

The Commissioners of Pilotage for the Lower Coastal Area have promulgated an emergency regulation allowing the issuance of emergency pilot licenses as needed to current apprentices and to retired pilots previously licensed by the Commissioners to ensure enough pilots are available during the current health emergency.

S.C. Code Section 54-15-270 requires that all vessels entering the pilotage area of the Port of Charleston must have on board a pilot licensed by the Commissioners of Pilotage for the Lower Coastal Area. Currently, the Port of Charleston has 18 licensed pilots. On March 13, 2020, Governor McMaster issued Executive Order No. 2020-08, declaring a public health emergency due to the risks and impacts of COVID-19. If the current pilots become exposed to or infected by COVID-19, there may not be enough licensed pilots for the Port of Charleston to meet the requirements of the law during this public health emergency.

The regulation provides:

136-100. Emergency Licenses.

A. The South Carolina Commissioners of Pilotage for the Lower Coastal Area waives the three-year apprenticeship for current apprentices pursuant to S.C. Code 54-15-120(D) and waives the seventy year-old age limitation in Regulation 136-013 for retired pilots previously licensed by the Commissioners.

B. This waiver of licensing requirements and age limitations shall remain in effect for the duration of the declared public health state of emergency.