



Myth: Harbor pilots act as advisors to ship captains.

Fact: Extensive case law, as well as the United States Coast Guard, establishes the harbor pilot as having full navigational control of vessels on Florida's waters. It is illegal for ship captains to navigate their ships in Florida's waters.

Myth: Harbor pilots are not liable if involved in an accident.

Fact: If a harbor pilot is found at fault, he or she not only faces the loss of their license, but the end of their maritime career. Harbor pilots are subject to unlimited civil and criminal liability. Case law establishes this fact.

Myth: The harbor pilot job is a birthright.

Fact: The Department of Business & Professional Regulation (DBPR), through the Board of Pilots Commissioners, authorizes the number of licensed harbor pilots in all of Florida's ports. The DBPR conducts a nationally-competitive exam for harbor pilot job openings. Harbor pilot groups do NOT hire new pilots.

Myth: Harbor pilots are unionized.

Fact: This is false. Actually, ship captains and their crews are unionized.

Myth: Some ship captains come into and out of Florida's ports frequently and have local knowledge.

Fact: No State Pilot Commission considers a ship captain's experience or knowledge in setting pilot rates.

Myth: Advanced technology and electronic navigation make up for the ship captain's lack of local knowledge.

Fact: Recent accidents involving cruise ship captains' over-reliance on technology and under-reliance on harbor pilots demonstrate the need for the real-time knowledge and independent judgment provided by a local harbor pilot.

Myth: Ship captains have the safety of their passengers and ship in mind. Harbor pilots do not.

Fact: Ship captains, as the ship owners' representatives, are under commercial pressure. Some are motivated by cash bonuses. Harbor pilots do not receive cash bonuses for saving fuel. Harbor pilots exercise independent judgment when it comes to protecting the ports and the state's resources.

Myth: Ship captains have more experience in ship handling and more training in advanced technology than pilots.

Fact: Ship captains have no specialized training in Florida's ports. Harbor pilots undergo a two- to three-year custom training program for their port; whereas, ship captains do not. Harbor pilots also do not transfer from port to port, they are resident experts in their respective ports; whereas, ship captains' employers transfer them from ship to ship around the world.

Myth: Florida's pilot rates are higher than the national average.

Fact: Florida's pilot rates are considerably *lower* than the national average and are among the lowest on the Eastern seaboard.

Myth: Harbor pilots charge excessive fees.

Fact: The pilotage fee makes up less than 2 percent of a ship's port costs. Port costs are generally 12 percent of operating costs – 2 percent of 12 percent is a fractional cost to ensure safety.

Myth: Cruise ships pay higher pilotage fees than cargo ships.

Fact: Cruise ships pay the exact same rate per ton, just like any other ship. All pilot rates are based on the tonnage of the ship, just like in the marine insurance business. The bigger the tonnage, the bigger the risk. Cargo ships of the same tonnage actually pay *more* than cruise ships due to the draft charge.

Myth: Ship owners have no choice in taking a harbor pilot.

Fact: This is false. Ship owners are free to register their foreign-flagged ships in the United States, which allows them to then be exempted from pilotage.

Myth: Cruise ships are safer than cargo ships.

Fact: Every ship has its own challenges. The marine insurance industry prices risk when charging a premium. Insurance premiums for cruise ships are *three-times higher* than that of an oil tanker. Cruise ships have a history of more incidents and more damage.

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