FALKLAND ISLANDS MARITIME AUTHORITY

# Cruise ship guidance 2026/ 2027

# including guidance on

# operating Tenders / Zodiacs at the Public Jetty

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## Introduction

This document aims to highlight the navigational safety requirements, medical services guidance and tendering guidance that apply to visiting cruise vessels. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Ports & Harbours Information Booklet, which is available on the FIMA website, www.falklands.gov.fk/maritimeauthority All vessels are also to ensure that the information contained in Admiralty Sailing Directions and Lists of Radio Signals is also considered.

## Bookings and emergency plans

Only vessels with a confirmed booking will be permitted entry into the Port William/Stanley Harbour. This does not prevent a vessel seeking refuge in case of emergency.

All vessels are required to supply a copy of their SAR emergency plan, and risk assessments for tendering/zodiac operations, which should include, a statement on weather restrictions for operation i.e. 30 knots or at master's discretion, **at least 28 days prior to arrival**. These may be sent direct to shipreporting@sec.gov.fk or submitted via the vessel's agent.

## Medical Services

Please read and consider the below information first when a referral is being considered.

The Falkland Islands has a small hospital, which is led by general practitioners with some of those GP's having an extended skillset in emergency medicine and obstetrics. Consequently, it offers an extremely limited range of secondary care services and does not possess any secondary care specialist services. There is no MRI scanner.

In cases in which a passenger is stable or requires specialist opinion or investigation before further treatment can occur it should be considered whether timely access to definitive care is better enabled by the passenger remaining on board the vessel, particularly when the vessel is already travelling in the direction of South America, or whether or not it would be safer and quicker for the patient to be taken directly to mainland South America and the ship diverted to do this.

The minimum cost of a medevac flight from the Falkland Islands to mainland South America is around US $34,000+ and commercial flights only operate on Saturdays. Provision of emergency air ambulances is limited and not always easy to secure. It often takes days to secure aeromedical evacuation. This coupled with the fact the only international airport is frequently impacted by closures or restrictions owing to rotor winds, causing delays, means that in cases other than an immediate medical emergency, where it is clear that the hospital in the Falklands can bring additional care and services to the patient, careful consideration should be given as to whether the patient's best interests are met by remaining onboard, as in many cases this will offer more timely access to specialist care. The local medical team can provide further advice where necessary.

The hospital reserves the right to decline referrals that are not in the patient's best interests (considering their condition and local availability of services) or where valid insurance or guarantee of payment are not evidenced in advance.

## Medical Insurance

Please ensure that proof of the passenger's valid insurance policy is provided or guarantee of payment from the cruise line or shipping agent is given to enable the hospital to review the referral. If the intention is to disembark a patient, activation of their insurance policy must occur **before** disembarkation otherwise the patient will not be accepted.

## Falkland Islands Voluntary Ship Reporting System

In 2022, The Falkland Islands introduced a voluntary ship reporting system covering West Falklands and its approaches. All cruise vessels wishing to enter the Falklands are requested to comply with the requirements of the scheme. The limits of the system are shown on Admiralty Charts, and can be viewed on the FIMA website Falkland Islands Voluntary Ship Reporting System (FIREP) (falklands.gov.fk)

## FIPASS

Due to the age and condition of the FIPASS structure, vessels with a displacement over 10,000t will not be permitted to berth at FIPASS. Local Notice to Mariners 05/2021 (falklands.gov.fk)

## Weather

Due to the constrained nature of Stanley Harbour and the poor protection provided from prevailing winds, the harbour will be closed to all fishing vessels, cruise vessels and their tenders when wind speeds reach a sustained 30kts and rising.

When visibility reduces below 0.1nm the Maritime Authority will implement a fog routine. During such times all cruise vessel tender operations will be suspended. Exemptions may be granted if only one vessel is operating and risk assessments are provided.

## Anchorages

Provisional anchorage allocations can be requested on receipt of emergency plans. Anchorage allocation will be confirmed on receipt of the 24hour pre-notification of arrival.

