



Pilotage exemption certificates

Manchester Ship Canal Company (MSCC), as Competent Harbour Authority, has powers and duties to exempt certain ships officers from their requirements to take an authorised pilot. The use of these powers follow these general principles:

- a) The standards for exemption certificates must not be more onerous than those required for an authorised pilot; but they should be equivalent.
- b) Exemption certificate holders and their employers are accountable to the competent harbour authority for the proper use of any certificate.
- c) Harbour authorities should have formal written agreements with certificate holders and their employers to regulate the use of certificates.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Pilotage Directions and Pilotage Act 1987.

Eligibility for a PEC

The Act requires CHA's to grant a PEC only to a person who is a bona fide deck officer of the ship or ships specified on the certificate. The arrangements whereby applicants may qualify, obtain, and use a PEC are be laid down in the MSCC Pilotage Directions. The Pilotage Directions will specify the type and size of vessels which are subject to pilotage and therefore, by definition, the vessels to which a PEC applies.

Award of Certificates

The first step will be for the officer to apply to the CHA using the form available on the Manchester Ship Canal website, Marine Information.

They will be invited to receive a briefing from the CHA on what they are required to do to progress.

Once the requirements have been determined, applicants who satisfy them will have a right to exemption whilst serving as bona fide deck officer only on the vessel/s for which they hold a certificate.

It should be noted that HPL will not withhold certification for reasons unconnected with an applicant's skill and experience, local knowledge, medical fitness and knowledge of English.

Requirements may apply if the vessel were to take tugs. In that case, the authority has to choose whether it is reasonable to make the related skills a requirement for exemption; or whether to adopt an alternative risk management device.

**The Manchester Ship Canal
Company Limited**

Maritime Centre
Port of Liverpool
L21 1LA

T: **+44 (0)151 949 6000**

MSCC PEC GUIDELINES



Validity of Certificate

A PEC is valid until the following 31st December from date of issue, then annually. Renewal will depend upon the CHA being satisfied with the conduct of the PEC holder and confirmation that the holder's certificate of competency and medical certificate remain valid.

Where a PEC is continuously renewed, the holder will be practically reassessed, and/or re-examined at a maximum every five years.

The application form available on the website includes provision for renewal, five year revalidation and additional vessels.

Addition of new vessels will depend on the characteristics of the vessels. Additional areas will be subject to the same requirements as for the areas in the first application. The Pilotage Directions advise further.

Training

The CHA provides to the PEC applicant and their employer relevant up to-date navigation information and may offer further training required on aspects of the examination.

The information is presented on the website, which includes Pilotage Directions, Navigation Guidelines, Harbour Byelaws, Port Information Guide, Towage Guidelines and Hydrographic Information.

Further guidance should also be sought from publications such as Admiralty Charts, Sailing Directions, ALRS, Tide Tables and List of Lights.

Where applicable, it is also recommended that applicants visit, or be briefed on, the port control system.

Skill, experience and local knowledge

The granting of a PEC is dependent upon the CHA being satisfied that the applicant's skill, experience and local knowledge is sufficient for him to pilot his ship safely within the whole of the area of the harbour to which the authority's directions apply, or a specified part.

A checklist in the Syllabus below lists the general criteria which the CHA apply when assessing applicants for PEC.

The CHA considers it necessary in the interests of safety that a PEC may only be issued where the CHA is satisfied that the applicant's knowledge of English is sufficient for that purpose. This will generally be established during an oral examination or practical assessment. If there is any doubt, then evidence of nationally recognised assessment will be required.

Assessment of Experience

Experience of the relevant area will be ensured by requiring a PEC applicant to complete a number of training acts in the company of an authorised pilot or a holder of a valid PEC for the area concerned.

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Tripping should be undertaken on the ship, or class of ship, in which the PEC is to be used.

The applicant should actively make best use of this time by discussing all elements of the syllabus with the Pilot or PEC.

