

OP NOTICE TO SHIPPING No. N-6-2022



Embarking or
Disembarking During
Transit

January 1, 2022

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To: Shipping Agents, Owners and Operators

Subject: Embarking or Disembarking During Transit

1. This Notice is effective on the date of issue and cancels OP Notice to Shipping No. N-6-2021. A revised Notice will be issued in January of each year or when otherwise required.
2. The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) does not provide commercial launch services on a regular basis at this time; however, under special circumstances, and in exceptional cases, embarking and disembarking a vessel may be arranged. Such operation will take place only after approval by the Canal Port Captain on duty on the side of the Isthmus under his supervision. These services will entail a charge, unless otherwise authorized as *official* or *courtesy*.
3. Persons or organizations requesting launch service from the ACP shall first obtain approval from the Canal Port Captain on duty and, after concurring with ACP, from the provider of launch service under contract with the *Panama Maritime Authority (PMA)*. Documentation with the *PMA* contractor's approval shall be presented to the appropriate ACP launch dispatcher, who will ensure proper billing.
4. Shipping agents requesting embarkation or disembarkation of ship passengers or crew members shall make arrangements with the Panama governmental immigration authority and shall ensure that the corresponding officials are on site at the time of the operation. The shipping agent shall also notify the Canal Port Captain on duty when clearance has been obtained from the governmental immigration authority. The names of personnel embarking or disembarking and a list of luggage, packages or equipment involved must also be provided.
5. For operational purposes, the normal sites for embarkation/disembarkation are as follows:

Pacific Terminal	Atlantic Terminal
Balboa Anchorage	Cristobal Anchorage
Mine Dock (Amador Launch Landing)	Gatun Landing (Gatun Lake)
Diablo Landing (Balboa Basin)	
Gamboa Small Craft Dock	

a. The designation of these sites is based on safety and operational considerations. Use of any other site requires prior approval of the Transit Operations Division Manager or the Canal Port Captain on duty.

b. Under unusual or special circumstances, or in cases of emergencies, the Canal locks and Davis and Paraiso landings may be authorized for embarking or disembarking. Approval will be on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to operational requirements.

c. Generally, official and courtesy launch service will be rendered only at Diablo or Gamboa landings in the Pacific Terminal and at Gatun Landing in the Atlantic Terminal.

6. The following procedure must be followed when embarkation or disembarkation that entails a charge is authorized at Gamboa Landing or the locks:

a. Shipping agents shall request authorization to the Canal port captain's office in Balboa.

b. The duty Canal Port Captain will notify the Gamboa launch dispatcher or the appropriate control house operator and the Admeasurement Unit for billing purposes.

c. The message must name the person or persons, the identification document number, and baggage or packages involved and the steamship agency requesting the service.

d. Only person(s) and items identified and approved will be permitted to embark or disembark.

e. When a gangplank is secured to a vessel at the locks or a fee for service launch is used at Gamboa, the Locks Operations Supervisor or the dispatcher on duty at Gamboa Landing will notify the Admeasurement Unit.

f. The Gamboa Tug Landing (Gamboa Field Office) is not a regular site for the embarking/disembarking of passengers. This area is an industrial area complex with various ongoing projects and there are no suitable facilities for use by passengers or the general public.

g. For the purpose of embarking and disembarking passengers from small craft operated by local tour operators, the new Gamboa Small Craft Dock was constructed just north of the Gamboa Reserve Fleet area, on the east side of the Canal. To use this facility, tour operators have to coordinate with Marine Traffic Control, so that access can be provided to the buses carrying the passengers. Tour operators are responsible to provide linehandlers to moor these vessels to the dock, as well as gang planks to be used by the passengers.

7. Other requirements concerning Embarking or Disembarking:

a. *Draft reading at the locks:* Masters of vessels are reminded that personnel from transiting vessels are not permitted to climb or hang over the side of the vessel from ladders or bosun's chairs while the vessel is in the lock chamber. Personnel are prohibited from disembarking onto the lock walls at any time for any purpose. Draft readings are obtained from the locks through the Pilot.

b. *Carrying weapons within Canal Authority facilities:* The carrying of weapons within Authority buildings and facilities is prohibited, except in the case of law enforcement officials or Authority employees who are authorized to carry weapons in the performance of their official duties. Exceptions to this regulation must be approved by the Protection and Emergency Response Division executive manager.

c. *Ship's business and commercial activities:* The ship's business and commercial activities should be conducted **exclusively** in the ports or in the anchorage areas.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Ilya R. Espino de Marotta
Deputy Administrator and Vice President for Operations