

**Local Knowledge Certificate  
for Masters of Commercial Vessels Guide**

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## About this guide

This guide provides a general description of the legislative requirements and application process for obtaining and renewing a local knowledge certificate. It brings together the requirements under the Marine Safety Act 2010 (Vic) (the MSA) and also those required under the Marine Safety Regulations 2012 (Vic) as at the date of this publication.

It is an offence for masters of commercial vessels to navigate vessels in those waters where they are required to hold a local knowledge certificate without this certificate.

The local knowledge certificate is required in addition to the certificate of competency required by a master to operate the vessel.

Local knowledge certificates are required where the Safety Director considers the risks due to local conditions are sufficient to justify additional permissioning requirements on the vessel operator to satisfy the Safety Director that the master understands these risks.

The waters requiring local knowledge and the vessels for which masters must hold local knowledge certificates are declared pursuant to section 81 of the MSA in the document titled Notice of Declaration in Relation to Waters and Vessels Requiring Local Knowledge Certificates for Navigation in Those Waters.

Copies of this Declaration are on the TSV website [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au).

## Definitions

In this guide the following terms have the meaning specified below:

Accredited training provider means a training provider accredited by the Safety Director under section 271F of the MSA to provide any training required for the issue of a local knowledge certificate.

Certificate of competency means a certificate issued by the Safety Director pursuant to section 78 of the MSA.

Declared vessels means the types or classes of vessels required to have a local knowledge certificate to navigate in declared waters pursuant to a declaration under section 81 of the MSA.

Declared waters means waters declared under section 81 of the MSA by the Safety Director by notice published in the Government Gazette, to be waters within which a local knowledge certificate is required to navigate types or classes of vessel specified in the notice.

Examiner means a nautical examiner or other person accepted by the Safety Director to conduct examinations in local knowledge.

Lakes Entrance Bar means the sand bar at the entrance to the Port of Gippsland Lakes as shown on the chart AUS 182 'Australia—South Coast—Plans in Victoria—South East Coast—Lakes Entrance', published by the Australian Hydrographic Service from time to time.

Local knowledge includes knowledge of navigation aids, geographical features, statutory requirements, traffic and any other local characteristics, operational condition or anomaly which may relate to safety of navigation.

Local knowledge certificate means a certificate issued by the Safety Director pursuant to section 83(1) of the MSA.

MSA means Marine Safety Act 2010 (Vic).

Pilot required waters means waters declared under section 250 of the MSA by the Safety Director by notice published in the Government Gazette to be waters in which a licensed pilot is required to be engaged.

Port includes any of the following waters, or any part of those waters:

- any harbour or haven, whether natural or artificial
- any estuary, channel, river, creek or roadstead
- any navigable water in which vessels may lie for shelter or for the transfer of cargo or passengers.

Port Phillip Heads means the waters between a straight line drawn between Point Lonsdale and Point Nepean and the seaward limits of a line drawn on an arc of a radius of 3 nautical miles centred on Point

Lonsdale as shown on the chart AUS 143 'Australia—South Coast—Victoria—Port Phillip', published by the Australian Hydrographic Service on 2 May 1973.

Safety Director means the Director, Transport Safety within the meaning of section 3 of the Transport Integration Act 2010 (Vic) who is responsible for the administration of the MSA.

## When and where is a local knowledge certificate required?

Under section 81 of the MSA the Safety Director, by notice published in the Government Gazette, may declare a part of State waters as waters in respect of which a local knowledge certificate is required to navigate types or classes of vessel specified in the notice. This means that certain types or classes of vessels will not be able to be navigated within declared waters without a local knowledge certificate.

Specifically, local knowledge certificates are required for masters operating in declared waters when:

- the master of a vessel that is a 'trading' vessel of greater than 12 metres in length is entering, leaving or navigating within any declared waters within the limits of the State which are not part of pilot required waters
- the master of a vessel that is a 'trading' vessel of greater than 12 metres in length and no greater than 35 metres in length is entering, leaving or navigating within any declared waters within the limits of the State which are also part of pilot required waters
- the master of a vessel that is a fishing vessel of greater than 35 metres in length is entering, leaving or navigating in any declared waters within the limits of the State which are not part of pilot required waters
- the master of a commercial vessel that is greater than 35 metres in length and which operates either permanently or for the time being solely within the limits of a port as defined above is not required to have a pilot on board if the master holds a local knowledge certificate for the relevant declared waters in accordance with the Act
- the master of a vessel other than a vessel described above is considered by the Safety Director to require a local knowledge certificate for the particular operations of the vessel.