Vessels of less than 143m length, 25m beam and 6.0m draft may request an anchorage in Stanley Harbour. Such requests will only be considered if the vessel has sufficient manoeuvrability, the Master is familiar with the Harbour and there is a suitable anchorage available.

## Tendering Operations

The finger pontoon has been replaced with a more robust structure that will allow single tender/zodiac operations to be conducted.

Additionally, the pontoon alongside the public jetty has also been refurbished and repurposed in accordance with ISPS code to allow tenders from two different ships to use this pontoon. In order to facilitate this, should it be necessary, the pontoon will be split half way along to give two distinct landing points, north and south with access to the public jetty via gangways north and south respectively. See also the note on extra staff below.

Two tenders are permitted alongside at any time on pontoons but embarkation/disembarkation will only be permitted from one tender at a time.

LNTM 08/2024 has been fully revised to cover all aspects of passenger vessel tender operations. The revised Local Notice to Mariners 08/2024 (falklands.gov.fk) can be found on the FIMA website.

### Zodiac Operations

Cruise ships transferring passengers to the public jetty are advised that zodiacs left secured to the public jetty should not be left unattended at any time. Lifejackets may be left in the shelter adjacent to the pontoon where the zodiacs are operating from, however this is at their own risk. Operators are reminded that once they leave the Temporary Restricted Area set up by Falklands Security Services Ltd, they must enter through the correct security check point where ID cards will be checked.

### Speed restrictions

All tendering vessels are requested to keep their speed to no more than **4kts** within 200m of the south shore of Stanley harbour to keep their wash at a minimum and to pass vessels at anchor at a reduced speed.

### Public Jetty Pontoon

Vessels are to manoeuvre with caution and at reduced speed when arriving and departing at the pontoons. Only one tender may arrive/depart at any one time. When vessels are alongside the public jetty pontoons/finger pontoons they must make their vessel fast by a minimum of one forward spring and one aft spring and their engines must be placed into neutral.

### Safe Navigation in Stanley Harbour and Port William

All vessels operating within Falklands waters and their harbours must at all times apply the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea (COLREGS) with the observance of good seamanship. Stanley Harbour and Port William are particularly busy with harbour launches and fishing vessels during the months of January/February. Tender and Zodiac drivers are requested to give a wide berth to these vessels and pass by them at a safe distance and speed especially when passing by their bow or stern.

### Ships Staff and the ISPS Code.

All ships Crew and Staff must be in possession of an in date and valid Ship Identity Card before disembarking and be prepared to show this to Port Security staff before entering the Temporary Restricted Area. Failure to comply will result in the person, without exception, being denied access to the vessel until their identity can be verified and the Port Facility Security Officer, or their representative, informed.

**Extra staff to assist on the pontoons**

Each vessel tendering to the pontoons must ensure that at least one staff member from the ship is located on the pontoon to assist with passengers getting on and off the pontoons and at least one member of staff at the shelter to assist with passenger control on and off the pontoons. This responsibility lies with the cruise ship and not with the security staff. Cruise ships may place additional staff to assist with passengers but must provide the minimum staff mentioned above.

*Appendix 1* shows the lay out of the public jetty when tenders (or zodiacs) are operating from three different cruise ships (Vessel A, B and C). This Appendix also shows the general flow of traffic to and from the pontoons and the location where the minimum requirement of staff should be placed.

*Appendix 2* Shows the Public jetty being used by only Two cruise ship tenders/zodiacs.

For the purpose of safety, cruise ship staff operating on the pontoons should ensure that passengers are only allowed on the pontoons when their tender/zodiac is ready to receive them. When loading and disembarking passengers, they should keep them moving towards the exit gates and not remain standing around on the pontoons.

