

BAGONG PILIPINAS

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY



MAR 13 2025

PPA OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM ORDER

NO. 001
Series of 2025

TO :

**The Acting Port Manager, PMO Eastern Leyte/Samar
Tacloban Harbor Pilots Association
Shipping Companies/Agents
Others Concerned**

SUBJECT :

**TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF THE EXEMPTION FROM
MANDATORY PILOTAGE FOR VESSELS BELOW 500 GT IN
THE SAN JUANICO STRAIT AND JANABATAS CHANNEL**

In view of the recent initial findings from the Tacloban Harbor Pilots as validated by PMO Eastern Leyte/Samar that professional pilotage is necessary to ensure the safe transit of vessels, particularly for those unfamiliar with the San Juanico Strait and Janabatas Channel, and in consonance with PPA Administrative Order (AO) No. 01-2025 which grants an exemption from mandatory pilotage for vessels below 500 Gross Tonnage (GT) and Executive Order No. 1088, s. of 1986, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) is implementing a thirty (30)-day temporary suspension of said exemption for vessels transiting the San Juanico Strait and Janabatas Channel.

This temporary measure will allow PPA to conduct public consultations with affected stakeholders and obtain a final assessment whether mandatory pilotage should be permanently required for vessels transiting these critical maritime passages.

RATIONALE

1. **Navigational Risks.** The San Juanico Strait and Janabatas Channel are high-risk maritime corridors with strong currents, narrow passages, shallow areas, and rocky obstructions, making unassisted vessel navigation hazardous.
2. **Infrastructure Protection:** The San Juanico Bridge, a vital transport link between Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, is vulnerable to damage from vessel collisions, which could result in economic disruptions and logistical challenges.
3. **Precedents for Safety Measures:** The recent Baltimore Bridge disaster highlights the severe consequences of vessel-bridge collisions.

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21 APR 2025
[Signature]
JANET P. CAYONA
Acting Manager
Records and Communications Division, ASD
PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY

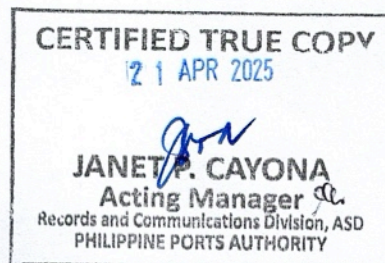
necessitating proactive measures to mitigate risks in critical maritime passages.

4. **Public Consultation and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Assessment:** The temporary suspension provides an opportunity for port users, vessel operators, and maritime stakeholders to provide input while PPA also obtains a formal assessment from the PCG as regards strong currents, narrow passages, shallow areas, and rocky obstructions, making unassisted vessel navigation hazardous in the subject maritime passage, so as to render mandatory pilotage on a permanent basis in the subject maritime passage.

DIRECTIVES

1. **Thirty (30)-Day Suspension Period:** Effective immediately, the exemption granted under PPA AO No. 01-2025 for vessels below 500GT transiting the San Juanico Strait is suspended for thirty (30) days.
2. **Mandatory Pilotage Implementation:**
 - a. During this period, all vessels, regardless of GT, must engage a Harbor Pilot duly licensed by MARINA and appointed by PPA for the Tacloban Pilotage District as a Regular Pilot when transiting the San Juanico Strait.
 - b. PMO Eastern Leyte/Samar is directed to strictly enforce this measure in coordination with harbor pilots, the PCG, and other relevant agencies.
 - c. Harbor pilots shall ensure compliance with proper speed, alignment, and maneuvering protocols, especially when passing under the San Juanico Bridge.
3. **Public Consultation and PCG Assessment:**
 - a. PPA shall conduct public consultations with shipping operators, maritime stakeholders, and other affected parties within the thirty (30)-day period.
 - b. PPA shall formally request the PCG to conduct an assessment on whether mandatory pilotage should be permanently required for vessels transiting the San Juanico Strait, based on navigational risks, maritime safety considerations, and past incidents.
 - c. Feedback from stakeholders and the PCG's assessment will be used to determine whether PPA should amend AO No. 01-2025 to require pilotage for all vessels in the San Juanico Strait permanently.

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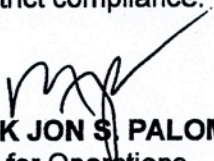
4. Incident Monitoring & Reporting: PMO Eastern Leyte/Samar shall report any maritime incidents, near-misses, or non-compliance during the suspension period to the Port Operations and Services Department (POSD).
5. Information Dissemination: Notices to Mariners and official communications shall be issued to inform port users, shipping lines, and affected stakeholders of this directive.

EFFECTIVITY & REVIEW

This Order shall take effect immediately upon issuance and shall remain in force for thirty (30) days, subject to review based on the outcomes of the public consultations and the PCG's assessment.

Further advisories shall be issued at the conclusion of the consultation period.

For strict compliance.


MARK JON S. PALOMAR
AGM for Operations

