

Transport and Main Roads

Gold Coast superyacht guidelines

Guidelines for Masters operating
superyachts in the Southport Pilotage
Area

Welcome to the Gold Coast.

The aim of these guidelines is to assist superyacht masters with their preparations for a visit to the Gold Coast and to provide a reference document during the visit.

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with, and are subordinate to, Queensland and Commonwealth legislation, as amended from time to time, the Port Procedures and Information for Shipping – Southport Pilotage Area (port procedures) and the information promulgated on relevant websites. In the event of any inconsistency between these guidelines and the legislation, port procedures or information promulgated on relevant websites, the requirements of the legislation, port procedures and relevant websites take precedence.

For the purposes of these guidelines, superyachts are recreational ships with a length overall (LOA) of more than 24 metres which are used for private (non-commercial) operations.

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) requires all ships that are 50m or more LOA to use the services of a pilot, unless the master holds a valid Pilotage Exemption Certificate for the pilotage area in which they are operating.

Masters of superyachts of all sizes may request the services of a pilot for any passage within the Southport Pilotage Area. A master is encouraged to request these services if in any doubt regarding the guidelines in the pilotage area or regarding his/her ability to safely manoeuvre within the pilotage area.

In certain circumstances the Harbour Master may require a Pilot to conduct the ship on its movement into, out of or within the port.

If the ship is to be engaged in commercial activity, including any form of charter, then the ship must comply with the registration and licensing provisions of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994*, [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2004](#) and the [National Marine Safety Committee \(NMSC\) superyacht policy](#).

Superyachts are free to enter and move around the Southport Pilotage Area subject to compliance with the following requirements:

1. Superyacht masters must operate in accordance with the requirements outlined in these guidelines.
2. Superyachts, operating within the Southport Pilotage Area, must at all times maintain a listening watch on VHF Ch 16 and follow all directions issued by MSQ.
3. Superyacht masters must be aware of, and comply with, the restrictions and all other requirements for operating in the Southport Pilotage Area.
4. [Convention on the International Regulations for Prevention of Collision at Sea 1972](#) (COLREGS).

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Definitions

Terms, abbreviations and acronyms	Meaning
Authorised Officer	Under the provisions of the <i>Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995</i> , Authorised Officers have the following functions: (a) to investigate discharges prohibited by this Act (b) to monitor compliance with this Act (c) to monitor transfer operations (d) to examine ships using coastal waters to minimise discharges (e) to take action to remove a pollutant discharged into coastal waters or mitigate its effect on Queensland's marine and coastal environment.
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
COLREGS	<i>Convention on the International Regulations for Prevention of Collision at Sea 1972</i> (see Marine Orders Part 30)
Commercial ship	All ships (and their tenders) used for activities undertaken for financial reward are considered commercial ventures. This includes ships used where no direct fees are received. The following ships must be commercially registered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ships commercially operating in Queensland waters owned or chartered by a person whose principal place of residence is Queensland • ships commercially operated by a person whose principal place of business is Queensland • ships commercially operated by a person whose principal place of business for managing the ship's operations is in Queensland.
Emergency	Includes any marine related incident such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fire • explosion • marine oil pollution • marine casualties (including stranding and collision) • ships requiring safe haven • natural disasters. These emergencies may or may not involve injury, death, structural and/or environmental damage.
Gold Coast Seaway Tower	Conspicuous white tower located on the southern breakwater. Volunteer radio operators provide radio coverage for ships transiting the seaway and also monitor distress frequencies and provide regular weather forecasts.
Harbour Master (HM)	The person authorised to give direction under the relevant provisions of the <i>Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994</i> .
Highest astronomical tide (HAT) and lowest astronomical tide (LAT)	Highest astronomical tide and lowest astronomical tide are the highest and lowest levels respectively which can be predicted to occur under average meteorological conditions and under any combinations of astronomical conditions. These levels will not be reached every year. Highest astronomical tide and lowest astronomical tide are not the extreme levels which can be reached, as storm surges may cause considerably higher and lower levels to occur
International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code)	The codes are published by the International Maritime Organization for the safe carriage, packing, handling, classing and transporting of dangerous goods.
Length Overall (LOA)	The distance in the fore and aft line from the foremost part of the hull of the ship to the aftermost part of the hull of the ship taken at the weather tight deck or, for an open ship, at the height of the gunwale.

