

Always safe  
Never Sorry

- Safety Alert 01-2021

# Pilot Ladder – Trapdoor arrangement

Classification: Public



## Combination Ladder – Trapdoor arrangement

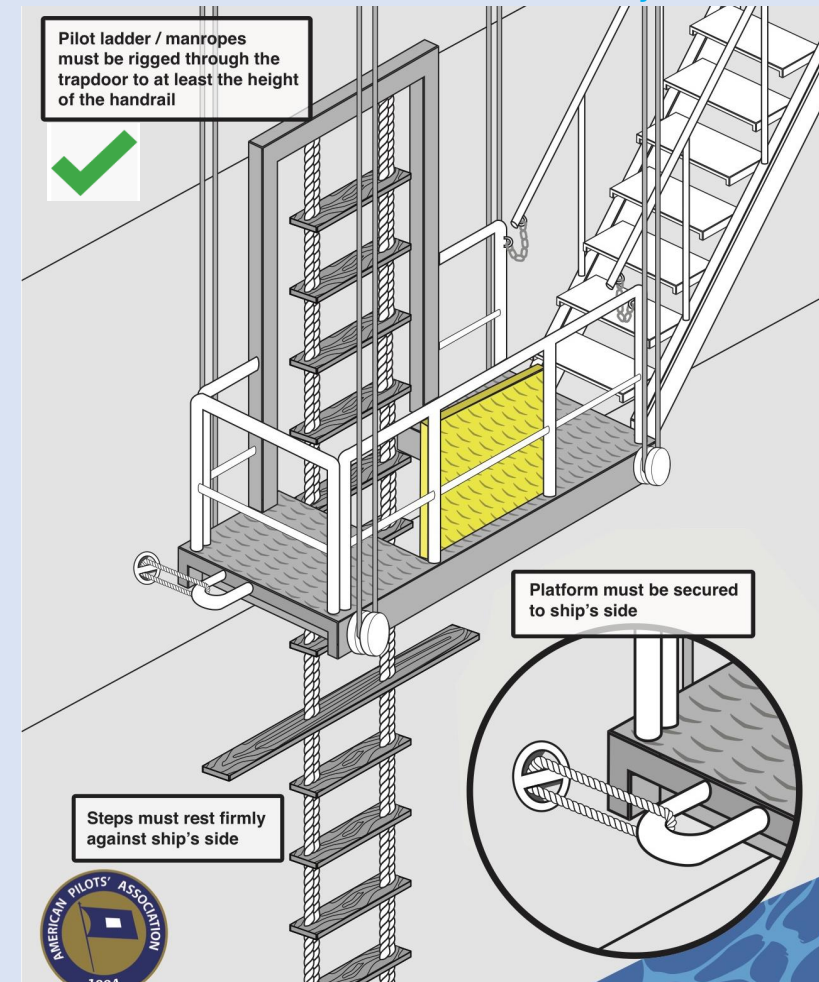
### Background:

Recently, Pilots have refused to board our own and time-chartered vessels due to unsafe rigging of the Combination Ladder – Trapdoor arrangements. The vessels have to delay significant or omitted ports until onboard arrangements meet current IMO requirements.