The tripping requirements for pilotage area, or any part, are defined in the Pilotage Directions. The Tripping Log, available on the website, should be completed in full and submitted at the requested time.

Assessment of skill

A mariner's level of knowledge is, usually, in principle, confirmed by his certificate of competency. It is therefore fundamental that a PEC applicant holds a valid and relevant certificate of competency, which entitles him/her to hold the position as deck officer in the ship(s) named in the application.

Experience has shown, however, that in practice, certificates of competency do not always reflect accurately an applicant's professional ability in ship handling. Therefore, the CHA will confirm the overall competency of an applicant, together with his/her ability to communicate effectively in English, during the practical assessment of their shiphandling and local pilotage knowledge. The assessment is carried out by the Harbour Master's Representative and an Authorised First Class Pilot.

Assessment of Local Knowledge

The level of local knowledge will be assessed practically and by oral examination. The level should be sufficient for the applicant to pilot his vessel with safety throughout the area covered by the PEC.

The checklist in the Syllabus lists the criteria which the CHA will apply in assessing applicants. This includes both generic matters and local knowledge.

The Exam Committee consists of the Chairman (Harbour Master's Representative) and an Authorised First Class Pilot.

Chairman	Pilot
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Directions and Guidelines 2. Mersey Channel Collision Rules 3. The Prohibited Anchorages 4. Aids to navigation in the Channel and River 5. Shore based aids to navigation 6. Depths and character of soundings in the Channel and River 7. Depths of water at Dock Entrances 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tidal sets and procedures for docking at all Dock Entrances and Stages in the River 2. Awareness of other traffic requirements 3. Courses and distances in the Channel and River 4. The rise and set of tides in the Channel

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Procedure for examining applicants

The CHA will establish a procedure for examining applicants for a PEC, to verify whether they meet the criteria set out in the checklist. The procedure will include an oral examination and a practical assessment.

PEC Procedure for Certification

- Complete and send application form (found on Peel Ports website - MSC - Marine Information – Publications and Forms) to Jayne.johnson@peelports.com
- The form defines evidence required at the application stage, but in summary:
- Valid certificate of competency as deck officer
- Confirmation from company of being bona fide deck officer responsible for navigation
- Evidence of current medical fitness
- Vessel Passage Plan
- Applicant makes direct contact with Marine office to arrange a session to discuss syllabus and exam structure.
- Applicant completes and logs required qualifying passages, tripping log found on website.
- At an agreed point during the qualifying passages, the applicant shall contact the CHA to arrange the practical assessment and exam. Qualifying passages must be completed before the exam can take place.
Note: the CHA generally requires one calendar month notice for the assessment and exam, notice periods less than this may result in greater risk that the preferred date and time will not be possible.
- On successful completion the applicant and employer will be asked to sign a Letter of Agreement with the CHA.
- A Pilotage Exemption Certificate will then be granted subject to payment of standard fees.

Syllabus

GENERIC

Thorough understanding of own vessel handling characteristics

Knowledge of squat and interaction

Communicate sufficiently for the purposes of safety in English

Prepare, implement and provide pilotage passage plan including blind pilotage

Own vessel abort positions and procedures

Relevant knowledge of applicable International, National and Local legislation eg: Pilotage Act 1987

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LOCAL KNOWLEDGE (Specific to PEC area)

Port regulations – Directions, Guidelines & Byelaws etc.

Speed limits, if any.

Local Notice to Mariners

Port Control operations

Parallel Indexing

VHF channels

Local sound/light/shape signals inc, traffic signals

Channels/tracks/widths/depths/buoys/track distances/escapes depths

Navigation marks and aids

Coastal features

Tidal streams, prevailing wind

Restricted visibility procedures

Berths

Anchorage and no anchoring areas

Prohibited areas/submarine cables, pipelines etc.

Tidal limitations/constraints

Harbour tug – knowledge

Other harbour activities – recreational areas, diving locations etc.

Knowledge of local traffic patterns

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