

Panama Canal Authority
Vice Presidency for Operations
Advisory to Shipping No. A-05-2021

January 15, 2021

TO: All Steamship Agents, Owners, and Operators

SUBJECT: Clarification Regarding Boarding Facilities with installed Trapdoors

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) considers proper boarding facilities to be an absolute necessity to ensure the safety of ACP personnel and others using these facilities while in Canal waters. Poorly constructed, installed, maintained, or operated boarding facilities are not acceptable for use in Canal waters.

Due to several recent non-compliance reports involving trapdoors installed on the lower platform of some accommodation ladders, being used as combination ladders, be advised that the use of trapdoors is permitted only when in full compliance with the requirements regarding Boarding Facilities contained in Section 10 of Notice to Shipping N-1-2021, as stated below:

Paragraph 10.f.(2)(f) states that "If a trap door is fitted in the lower platform of a combination ladder arrangement to allow access from and to the pilot ladder, the aperture should not be less than 750 mm x 750 mm (30 inches x 30 inches) and of a design approved by the Authority. In this case the after part of the lower platform should also be fenced as specified in Paragraph 10.f (2) (c), and the pilot ladder should extend above the lower platform at least 2 meters (6 feet 8 inches). The aperture on the lower platform must be open to the side of the vessel's hull to allow the pilot ladder to lay flat against the hull."

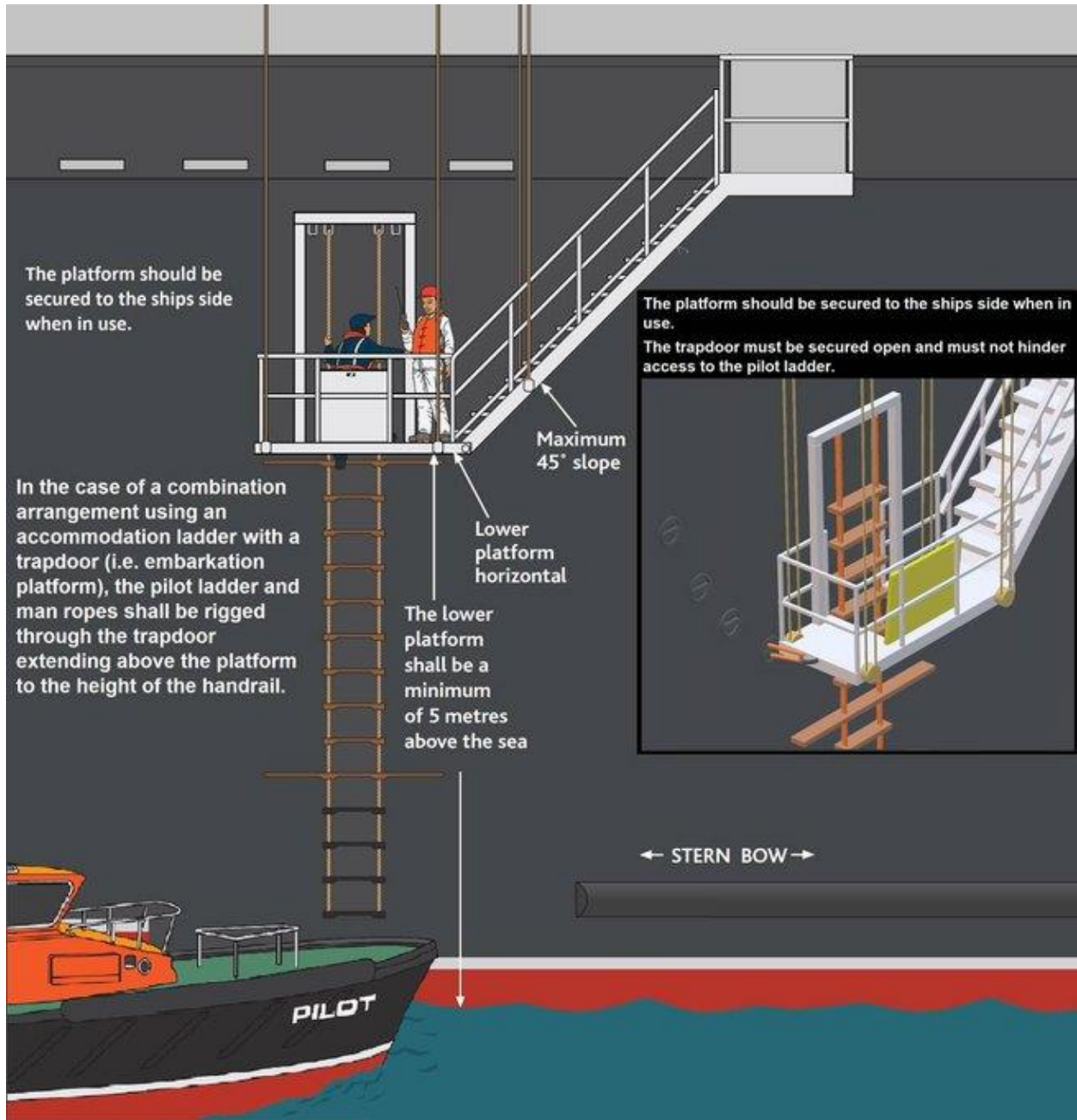
Boarding facilities using a trapdoor at the lower platform of the accommodation ladder shall meet the following conditions:

