline from VTS/Pilot Station.
3. Securing of the ladder MUST be supervised by a 'responsible Officer'.
4. Prior to deploying the ladder check the condition of side ropes, chocks and steps. If in doubt about the ladder DO NOT USE IT!
5. Ensure the ladder is secured using dedicated securing strops by a rolling hitch around the side ropes ensuring no weight is borne by the steps or chocks.
6. If the ladder is on a reel ensure ALL precautions listed above are taken.
7. If a combination ladder is required ensure both pilot ladder and accommodation ladder are secured to the ships side as explained above and that the platform is horizontal.
8. If a recovery line (tripping line) is required it MUST lead forward and be tied no lower than the lowest spreader.
9. The pilot's safety is in your hands, please act professionally so we all go home safe!



Fathom Safety has been created to provide low/no-cost training to improve the safety of pilot transfer operations. Established by UK pilot Gary Clay who realised the issues within the industry were largely education based due to a general lack of training material regarding pilot transfer operations. As a pilot for nearly 20 years Gary has boarded and disembarked thousands of vessels without incident and is passionate about ensuring his colleagues worldwide can go home safely. To find more high quality educational material and our interactive animated e-learning course please visit our website.

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