A master must hold a local knowledge certificate for the relevant declared waters in accordance with the MSA. Regardless of local knowledge requirements, a person must hold an appropriate certificate of competency for the vessel size and type.

## Requirements for local knowledge certificates in declared waters.

**Table 1: Local knowledge for declared waters**

This table provides a summary by vessel type, of the minimum and maximum vessel length requirements for local knowledge certificates in declared waters.

Vessel type	Minimum vessel length	Maximum vessel length for local knowledge certification
Trading vessels	>12m	Unlimited
Fishing vessels	>35m	Unlimited

**Table 2: Local knowledge for declared waters which are also within pilot required waters**

This table provides a summary by vessel type, of the minimum and maximum vessel length requirements for local knowledge certificates in declared waters which are also within pilot required waters.

<b>Vessel type</b>	<b>Minimum vessel length</b>	<b>Maximum vessel length for local knowledge certification</b>
Trading vessels	>12m	Up to and including 35m without any conditions on the local knowledge certificate. If operating a vessel greater than 35m in length a local knowledge certificate must have a condition imposed by the Safety Director as per clause 83 (3) of the MSA allowing the vessel to be operated within pilot required waters without a pilot.
Fishing vessels	>35m	If operating a vessel greater than 35m in length a local knowledge certificate must have a condition imposed by the Safety Director as per clause 83 (3) of the MSA allowing the vessel to be operated within pilot required waters without a pilot.

**Table 3: Local knowledge for vessel entering or leaving port waters via pilot required waters**

This table provides a summary by vessel type, of the minimum and maximum vessel length requirements for local knowledge certificates in declared waters (also see specific conditions listed below).

<b>Vessel type</b>	<b>Minimum vessel length</b>	<b>Maximum vessel length for local knowledge certification</b>
Trading vessels	>12m	35m Vessels greater than 35m require a licensed pilot or the vessels must be operated by a pilot exempt master.
Fishing vessels	N/A	35m Vessels greater than 35m require a licensed pilot or the vessels must be operated by a pilot exempt master.

**Table 4: Declared waters and local knowledge certificates**

This table provides a list of the code and names of declared waters where a local knowledge certificate is required by masters of declared vessels.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Declared water</b>
LK.1	Apollo Bay
LK.2	Barwon Heads
LK.3	Corner Inlet – restricted to approaches to Corner Inlet and Barry’s Beach large vessels
LK.4	Corner Inlet
LK.5	Port Albert
LK.6	Geelong
LK.7	Gippsland Lakes
LK.8	Lakes Entrance Bar including the requirements for passenger vessels
LK.9	Maribyrnong River – no 1 Maribyrnong Berth to Canning Street
LK.10	Port of Geelong
LK.11	Port of Melbourne
LK.12	Port of Port Fairy
LK.13	Port of Portland
LK.14	Port of Queenscliff and adjacent waters of Port Phillip
LK.15	Passenger Operations through Port Phillip Heads
LK.16	Port and Ports of Port Phillip (south)
LK.17	Warrnambool
LK.18	Port and Ports of Port Phillip (north)
LK.19	Yarra River
LK.20	Westernport and Hastings (Western Channel and East Arm)
LK.21	Westernport (North Channel)
LK.22	Westernport (eastern waters)

## Conditions

All local knowledge certificates may be subject to conditions deemed appropriate. Section 83 (2) of the MSA allows the Safety Director to impose conditions on certificates issued.

Specific condition for operating vessels greater than 35 metres in pilot required waters

Pursuant to section 250 of the MSA the Safety Director, by notice published in the Government Gazette, may declare a part of State waters as waters in which a licensed pilot is required to be engaged.

Within Victoria there are four major ports – Melbourne, Geelong, Hastings and Portland. Each of these ports has been declared as State waters in which a licenced pilot is required to be engaged.

Section 248 of the MSA makes it an offence not to use a pilot in pilot required waters. It provides that:

- 1) The master of a vessel must not
  - a) enter or leave pilot required waters or attempt to enter or leave pilot required waters; or
  - b) navigate the vessel within pilot required waters or attempt to do so without using the services of a licensed pilot.

120 penalty units.

