

**MIKE HALEY**  
Harbour Master  
Northumberland



Dear Sir/Madam,

Following a period of consultation the Pilotage Directions applying to the river Blyth and approaches will be reviewed from 01 April 2010.

Under the Pilotage Act 1987 (s 7) I am required to consult with; "the owners of ships which customarily navigate in the area" and "any other persons who carry on harbour operations within the harbour of the authority."

I enclose copies of both the present direction and the proposed new direction, marked "Draft". The main drivers for the changes are outlined below.

- 1) In January 2009 an external audit was undertaken to ensure continued compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC). The audit revealed a number of areas for improvement and the Pilotage Directions were amended in April 2009.
- 2) As a part of our policy of continual assessment and improvement a further review has now been completed.  
The review analysed the Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations in conjunction with the PMSC, the Pilotage Act 1987 and compared our current directions with other UK ports.

To ensure that risks are reduced to 'as low as reasonably practicable' in compliance with the PMSC it is considered necessary to further enhance our criteria for compulsory pilotage and introduce a system for issuing Pilotage Exemption Certificates. (PEC)

The purpose of this consultation process is to determine the qualifying criteria necessary prior to issuing a PEC.

Under the revised Pilotage Directions pilotage would become compulsory for all vessels over 50m length and a system introduced for those Masters wishing to apply for a PEC.

Masters of vessels wishing to apply for, and be issued with, a PEC prior to 01 April 2010 may do so subject to compliance with the relevant qualifying criteria as agreed.

The consultation is open to all interested parties until 01 January 2010.

Please contact me at the address above or email if;

- you would like to respond to the consultation / changes,
- require any further clarification or information,

Attached

- 1 Existing Pilotage Direction
- 2 Draft Pilotage Direction

Yours sincerely

Mike Haley  
Harbour Master