- The pilot ladder must be of a continuous length, extending at least 2 meters above the lower platform.
- No rails, bars or beams should obstruct the pilot's ability to grasp the side ropes or stand on steps until they reach the level of the lower platform.
- Inboard railings on platforms fitted with a trapdoor must not obstruct the pilot ladder.
- Accommodation ladders must be secured to ship's side.
- If the pilot ladder is stored on a reel, the ladder must be secured to strongpoints on deck, and the reel locked separately.
- The lower platform of the accommodation ladder must be horizontal.
- The pilot ladder steps must rest firmly against the ship's hull.
- The pilot must not be required to lean outwards to pass through the trapdoor accessway.

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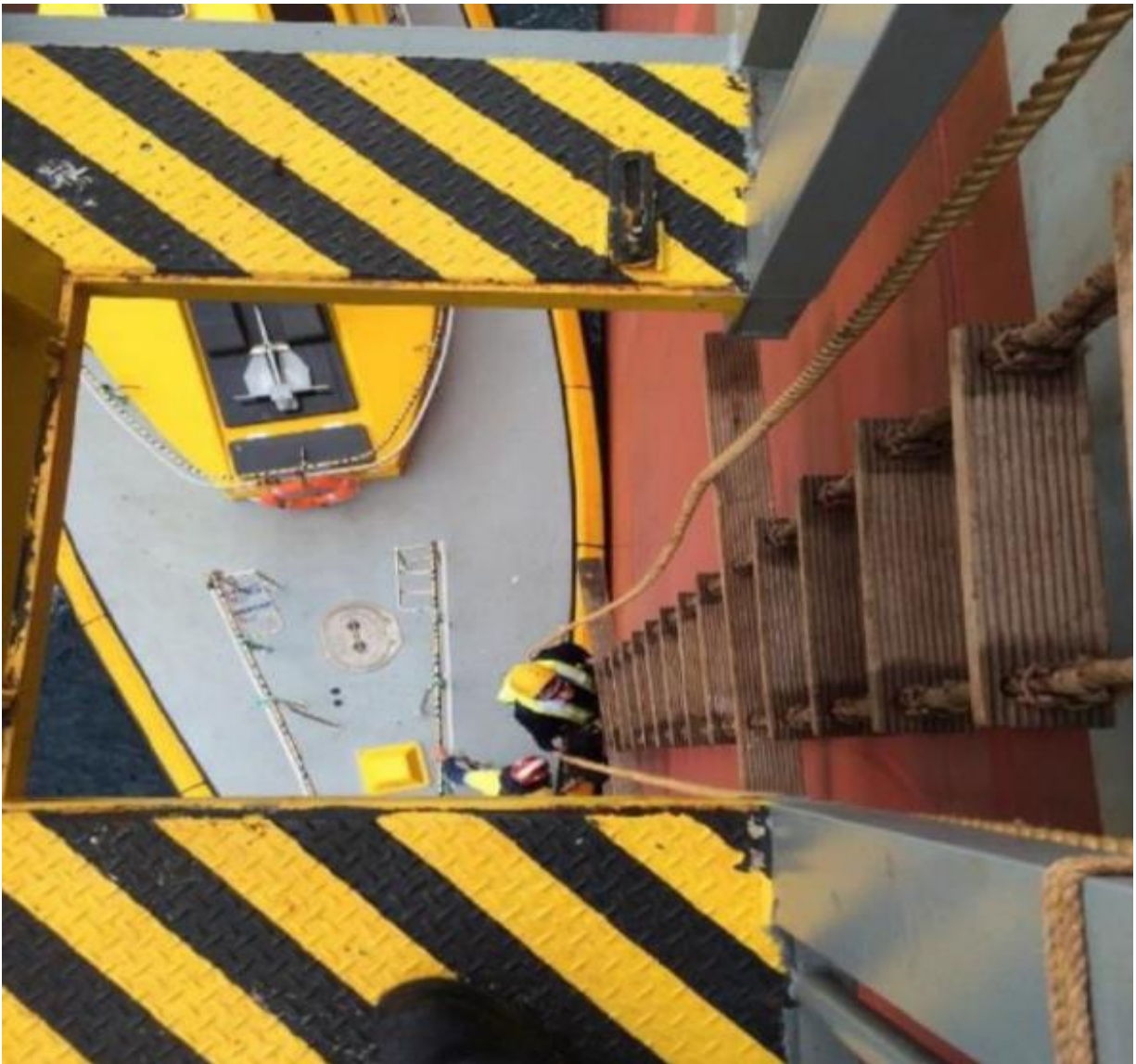
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A diagram and photograph have been included for your reference.



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Vessels that arrive at Panama Canal waters with unsafe or inadequate boarding facilities are required to correct such deficiencies prior to proceeding to dock or transit. Vessels that do not comply with these requirements may experience delays and additional charges.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Ilya R. Espino de Marotta
Deputy Administrator and Vice President
for Operations