- 2) Subsection (1) does not apply to—
  - a) State waters for which no pilot is licensed; or
  - b) a pilot exempt master; or
  - c) a master who holds a local knowledge certificate for port waters in relation to those port waters; or
  - d) a vessel that is less than 35 metres long.

Victoria's domestic commercial fleet includes a number of vessels over 35 metres in length.

In order to allow these vessels to operate freely within port waters, section 83 (3) of the MSA provides:

A condition may provide that the master holding the certificate is not required to use the services of a pilot in pilot required waters if the vessel that the master has command or charge of is

- a) a vessel of a type or class that the holder of the certificate is authorised to operate under a certificate of competency; and
- b) a vessel greater than 35 metres in length and operates either permanently, or for the time being solely, within the limits of port waters.

However, masters should note the above condition will be applied only in port waters and as such a pilot will be required for ingress and egress to those waters. Effectively this means pilots must be used on vessels greater than 35 metres when those vessels are on a voyage which crosses:

- Port Phillip Heads
- The seaward boundary of the Pilot Required Waters for the Port of Hastings
- The seaward boundary of the Pilot Required Waters for the Port of Portland.

## Applying for a local knowledge certificate

### Requirements for all certificates

- To be eligible to be issued with a local knowledge certificate, you must meet the several mandatory requirements.
- Apply on the specified application form.
- Provide evidence that you hold a valid certificate of competency for the type or class of vessel which you may operate. This may be in the form of a certified copy of a certificate of competency however, if the certificate of competency is issued in Victoria, the applicant should supply details of the certificate number, date of issue and expiry date.
- Provide evidence that you have completed any training required by the Safety Director pursuant to section 82(2)(b)(ii) of the MSA. The majority of applicants for local knowledge certificates will not be required to complete training. Exceptions are discussed below:

Provide evidence that the applicant has suitable qualifications and experience appropriate to the State waters to which the local knowledge certificate will apply. Applicants will be required to complete an examination on the local knowledge area applied for. The local knowledge examination may include but is not limited to questions relating to navigation aids, geographical features, tidal conditions, statutory requirements, traffic and any other local characteristics, operational condition or anomaly which may relate to safety of navigation. Evidence will be in the form of a statement of results issued by the examiner advising of the successful completion of a local knowledge examination. Additional requirements for specific waters are discussed in paragraphs relating to Port Phillip Heads, Lakes Entrance Bar and Port of Corner Inlet.

- Provide certified photographic identification in addition to any certified copy of a certificate of competency.
- Provide two passport sized photographs which the applicant has signed on the back.
- Pay the prescribed fee (see [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au)).
- Provide any additional information or material in respect to the application which the Safety Director may require.

### **Applying for a local knowledge certificate - specific requirements**

The master of a trading vessel who intends to carry passengers either across the Lakes Entrance Bar or in or through Port Phillip Heads must not operate the vessel unless he or she holds the appropriate local knowledge certificate.

### **Particular requirements when applying for a local knowledge certificate for operators carrying passengers through Port Phillip Heads**

Pursuant to section 82(2)(b)(ii) of the MSA, the master must successfully complete a training course approved by Transport Safety Victoria that covers local knowledge, operating guidelines and vessel and passenger safety. Evidence of successful completion must be in the form of a course completion certificate issued by the relevant training provider. The course shall include but not be limited to:

- local knowledge, including lights, charted depths, channels, local dangers, tidal flows, navigation leads, beacons and topmarks
- VHF radio communication procedures
- passenger briefing and control
- person overboard response procedures
- occupational health and safety
- boat operation and handling techniques specific to Port Phillip Heads
- guidelines and rules for crossing Port Phillip Heads
- local meteorological and tidal conditions
- emergency contingency planning.

### **Particular requirements when applying for a local knowledge certificate for operators carrying passengers across the Lakes Entrance Bar**

Pursuant to section 82(2)(b)(ii) of the MSA, the master must successfully complete a training course approved by Transport Safety Victoria that covers local knowledge, operating guidelines and vessel and passenger safety. Evidence of successful completion must be in the form of a course completion certificate issued by the relevant training provider. The course shall include but not be limited to:

- local knowledge, including lights, charted depths, channels, local dangers, tidal flows, navigation leads, beacons and topmarks
- VHF radio communication procedures
- passenger briefing and control
- person overboard response procedures
- occupational health and safety
- boat operation and handling techniques specific to the Lakes Entrance Bar
- guidelines and rules for crossing the Lakes Entrance Bar
- local meteorological and tidal conditions



- emergency contingency planning.