Terms, abbreviations and acronyms	Meaning
Marine incident	A marine incident is defined in section 123 of the <i>Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994</i> and includes events causing or involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the loss of a person from a ship or (b) the death of, or grievous bodily harm to, a person caused by a ship's operations or (c) the loss or presumed loss or abandonment of a ship or (d) a collision with a ship or (e) the stranding of a ship or (f) material damage to a ship or (g) material damage caused by a ship's operations or (h) danger to a person caused by a ship's operations or (i) danger of serious damage to a ship or (j) danger of serious damage to a structure caused by a ship's operations.
MSQ	Maritime Safety Queensland
NMSC	National Marine Safety Committee
Pilotage exemption certificate	Certificate granted to certain qualified masters who have satisfied the necessary requirements and are authorised to navigate their ships in the port limits without a pilot.
Port procedures	Port Procedures and Information for Shipping – Southport Pilotage Area
Recreational ship	A ship used only for private recreation or a tender to a ship used only for private recreation. Ships used for activities undertaken for financial reward, including where no direct fees are received, are considered commercial ventures.
Ship movement	The arrival, departure or removal of a ship.
Shipping Inspector	Under the provisions of the <i>Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994</i> , Shipping Inspectors have the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to monitor ships and their operations to ensure general safety obligations and standards and other provisions of this Act are complied with (b) to monitor the holders of approvals and their business operations to ensure that registration, licensing, permits and accreditation is complied with (c) to help harbour masters, including exercising any Harbour Master delegated powers (d) to investigate marine incidents and report the results to the general manager (e) to carry out directions of boards of inquiry.
Superyacht	A sailing ship or motor ship that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is used for sport or pleasure (see recreational ship) • is over 24 metres in load line length • does not carry cargo • does not carry more than 12 passengers (berthed/unberthed).
Tender	An auxiliary ship, other than a lifeboat, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) is not longer than 6m (b) is employed to attend another ship (c) is smaller than the other ship (d) is operated only in the proximity of the other ship.
Under Keel Clearance (UKC)	The depth of water between the ship's keel and the sea or river bed.
Very high frequency (VHF)	Radio frequencies used for two-way radio telephone communication.
Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR)	Provides marine search and rescue services to the boating public on a volunteer basis.

General considerations

The port of Southport falls within the jurisdiction of Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ). A comprehensive [Port Procedures and Information for Shipping – Southport Pilotage Area manual](#) is available on the MSQ website.

General

Superyacht masters should familiarise themselves with the latest navigation warnings, shipping movements and weather information and maintain a listening watch on Channel 16. MSQ publishes Queensland [Notices to Mariners](#) on an as needed basis to warn ship operators of navigation hazards, faulty aids to navigation and or changes to aids to navigation, flare demonstrations, change of channel depths and any other relevant information.

The [MB6 Nerang River to Couran](#) chart contains colour enlargements of popular areas on the reverse side, plus safety and environmental information with rules and regulations.

The [Beacon to Beacon Directory](#) provides a comprehensive guide to Gold Coast waterways. The maps are compiled by MSQ cartographers and include extra information such as rules and regulations, and navigational warnings.

Directions and regulations to be observed

The Regional Director (Gold Coast) is appointed as a Harbour Master under the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* to manage the safety of ships and their operations and the safety of ship movements.

The Regional Director (Gold Coast) is also appointed as an Authorised Officer under the [Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995](#) to manage the protection of the marine environment through the prevention of ship-sourced pollution.

The master of any superyacht navigating in the Southport Pilotage Area must comply with any direction given by the Harbour Master and the requirements of the *Convention on the International Regulations for Prevention of Collision at Sea 1972*. Additionally, the superyacht master is required to comply with all relevant State and Federal legislation and international conventions.

Maximum ship size

Due to the nature of the Southport Broadwater and the available depth of water in some channels, certain limitations regarding the movement of ships must be considered. A minimum under keel clearance (UKC) of 1.0 metre is required to be maintained in the Gold Coast Seaway Entrance. A minimum UKC of 0.5 metres is required in all other areas.

