

Department of Commerce, Community
and Economic Development

Division of Corporations, Business
and Professional Licensing

Board of Marine Pilots

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2024



Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

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This report is required under Alaska Statute 08.01.070(10).

**Board of Marine Pilots
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Board Membership (as of the Date This Report was Approved)

Date of Final Board Approval: 6/28/2024

Curtis Thayer, Edward (Ed) Sinclair, James Cunningham, Leslie (Les) Cronk, Andrew (Andy) Mew, Joseph (Joe) Tougas, Don Habeger

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Accomplishments

Over the course of the year, the board continued its work to establish, audit and enforce the standard as set in Alaska Statute 08.62 to:

- Ensure that persons entering the practice meet rigorous standards of competency, and maintain such standards during their practice;
- Assist the public in the knowledge of who is licensed
- (<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofMarinePilots.aspx>);
- Approve the standards by which pilot organizations are operated and trainees are selected;
- Approve or disapprove rates for pilotage services;
- Ensure that drug and alcohol testing is compliant;
- Ensure that sufficient pilots are available to provide service;
- Vessels subject to pilotage have a licensed pilot while transiting compulsory waters; and
- Educate the public about the statutes and regulations governing marine pilotage in Alaska.

The board reviewed, updated, and published the foreign pleasure craft packet for 2024. The board also maintained its review of applications for pleasure craft of foreign registry seeking exemption from pilotage for vessels between 65 feet and 175 feet. The board approves pilotage exemptions if the requesting vessel meets the exemption requirements in 12 AAC 56.115. For FY 2024, the board approved 13 applications for exemption from pilotage requirements for foreign pleasure crafts. Foreign pleasure craft exemptions generated \$40,700 in FY 2024.

The board approved licenses for nine Deputy Marine Pilots and seven Marine Pilots. Core and Local Knowledge exams were administered to 14 total candidates.

The board updated the Core and Local Knowledge Exams while transitioning to a new testing software system.

Lucas Hasenbank and Richard Harris completed their terms on the board. Both seats have been filled and the board is currently fully staffed.

Investigations – In FY 2024 four new investigations were opened, and four investigations were closed. Two cases remain open.

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Activities

The board has a current regulations project in process with a proposal to amend 12 AAC 56.080(e) to change the amount of piloting experience required of a Deputy Marine Pilot during the preceding licensing period for renewal, to meet the board's original intent when it was created. The same regulation project includes a proposal to amend 12 AAC 56.070(a) to remove an outdated examination reference, and remove the requirement of examinations to be offered at a meeting of the board. Lastly, included in the same regulations project are proposals to amend multiple sections of 12 AAC 56.025 to amend requirements to allow applicants additional time to submit and complete applications and the application requirements. This will allow for faster processing times.

The board has a current regulations project in process with a proposal to to amend 12 AAC 56.028 to allow license candidates the option to finish certain training requirements at a manned model facility.

The board met four times during fiscal year 2024:

- July 12, 2023, via teleconference
- October 11, 2023, in Anchorage
- January 25, 2024, in Anchorage
- April 24, 2024, in Juneau

During these quarterly meetings, the board had participation from NOAA (presentation on charting), CLIA/CLAA (reports on cruise ship season and outlook for next season), and all three of the state pilot associations (association reports from AMP, SEAP, SWAPA).

The board continued to support association bylaw and training program amendments while ensuring changes comport with statute and regulation.

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Needs

The board is seeking information about the impact that Alternative Planning Criteria (APC) has in the state and possible conflicts with state pilotage regulations. SWAPA highlighted several issues with vessels being given navigation direction without the input of state licensed pilots, jeopardizing navigation safety. Once fully understood, the board will work to include the pilot associations in the APC.

The board needs the division to remove the Big Game Commercial Services Board from the MPC's job duties and replace it with another board that is not as active.

The board is in a renewal year and is expecting to begin the renewal process in October.