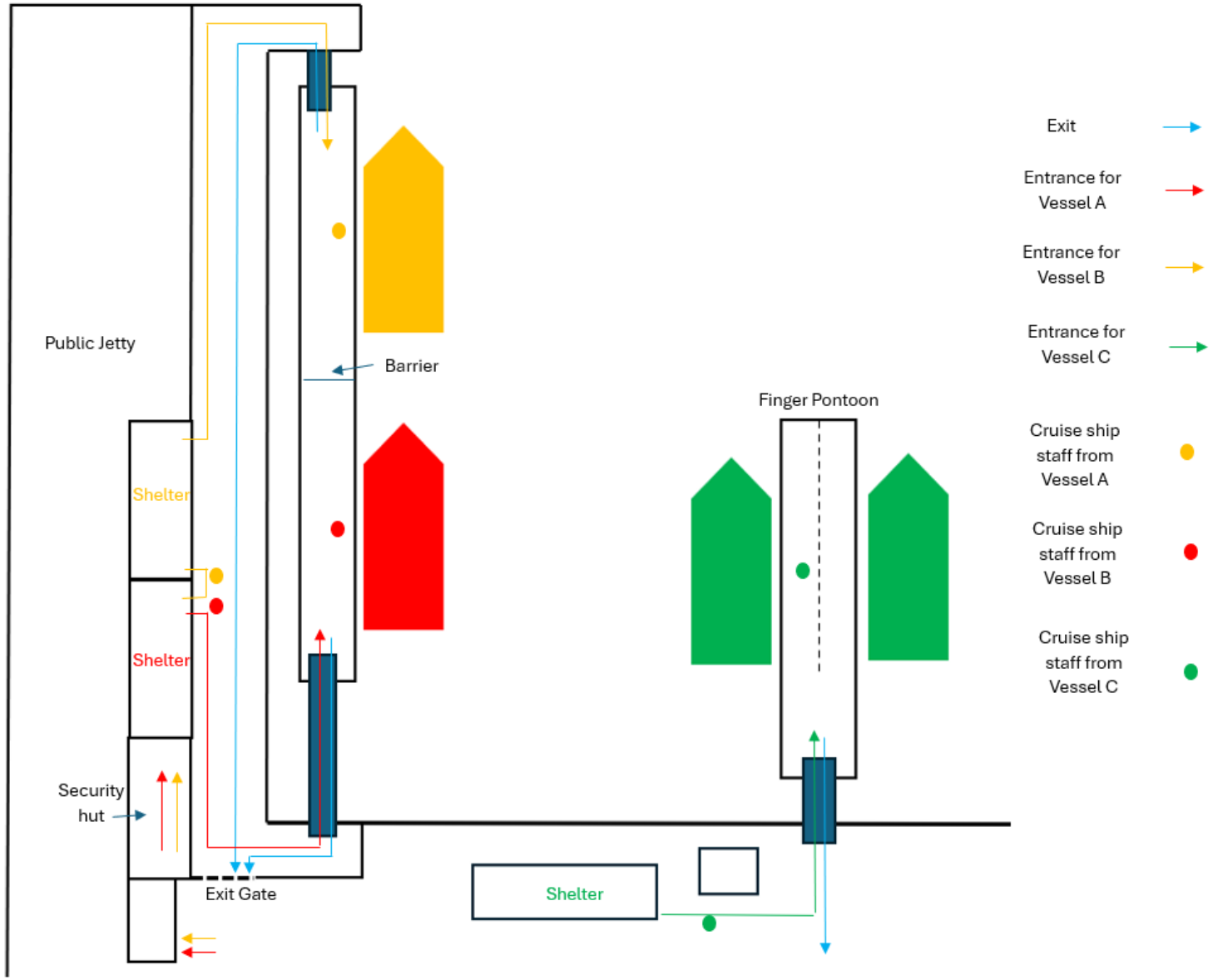
The Maritime Authority will be conducting spot checks to ensure compliance with all of the above.