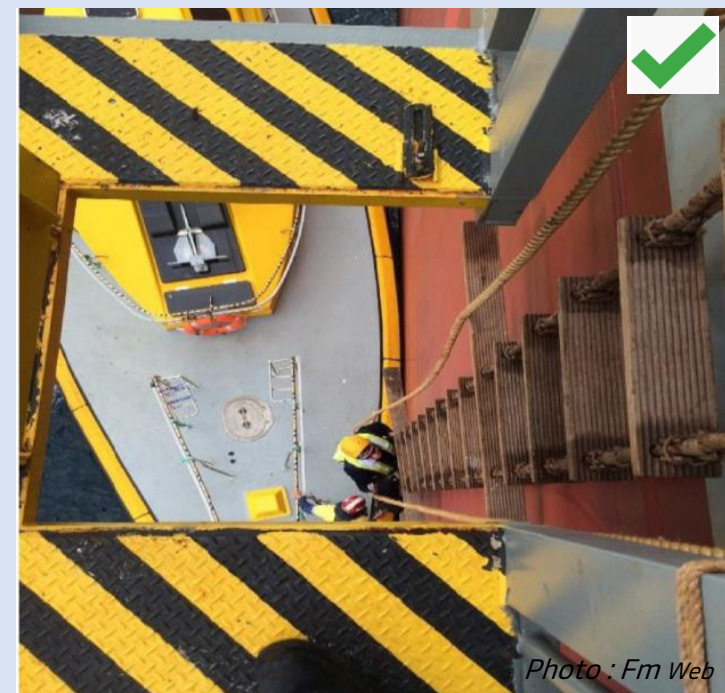
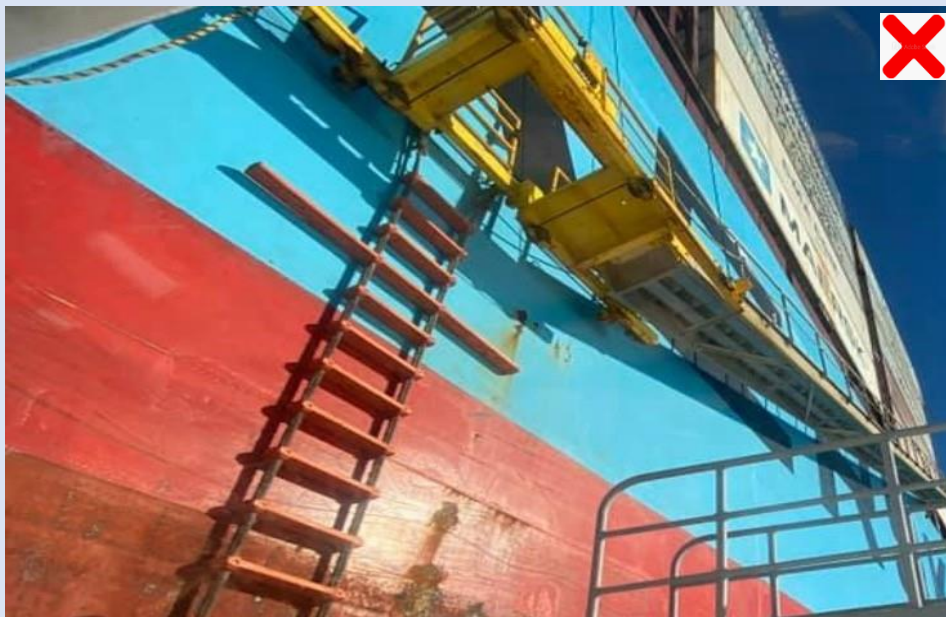
Most of the noncompliance pilot transfer arrangement was constructed before 2012, which would have allowed it, under the so called 'grandfathering clause', to be not required to comply with the revised regulations which came into force in July 2015.

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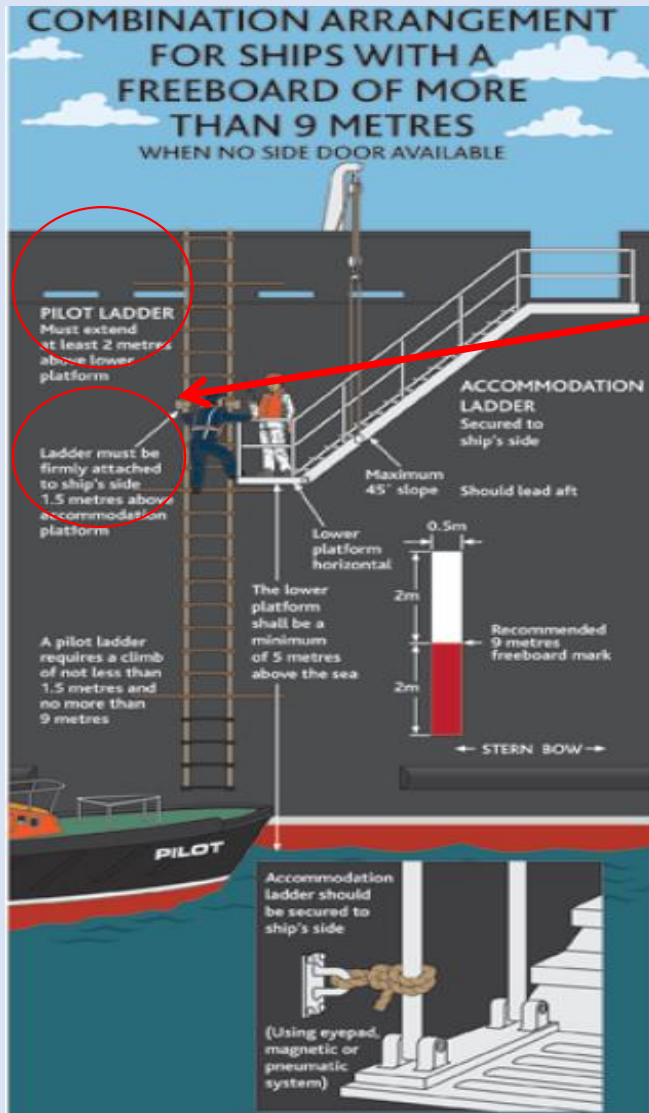


A SOLAS-compliant combination arrangement involving a trapdoor.  
American Pilots' Association illustration