In addition, the following pre-requisite qualifying sea service must be completed by the master to show that he or she has suitable experience pursuant to section 82(2)(b)(i).

- An applicant who intends to carry passengers across Lakes Entrance Bar must have completed a minimum of 20 outward crossings and 20 inward crossings of the Lakes Entrance Bar (no more than two crossings in any 24 hour period shall be counted as qualifying sea service).
- On each crossing of the Lakes Entrance Bar, the applicant must be at the helm and in charge of a trading or fishing vessel.

### **Particular requirements when applying for a local knowledge certificate for the Port of Corner Inlet**

The master must complete the following pre-requisite qualifying sea service to evidence that he or she has suitable experience pursuant to section 82(2)(b)(i).

- Six trips in and six trips out (two in the hours of darkness) of the Port of Corner Inlet.

The master of a vessel must ensure that a person holding a local knowledge certificate is on board with the master during the period of qualifying trips for the ports of Corner Inlet, Barry's Beach, Port Welshpool and Port Albert. This provision applies until the master qualifies for the local knowledge certificate in respect of those waters

### **Issuing a local knowledge certificate**

Upon receipt of an application which is seen to be satisfactory, the Safety Director may issue a local knowledge certificate for the declared waters which have been applied for. The local knowledge certificate issued by the Safety Director under section 83 of the MSA will:

- take effect from the day that it is issued; and
- remain in effect for a period of five years after the date it is issued unless sooner suspended or cancelled.

## **Your ongoing responsibilities**

### **Renewal**

Local knowledge certificates will expire five years after the date of issue. Local knowledge certificates issued under the *Marine Act 1988 (Vic)* will expire on the nominated expiry date five years after the date of their issue.

A holder of a local knowledge certificate can apply for the renewal of the local knowledge certificate which he or she holds.

### **Applications for renewal must be made before your local knowledge certificate expires.**

To renew your local knowledge certificate, you must meet mandatory requirements.

- Apply on the application form.
- Provide evidence that you hold a certificate of competency for the type or class of vessel which you operate. This may be in the form of a certified copy of a certificate of competency.
- Provide evidence that you have completed any training required by the Safety Director. Training will not normally be required if the application for renewal is received prior to the expiry of the current local knowledge certificate.
- Provide evidence that you have suitable qualifications and experience appropriate to the State waters to which the local knowledge certificate will apply. This will be satisfied by evidence that the applicant has used their local knowledge certificate for the declared waters within the period between 42 months and six months prior to the expiry date of the current local knowledge certificate. This may consist of formally logged hours attesting to the operation or similar evidence.
- Provide certified photographic identification in addition to any certified copy of a certificate of competency.

- Provide two passport sized photographs which the applicant has signed on the back.
- Pay the prescribed fee (see [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au)).
- Provide any additional information or material in respect to the application which the Safety Director may require.

## Notifying Transport Safety Victoria of changes

Holders of local knowledge certificates should notify the Safety Director of any changes to:

- their address,
- their telephone number(s)
- their email address
- changes in eyesight or medical conditions that may affect the certificate.

Transport Safety Victoria

Maritime Branch – Qualifications

PO Box 2797, Melbourne, 3001

Telephone: 1800 223 022

(9.00am to 4.30pm Monday-Friday)

Facsimile: (03) 9655 6611

E-mail: [marinesafety@transportsafety.vic.gov.au](mailto:marinesafety@transportsafety.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au)

## Useful contacts

Marine Training Services

17 Swanston Street Geelong

T: (03) 52295432

[marinets@tpg.com.au](mailto:marinets@tpg.com.au)

Advance Tafe

SEAMEC Maritime Education

48 Main Street Bairnsdale 3875

PO Box 886 Bairnsdale 3875

T; (03) 51520700

F: (03) 51526317

[Advancetafe.edu.au](http://Advancetafe.edu.au)

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This guide contains a summary of the requirements for obtaining a local knowledge certificate. It is intended as a guide only, and is not a substitute for the relevant legislation. Laws relating to local knowledge

certificates may change from time to time. If you have questions about this guide, check with Transport Safety Victoria on 1800 223 022.

For a complete knowledge of local knowledge certificates and their requirements, you should consult the Marine Safety Act 2010 (Vic) and associated regulations and the National Standard for Commercial Vessels. Copies of Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary documents are provided online at [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au) or can be purchased from the Information Victoria Bookshop.

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