

...On the big day, a Panama Canal Advisor is allocated to your vessel. He's transported by pilot boat to meet you in the anchorage around 6am. At that time he'll talk to the captain and the mandatory 4 line handlers (these can be your crew, but the helmsman doesn't count, he/she must be at the wheel at all times), to explain the type of transit to be used. Although you can request a preferred type of transit there is no guarantee it will be applied on the day. The three methods are;

1/ Locking through alone, or rafting with another boat and using "centre chamber", e.g suspending the vessel(s) cats-cradle fashion, centrally in the lock by means of your four long lines to bollards high up on the chamber walls.

2/ Rafting onto a tugboat that is accompanying a large ship through the locks.

3/ Directly alongside the chamber wall.

Whatever the method there will always be a large ship in the lock. Tugs and pleasure boats are positioned ASTERN of that ship when locking UP, and FORWARD of the ship when locking DOWN. During our many trial transits we experienced all combinations of passage, plus a variety of advisors, mostly good... **some BAD.**

To transit the Panama Canal is an experience of a lifetime, an adventure with memories to be cherished forever. There is no need for accidents, but sometimes they occur through no fault of the skipper or crew. An Advisor is allocated for one reason only, and that is to **ADVISE** on canal related operations and procedures, maintain radio communications with other canal traffic and generally keep the crew and your boat safe. Unlike a qualified commercial pilot, he is NOT entitled to take over the handling of the boat. That task, and the responsibility for ensuring the security of knots and lines is most definitely **a job for skipper and crew**, after all, **it's your boat**, and the Canal Authority accept **NO responsibility for damage, loss, injury or death** and you **MUST sign a waiver form to this effect** prior to your transit. **You enter the canal system entirely at your own risk!**