



Marine Pilot

Main tasks and duties

Navigation on the St. Lawrence River presents significant challenges: treacherous tides and currents, obstacles of all sorts, dangerous weather and narrow channels. This is why – from Des Escoumins to the Great Lakes – there are designated compulsory pilotage areas in which ships exceeding a certain size must use the services of a licenced marine pilot.

St. Lawrence marine pilots – experts in navigating specific sectors of the River – ensure the safe, efficient passage of the vessels under their care. Using their extensive knowledge, they guide these ships, telling the captain which route is most appropriate, and assisting with manoeuvres for getting under way and berthing in keeping with local navigation and weather conditions. In addition to the St. Lawrence navigation channel, these pilots may work in various marine-sector environments like ports, locks, channels and rivers, and under a wide range of conditions, including ice-covered waters.

Academic training or professional development

Future pilots must begin by getting their navigation officer certification from a recognized maritime institute or academy. Once they are officers, they rise up the ranks—through sea duty and continuing education—to the position of ship's captain or chief mate. These are the pre-requisites for becoming an apprentice pilot. During their apprenticeship, they learn every aspect of the waterway sector for which they will be responsible, carrying out many trips under the supervision of a seasoned pilot. This in-depth knowledge is then tested through rigorous oral and written examinations. Apprentice pilots must also demonstrate their proficiency in handling a wide array of specialized marine equipment.

Educational institutions and training centres in Québec

In Québec, the Institut maritime du Québec in Rimouski trains navigation officers. Specific pilotage-related training falls to pilot corporations and lasts a minimum of 2 years. Once pilots are qualified, their specialized training continues throughout their careers, ensuring that they remain current with changing navigational equipment and techniques. The Corporation of Lower St. Lawrence Pilots has its own training centre (Maritime Simulation and Resources Centre) devoted primarily to training apprentice pilots and providing continuing education.

Career opportunities

- Licenced marine pilots can work for the Corporation des pilotes du Bas Saint-Laurent (Corporation of Lower St. Lawrence Pilots), Corporation des Pilotes du Saint-Laurent Central or Corporation des Pilotes du Fleuve et de la Voie Maritime du Saint-Laurent. Some ports also offer pilotage services.
- Marine pilots' experience and expertise also open doors to a range of career opportunities in maritime administration.

Essential qualities and interests

- Professional attitude and conduct (autonomy, interpersonal skills, sense of organization, leadership)
- Bilingualism
- Good physical fitness
- Interest in working at sea
- Excellent spatial perception
- Ability to work in crisis situations and under unforeseen circumstances

Average annual income: \$125 000 or more

For more information

- www.csmoim.qc.ca
- www.cpsl.ca
- www.pilote-voie-maritime.ca
- www.marinepilots.ca
- www.pilotagestlaurent.gc.ca
- www.cpslc.ca
- www.tc.gc.ca

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