



1000 – 1130 West Pender Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 4A4
Tel: 604-666-6771
Fax: 604-666-1647
Email: info@ppa.gc.ca

The Pacific Pilotage Authority posts findings of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada’s Special Examination

September 23, 2024

Vancouver, BC: The Board of Directors of the Pacific Pilotage Authority (PPA) has made public today the report of the recent special examination by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Canada, as required by the *Financial Administration Act*.

The PPA accepts the OAG’s findings and has responded with planned actions to implement the recommendations.

With its mandate to deliver safe and efficient marine pilotage services on Canada’s west coast, the PPA has maintained an exemplary safety record, with over 99.9% of the approximately 13,000 pilot assignments each year being incident-free.

The Authority also administers a pilotage waiver program that allows smaller Canadian and U.S. vessels to sail without a marine pilot, provided their officers meet specific criteria. Most waivers are granted to tugs and barges which transport goods essential to trade and community resupply on the Pacific Coast. Historically exempt from pilotage requirements, regulatory changes in the 1980s eliminated this exemption, requiring operators to follow the same rules as foreign registered vessels.

Between 2021 and 2023, the PPA granted pilotage waivers on a limited basis to some vessels whose officers, while certified mariners, did not meet sea time requirements under the *General Pilotage Regulations*. In these limited instances, vessel operators had to demonstrate an equivalent level of safety. The OAG audit found this administrative practice to be a “significant deficiency”.

Since January 2024, the PPA has advised vessel operators that their officers must meet all regulatory requirements in order to be granted a waiver. The PPA has also been working closely with Transport Canada, which oversees the regulations, to address some of the challenges with the waiver program by increasing the eligibility of qualified seafarers with experience in Pacific waterways.

“The PPA is a key partner in Canada’s robust marine safety regime in the Pacific Region,” said PPA CEO John Wilson. “By keeping ships moving safely, the Authority plays a vital role in the economy, facilitating the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars in cargo through West Coast ports each year. We are deeply committed to safety, and the work to implement the OAG’s recommended improvements is well underway.

The Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Board of Directors of the Pacific Pilotage Authority can be found on the PPA website (ppa.gc.ca) in the Other Reports section under Corporate Information.

For media enquiries, please write to info@ppa.gc.ca