



## How to become a pilot

### 1. Career path and Familiarization Program

Marine pilot candidates typically start their career in the local maritime industry (fishing, tug & tow industry, ferry services, the Canadian Coast Guard, etc.). Some pilot candidates have deep sea experience as well. They accumulate sea time as officers of a navigation watch and obtain the required maritime certificate of competency in order to meet the requirements outlined in the *Pacific Pilotage Regulations* [[http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,\\_c.\\_1270/index.html](http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1270/index.html)].

Once they have accumulated the qualifying sea time and certificate of competency, candidates may apply to join the Familiarization Program, where they will spend two years observing licenced pilots perform pilotage duties. In order to enter into the Familiarization Program, candidates must possess a valid medical report, hold a *Master 500 GT, Near Coastal* certificate of competency (CoC), and be well on their way to meeting the sea time and CoC requirements as per the regulations.

### 2. Examination prerequisites

The prerequisites for exam candidates are as follows:

- a. Canadian citizenship
- b. Proof of attendance of the following courses:
  - SEN 2 / Automatic Radar Plotting Aid (ARPA)
  - Radio Operator's Certificate (ROC) or GMDSS Certificate (GOC)
  - Bridge Resource Management (BRM)
  - Marine Emergency Duties (MED)
- c. Valid Transport Canada medical
- d. Bio-psychosocial assessment (arranged by PPA)
- e. Valid *Master 500 GT, Near Coastal* certificate of competency
- f. Required number of familiarization trips, which varies based on the composition of the candidate's sea time
- g. Required sea time as defined in the Pacific Pilotage Regulations.

### 3. Examination process

The marine pilot examinations consist of three consecutive components: a General Knowledge written exam, a Local Knowledge written exam, and an oral exam. Exams are usually held once per year. Each candidate is allowed a maximum of six attempts to pass the pilot examinations.

The General Knowledge written exam, which requires candidates to obtain a minimum grade of 70%, is designed to assess candidates' general ship knowledge. and models the subjects required for a *Master 500 GT, Near Coastal* CoC.

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The Local Knowledge written exam, which requires candidates to obtain a minimum grade of 70%, is designed to assess a candidates' local knowledge of the B.C. coast – prominent and conspicuous landmarks, transit passages, aids to navigation, navigation hazards, local currents, tides, weather systems, etc.

Candidates who pass the General Knowledge and Local Knowledge exams are move on to the oral exam. The oral exam consists of a three to four-hour oral assessment of a candidate's overall knowledge of the coast, and their ability, suitability, and experience. The passing grade for the oral exam is 70%.

#### **4. Eligibility list**

Candidates who pass all the exams will be placed on an eligibility list in ranking order. As pilot positions become available, candidates on the eligibility list are hired as apprentice pilots in the order that they are ranked.

#### **5. Apprenticeship and licencing**

During their apprenticeship, candidates understudy licensed pilots on pilotage assignments in all the ports on the BC coast. They also receive in-class and simulation training locally and internationally. Periodic assessments are conducted by senior pilots. Upon successful completion of the apprenticeship, a Class II (restricted) licence is awarded to the new pilot. Once a pilot has served satisfactorily as a Class II licence holder for a period of one year, he/she will be awarded a Class I (unrestricted) licence.

#### **6. Additional notes for coast pilot candidates**

The admission process ultimately hinges on the candidate's knowledge of, and experience in, local waters. Please note the following useful tips:

- Interested candidates should focus on getting wide exposure to the B.C. coast, including the Mainland coast, the Queen Charlotte Islands as well as the east and west coasts of Vancouver Island.
- If marine experience is limited to one part of the coast, it is recommended that interested candidates find work on vessels operating in other areas of the coast.
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