Translation

Local Vessels Advisory Committee
Joint Sub-committee on Class I and Class IV Vessels
Minutes of the 17th Meeting

Date :10 June 2016 (Friday)
Time :10:00 a.m.
Venue : Room 1405-06, 14/F, Harbour Building, Central

Present（in no particular order）

Mr. LI Yiu-kwong, Stephen （Chairman）	Marine Department
Mr, CHOR Yee-on, Steve	The Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd
Mr. Samson LEUNG	The “Star” Ferry Company, Limited
Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen	New World First Ferry Services Ltd.
Mr. P. M.LEE, Alfred	New World First Ferry Services Ltd
Mr. LI Kin-wah	New World First Ferry Services Ltd
Mr. Bill CHAN	Discovery Bay Transportation Services Ltd
Mr. Luter LAU	Discovery Bay Transportation Services Ltd
Mr. Alex MONG	Discovery Bay Transportation Services Ltd
Mr. K. P. CHEUNG, Donald	Park Island Transport Company Ltd.
Mr. NG Siu-yuen, Nelson	Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Ltd.
Mr. C. M. WONG, Ken	Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Ltd.
Mr. LO Ngok-yang	Cheoy Lee Shipyards Limited
Mr. C. M. CHAN	The Hong Kong Shipyard Limited
Mr. LI Chi-wai	Hong Kong Seamen’s Union
Mr. YANG Kai-qiang	Hong Kong Seamen’s Union
Mr. WU Ka-shun	South China Towing Co. Ltd.
Mr. FAN Keung	Harbour Transportation Workers General Union
Mr. KWOK Tak-kee	Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association Ltd.
Mr. PUI Chi-keung, Emil	Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association Ltd.
Mr. WONG Yiu-wing	Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats &

	Tug Boats Association Ltd.
Mr. LEUNG Siu-wing	Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association Ltd.
Mr. KWOK Wai-hung	Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association Ltd.
Mr. Alan REID	Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club
Mr. WONG Yiu-wah	Marine Excursion Association
Mr. KWOK Chi-hong	Marine Excursion Association
Mr. William LI	Marine Excursion Association
Mr. LEE Shing-hing	Sai Kung Kaito Association
Mr. Donald LEE	Hong Kong Water Ski Association
Mr. Ale SHEK	Hebe Haven Yacht Club
Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai	Hong Kong & Kwoloon Floating Fishermen Welfare Promotion Association
Mr. LAU Wai-kee	Aberdeen Boat Club
Mr. Paul CHEUNG	Hong Kong Jet Sports Boating Association
Ms. Sandy MAK	Tsui Wah Ferry Service (H.K.) Ltd.
Mr. CHEUNG Yat-tung	Hong Kong Police Force
Ms. YAU Lai-sze, Lizzy	Leisure and Culture Services Department
Mr. K. P. LEE	Marine Department
Mr. Jammy NG	Marine Department
Mr. K. S. HO	Marine Department
Ms. Alana POON (Translator)	Marine Department
Miss Jennifer LAM (Secretary)	Marine Department

Absent with Apologies

Mr. Chris WONG	Discovery Bay Transportation Services Ltd
Ms. Tiffany LEE	Marine Excursion Association

I. Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed representatives from the industry to the meeting.

II. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. **The Chairman** announced that the minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

III. Discussion Items

(1) Proposed Arrangements regarding the Type Rating Certificate Required for Coxswains Operating Local Fast Speed Passenger Vessels (Paper No. 1/2016)

3. **The Chairman** briefed members on Paper No. 1/2016. The consultancy team completed a risk assessment of the number of vessels, traffic density and navigation safety in port, etc. on local passenger vessels in March 2016, and suggested classifying local passenger vessels with a speed of 20 knots or above as fast speed vessels, and requiring coxswains operating fast speed vessels with a carrying capacity of over 100 passengers to hold a Type Rating Certificate (TRC).

4. **Mr. WU Ka-shun** asked if the holding of a TRC was required for all coxswains of fast speed vessels. **The Chairman** replied that those who had been operating fast speed vessels before the effective date would not be affected. **Mr. WU Ka-shun** went on to enquire about the validity of the TRC. **The Chairman** replied that a validity of two years was proposed initially by the Marine Department (MD).

5. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** indicated that applicants for a TRC were required to pass a medical examination under the licensing system of the existing mechanism, and for that reason some crew in senior years were not issued with the certificate. The local passenger shipping industry was suffering from acute manpower shortage. The latest data on manpower suggested that 80% of the new crew entering the trade joined the pleasure vessel industry. MD had a set of requirements on training courses for the issue of TRCs, such as collision avoidance and instrument operation. If MD rigidly required the holding of a TRC for coxswains, it would be very difficult for the industry to meet the need given the manpower shortage. Even (operators of) the Hong Kong-Macau route, which were larger in scale, might not have sufficient resources for the training of new recruits to sit for examinations for the certificate. He held that MD should assess the adequacy of training courses and teaching personnel, as well as the number of vessels and crew involved before rolling out the policy. He asked if each ferry route required a different TRC, and whether each (holders of) TRC is allowed to operate three types of vessels only.

6. **The Chairman** noted the tight manpower supply of the industry and would implement the policy step by step. At the moment, serving coxswains would not be affected by the new requirements. The preparation for teaching personnel, trainings and examinations was in the pipeline and MD would keep in close contact with the Marine Services Training Institute, Vocational Training Council, teaching bodies and vessel companies. Provisionally, MD would base the classification of TRCs on vessel type to ensure that coxswains possessed sufficient knowledge of the operation of a particular type of vessel.

7. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** pointed out that about 70% of the coxswains of his company would retire in five years, which implied that more than 30 coxswains needed to sit for examinations for the certificate. He held that the industry generally support the board direction of introducing TRCs, but manpower shortage and limitations of teaching personnel and trainings would impede the implementation of the policy. At present, most of the newly recruited coxswains came from fisherman families with low education qualification. If coxswains were only allowed to operate three types of vessel under the TRCs, the operation of vessel companies and the livelihood of individual coxswains would be affected. As the industry was in short of local professional teaching personnel at the moment while serving instructors might not necessarily be familiar with the operation of local ferry routes, he proposed that MD should announce the details of the plan to the industry and deliberate together the practical implementation of the policy. **Mr. KWOK Tak-kee** said the shortage of professional teaching personnel for small-scale vessel companies was even more acute, and certain difficulties were expected for local vessels in the course of implementation.

8. **The Chairman** reiterated that there was no designated training for the approval of TRCs. Applicants were only required by MD to possess specific work experience and technical skills of operation. Vessel companies could arrange for the provision of guidance and training to coxswains by serving staff, without the need to recruit additional instructors. **Mr. Jammy NG** added that having regard to the current practices of river-trade vessels and local fast speed passenger vessels of the Hong Kong- Macau route, MD would send examiners to conduct assessment for coxswains applying for TRCs every two years. The major contents included knowledge on operation and equipment of individual vessel type, contingency measures, fire equipment and escape methods.

9. **Mr. LI Chi-wai** agreed in principle the introduction of TRCs for local ferry routes, but the hasty implementation might pose a difficulty for the industry. MD had launched a number of training courses for the new recruits in the recent years, and the introduction

of TRCs at the same time would put pressure on those who had just entered the industry. He opined that the implementation of the certificates amid manpower shortage would trigger the leaving of even more new recruits for the pleasure vessel industry. Therefore, he proposed that MD should first address the manpower shortage before enhancing the quality of training and crew.

10. **The Chairman** understood **Mr. LI Chi-wai**'s points of view. He explained that vessel companies were not required to increase their manpower under the TRCs, and the assessment involved was mainly about routine operation and contingency skills. Vessel companies could deploy existing manpower resources to conduct in-house training.

11. **Mr. K. P. CHEUNG, Donald** pointed out how fast speed vessels were defined by the consultancy team of the industry (BMT Asia Pacific Ltd). He said as the industry had yet to reach a consensus on the definition, the holding of TRCs by coxswains of fast speed vessels should not be rigidly required. The same standard should not be adopted given the difference in conditions between the waters beyond and within Hong Kong. He expressed dissatisfaction over MD's failure to fully consult the industry before policy implementation. **The Chairman** replied that the consultancy team based the definition of fast speed vessels on such objective data as traffic density, waterways and ferry routes of Hong Kong waters.