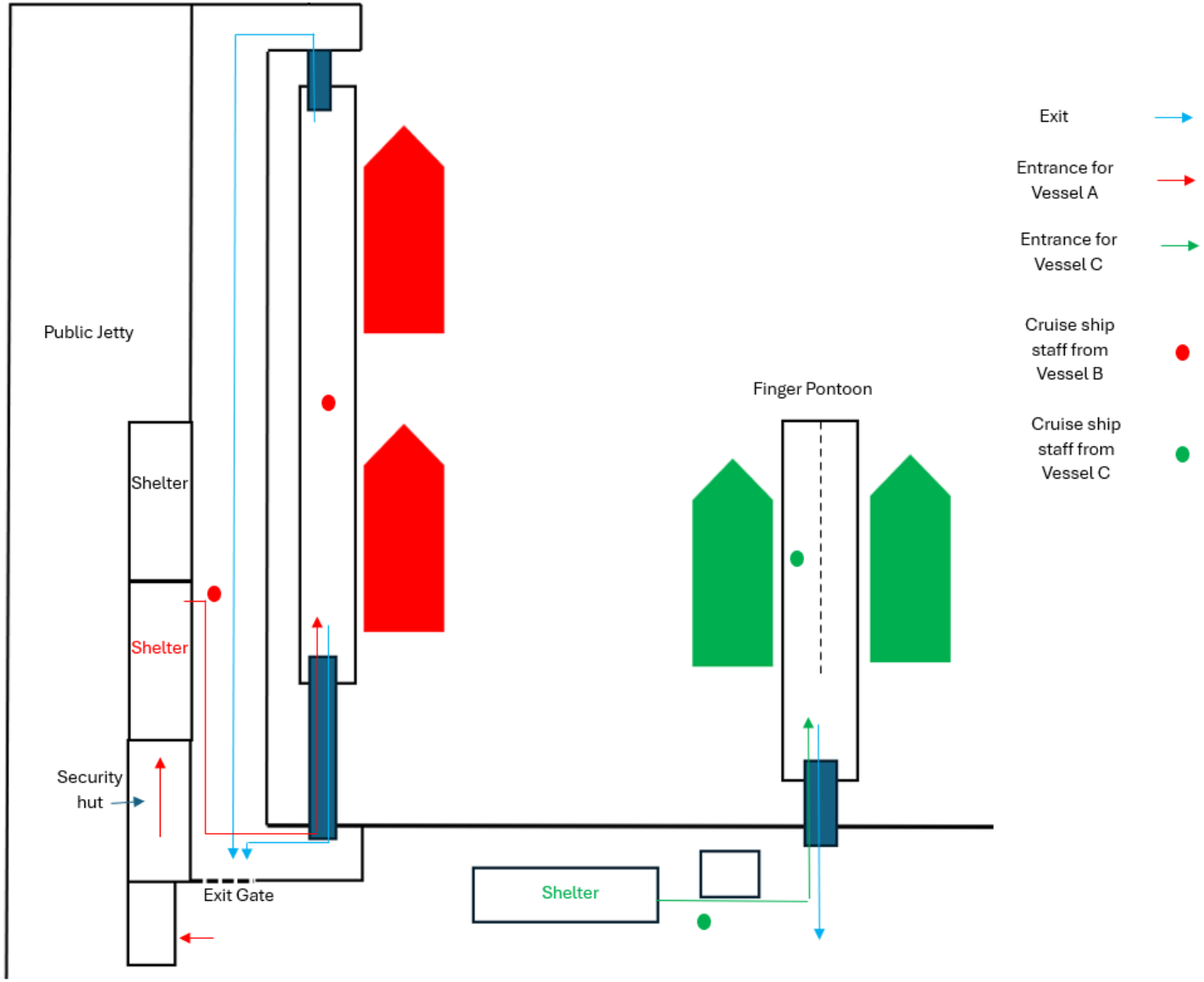
Steuart Barlow,
Harbour Master

1st October 2025

**Appendix 1**

Tender/zodiac operations at the Public Jetty from three different cruise ships



**Appendix 2**

Tender/zodiac operations at the Public Jetty from two different cruise ships