

THE PLA'S SAFE BOARDING WEEK

The Port of London Authority (PLA), which oversees operations in the UK's largest port, will be conducting its second 'Safe Boarding Week' next month, following on from the success of Safe Boarding Week in 2023. The week-long safety initiative, **from Monday 04 March to Sunday 10 March 2024**, aims to increase awareness of safe access and highlight the importance the PLA places on safety on the 95 miles of the tidal Thames that it manages.

Safe access to and from the varied range of vessels on the Thames, including ladders onto ships, as well as ship to shore access at berths, terminals, jetties and piers, is a key concern for the PLA. Inspired by *Panama Canal Authority* (ACP)'s Safe Boarding Week, an annual event since the late '80s, the PLA decided to initiate its own safety event, which aligns with its proactive approach to safety and safe boarding.

"Following last year's highly successful first Safe Boarding Week, I am pleased that we are repeating the event as part of our commitment to safety on the river. Globally, accidents involving gangways and pilot boarding ladders continue to occur and it is only through focussed campaigns and engagement with ships' crew, their management and the berths/jetties operators that we can make tangible improvements.

"Safety is at the heart of the what the PLA does every day. 'Safe Boarding Week' aims to increase awareness of the PLA's commitment to safe vessel access on the river Thames."

James Stride, Chief Harbour Master

During the seven days of Safe Boarding Week, the PLA aims to inspect the boarding facilities of cargo and passenger vessels, as well as terminal operators, jetties and piers. The results of these comprehensive assessments will enable the PLA to influence further improvements to safe boarding on the river Thames.

The responsibility for safe access on and off the vessels on the tidal Thames is shared between the master of the ship/vessel, in respect to Safe Access regulations, and the jetty or terminal operators, who must abide to the *Port Marine Safety Code**.

The PLA's Chief Harbour Master management team, along with our patrol crews and pilots, will be undertaking the inspections and assessing the quality and safety of access arrangements. Access arrangements will be checked against the requirements of SOLAS Regulation V/23 and the guidance from HSE and Port Skills and Safety provided in SiP014* (related standards, codes and legislation are provided in that document on pages 21-22.)

*Denotes a hyperlink to a destination other than PLA owned/operated websites. Be aware that those websites may have different security and privacy policies to that of the PLA, for which the PLA takes no responsibility.

26/02/2024

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JAMES STRIDE
Chief Harbour Master

EXPIRY DATE: 11/03/2024

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