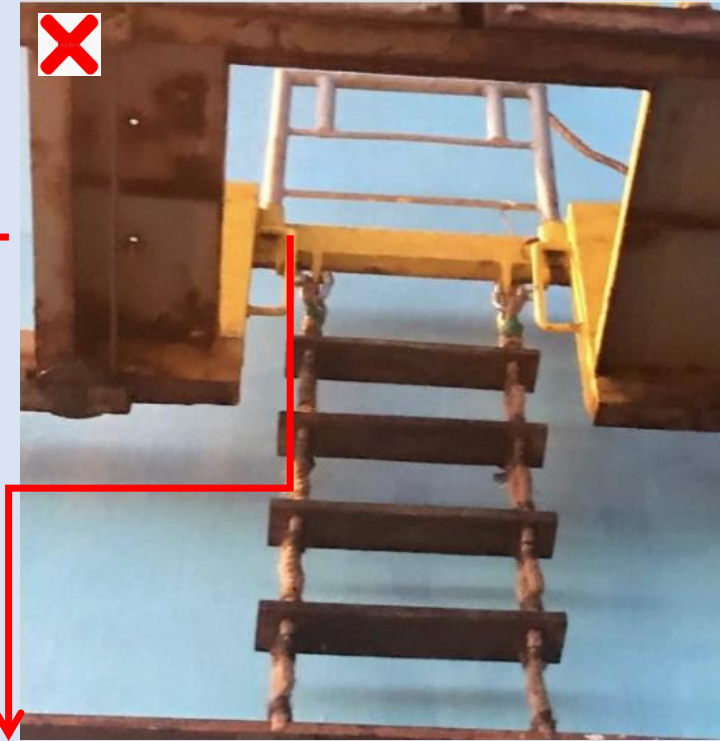
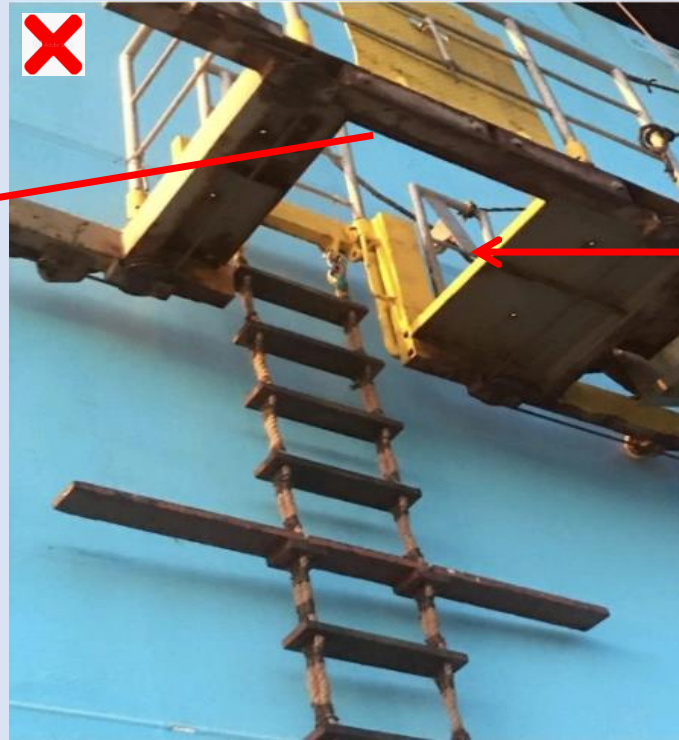
This trapdoor arrangement is currently found on several ships with pilot ladder combinations. Since at least 1979, IMO guidelines have recommended that pilot ladders used with a trapdoor extend to the height of the platform's handrail. The purpose of that recommended practice is to bring the ladder steps up to a level from which the pilot can step across to the platform rather than pull himself or herself up to it.



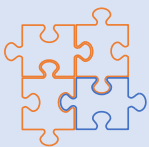
- For a trapdoor arrangement, the Pilot Ladder must extend above the lower platform to the ship's side rails.
- The Pilot Ladder must be firmly attached to the ship's side at a height of 1.5 meters above the platform.
- All steps of a pilot ladder must lie flat against the side of the ship.



This arrangement does not comply with applicable SOLAS regulation, although the original structure design was approved by class and flag as per SOLAS.



- The pilot ladder does not lie flush against the ship's side.
- The ladder extending slightly above the lower platform, it does not extend to the height of the handrails (to the ships side rails).
- The pilot ladder must be firmly attached to the ship's side at a height of 1.5 metres above the trapdoor.



## How is the rigging on your vessel ?

## Pay attention to the details

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Several vessels with noncompliance trapdoor arrangement overcome this issue by using their accommodation ladder. Pilot ladder combination arrangement with an accommodation ladder rigged is acceptable if the below four conditions apply

- The accommodation ladder angle is not to be greater than 45 degrees, and the ladder itself should lead aft.
- The accommodation ladder and platform should have rigid handrails and stanchions on both sides. Any other arrangement should provide full safety for boarding, be properly secured and securely fenced.
- If the trapdoor arrangement is in conjunction with an accommodation ladder, then the latter should also be secured to the ship's side in order to prevent it swinging. In addition, the platform of the accommodation ladder is to be horizontal.
- The Pilot Ladder must be firmly attached to the ship's side at a height of 1.5 meters above the platform.

Today, more than 45 noncompliance pilot transfer arrangements are in progress of modification into the Maersk network.

All vessels with a trapdoor arrangement are urged requested to revert with arrangement status. Vessels with noncompliance arrangements to come forward also with their Sort and long-term actions in order to bring their arrangements into compliance with the current IMO standards.

