

MARINE SAFETY AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**TIER I – POLICY****MEANS OF SAFE ACCESS TO A VESSEL**

Effective date	Date of revision
November 20, 2025	

MARINE SAFETY AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

TIER I – POLICY

MEANS OF SAFE ACCESS TO A VESSEL

1 Policy objective

- 1.1 This policy explains and describes the regulatory requirements for a means of safe access to a vessel described in Transport Canada's publication TP 15697 - Means of safe access to a vessel.
- 1.2 This policy covers procedures and work instructions for using the compliance checklist to verify safe access to a vessel by:
 - 1.2.1 Marine Safety Inspectors under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*
 - 1.2.2 delegated Health and Safety Officers under Part II of the *Canada Labour Code*

2 Policy statement

- 2.1 This publication explains the regulatory requirements and best practices for providing a safe means of access to a vessel. It covers the requirements for gangways, ladders and installing safety nets.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This publication describes the requirements for safe means of access to vessels when they are quayside in Canadian waters. Passenger vessels are not covered by this publication.
- 3.2 The publication also applies to:
 - all Canadian vessels
 - all foreign vessels in Canadian waters
 - all stevedoring companies
 - all port terminals

4 Authority

- 4.1 Part II of the *Canada Labour Code* and the *Maritime Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* apply to Canadian federally regulated ships and terminals when loading and unloading.
- 4.2 Both the code and regulations are applied and enforced under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) Labour Program and Transport Canada

(TC). Only a delegated Health and Safety Officer can enforce the code and regulations.

- 4.3 The Director of Seafarer Certification, Marine Safety and Security has administrative authority of this policy under the MOU between Transport Canada and the Labour Program.
- 4.4 Transport Canada's regional offices are responsible for parts of this policy that fall under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*.

5 Responsibility and further information

- 5.1 The National Manager of the Maritime Occupational Health and Safety Program is responsible for implementing and overseeing this policy. They are also responsible for national maritime occupational health and safety work and non-compliance actions under the code.
- 5.2 The Regional Directors and Managers of Marine Safety are responsible for implementing and overseeing the parts of this policy under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*.
- 5.3 Marine Safety Inspectors can use this checklist to help answer questions on complying with other regulations under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*.

6 Related documents

- 6.1 TP 15697 – Means of safe access to a vessel
- 6.2 Tier I – Policy – Means of safe access to a vessel
- 6.3 Tier II – Procedure – Means of safe access to a vessel
- 6.4 Tier III – Work Instructions – Means of safe access to a vessel, including annex Compliance checklist – Means of access with form # 82-0818
- 6.5 A communication email announces the new TP and that 2 previous bulletins are repealed ([Ship Safety Bulletin No.: 12/1998](#) and [Ship Safety Bulletin No.: 03/2008](#)) on the effective date of this document, including the use of ladders in the Seaway System

7 Background

- 7.1 Transport Canada inspectors have recently noticed many issues with how access equipment is installed.
- 7.2 Means of access and safety nets must follow Canada's requirements so people can safely board and disembark. The goal is to protect people from falling, drowning, or being crushed between a dock and a vessel. Not understanding or not following the regulations can lead to injuries or death.

8 Date of application

8.1 This policy comes into effect on November 20, 2025.

9 Date for review or expiry

9.1 This policy will be reviewed 2 years after it comes into effect, then at least every 7 years from the date of the last review.

10 Keywords

- Safe access to a vessel
- Accommodation ladders / gangways
- Safety nets