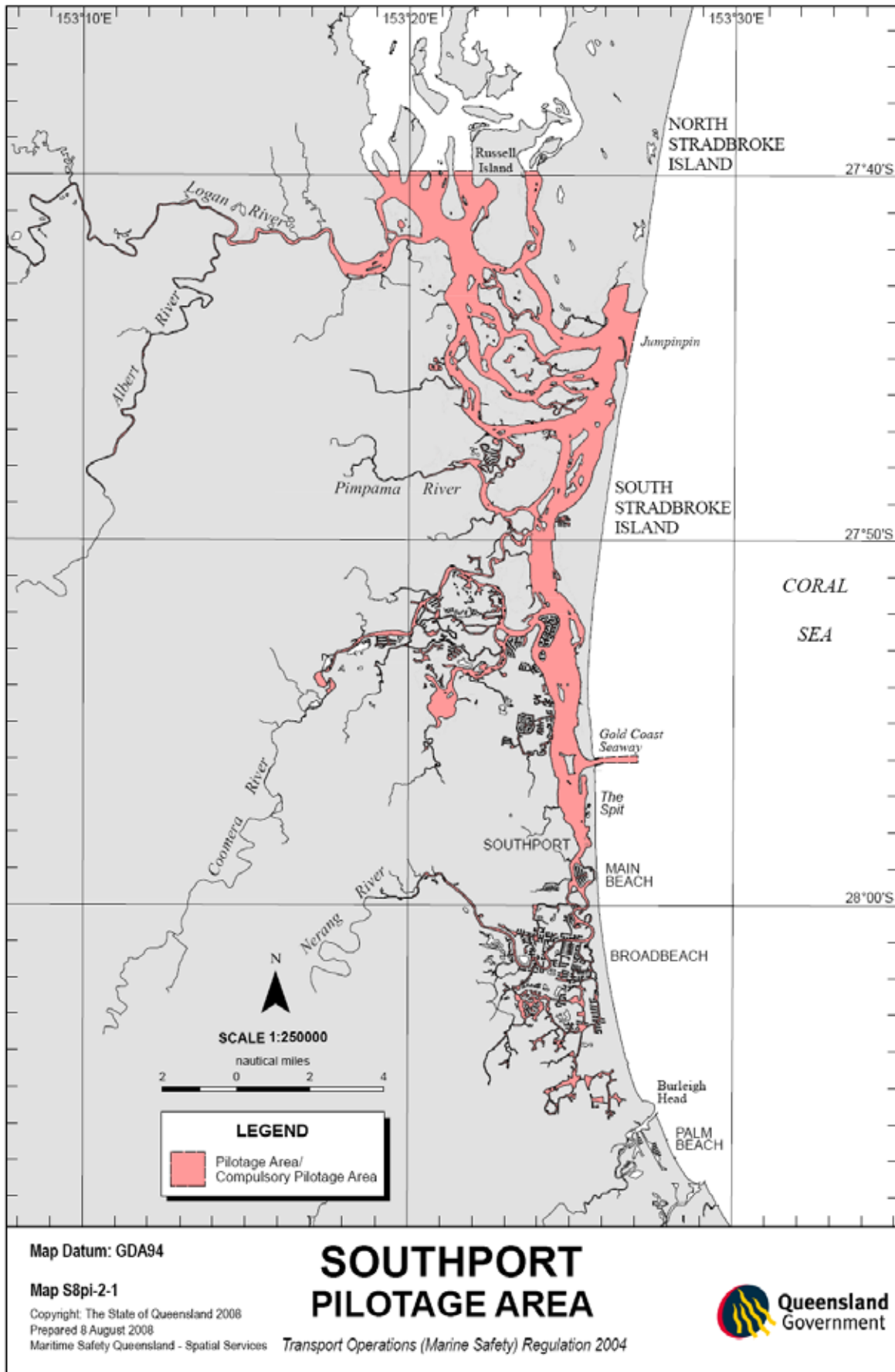
Gold Coast Seaway to Southport Yacht Club

- Maximum overall length 65 metres
- Maximum displacement (dependant upon berthing facilities)
- Maximum draught 3.0 metres plus tide

Gold Coast Seaway to Marine Precinct, Coomera River

- Maximum overall length 60 metres
- Maximum displacement (dependant upon berthing facilities)
- Maximum draught 2.1 metres plus tide

The Southport Pilotage Area



Pilotage

Unless a master holds a pilotage exemption certificate for the area, pilotage is compulsory for:

- a ship that is 50 metres or more
- a 'small ship' less than 35 metres (the relevant ship) if:
 - it is combined with another small ship for propelling one of the ships
 - the total of the lengths of the ships is 50 metres or more
 - the master of the relevant ship has command of the combined ships.

In waters north of the Gold Coast Seaway, in particular the Coomera River, movement of ships 35 metres LOA or more but less than 50 metres LOA may also require pilotage. MSQ will determine requirements on a case-by-case basis dependant on the ship's characteristics.

Further enquiries can be directed to the Gold Coast office:

Phone: +61 7 5539 7300 (business hours)

Email: MSQ.GoldCoast.Reception@msq.qld.gov.au

Recreational water activities

A wide range of recreational water activities occur in the Gold Coast area including the Southport Broadwater and near the Gold Coast Seaway. These activities include jet boat rides, surfing, hire and drive ship activities, general boating, personal watercraft activity, kayak tours and parasailing amongst others. On weekends and during holiday periods, this activity can peak with a large number of ships and people using the Southport Broadwater. Special attention should be given when navigating in the Southport Broadwater and Gold Coast Seaway, giving due regard to the increased traffic density and Masters should maintain a watch for surfers paddling across the Gold Coast Seaway.

Helicopter operations

Helicopter operations are permitted on the Gold Coast subject to certain restrictions and requirements and compliance with [Civil Aviation Safety Authority](#) and [Airservices Australia](#) regulations.

Seaplanes

Seaplanes use the area to the north-west of the Southport Yacht Club Marina, west of the South Channel near Loders Creek, west of Crab Island and the reach of the Coomera River near Santa Barbara (see chartlet over page).