12. **Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai** opined that one of the major contributory factors of the Lamma collision stemmed from the examination system. Owing to the difficulty level of examinations and the lack of teaching personnel in the industry, the problem of manpower shortage and succession had become increasingly prominent. While the government lacked long-term direction for the overall planning of the port, the ageing of crew would raise the frequency of accidents directly. It was necessary to address the examination policy if the safety of local ferries was to be enhanced effectively.

13. **Mr. WONG Hon-kuen** indicated that MD adopted different licensing systems for local ferries and pleasure vessels. The former were required to submit a plan to MD in advance for approval whereas the later only needed to provide a receipt of the vessel. As a result, the pleasure vessel industry boomed. The manpower shortage made it difficult for the local ferry industry to work in line with MD's new examination system.

14. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** opined that the risk of accidents for small vessels (e.g. fishing boats) was much higher than that of fast speed vessels, and many crew of

small vessels navigated recklessly. Therefore, MD should not focus on enhancing the safely standard for fast speed vessels only, but overlooked the regulation for small vessels. **The Chairman** replied that MD also intended to enhance the safely standard for all vessels in a gradual and orderly approach, starting with fast speed vessels and then extending to other vessels.

15. **Mr. NG Siu-yuen, Nelson** remarked that MD had not discussed the content of TRCs with the industry. Small-scale vessel companies might require additional resources for recruiting external instructors. **Mr. KWOK Tak-kee** said MD held a refresher course for crew once only after the Lamma collision. Instead of introducing the TRCs, he held that MD could consider increasing the number of refresher courses for crew to facilitate revision and learning. **The Chairman** said MD planned to arrange refresher courses for crew on a regular basis. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** opined that many medium and small-scale vessel companies relied heavily on training courses organized by MD or the Marine Services Training Institute, and therefore supported the reviving of refresher courses by MD.

16. **Mr. LI Chi-wai** supported the principles of TRCs, but held it inappropriate to include them into the assessment system. As deployment of officers for assessment for the TRCs was required every two years, MD might not necessarily have sufficient manpower to handle applications and conduct assessment on board vessels. He considered the reviving of refresher courses for crew more practicable.

17. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** said that applicants for TRCs were required to receive related training for no less than 120 hours. He asked if the training record of a crew remained valid if he switched to another company. **The Chairman** said MD would consider the nature of training and type of vessel on a case by case basis.

18. **The Chairman** concluded that further discussions were required as a consensus on this item could not be reached at the meeting.

(ii) Proposed Training Requirement regarding the High Speed Craft Radar Simulator Course (LVAC Paper No.2/2016)

19. **The Chairman** briefed members on Paper No.2/2016. MD proposed that in future coxswains who operated passenger crafts that were constructed on high speed craft standards be required to receive training in a high speed craft radar simulator course. Coxswains should understand the limitations when operating such vessels, thus making

a more appropriate judgement when trying to avoid collision for navigational safety.

20. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** considered that the introduction of the TRC and the high speed craft radar simulator course at the same time would significantly increase the pressure on the local ferry industry and discourage new blood from joining the industry. He held that all vessels should be subject to the requirements if the abovementioned training course was to be implemented. Also, the existing International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea required vessels to set a fixed range ring with a radius of 2.5 nautical miles, but, in fact, it was impossible for vessels in certain waters (such as the fairway in the Victoria Harbour, the Southern Fairway and the North Green Island Fairway) to comply with the requirement. **Mr. WU Ka-shun** suggested that MD should, before introducing the policies, provide the industry with more information to facilitate discussion.

21. **Mr. LI Chi-wai** said that MD had introduced various radar training courses in recent years, for example, the basic radar course and the navigation simulation course. There might be overlaps in content in the currently introduced high speed craft radar simulator course, which would cause confusion to learners. **The Chairman** responded that the duration of the high speed craft radar simulator course would be five days. Learners who had finished the basic radar course could directly enrol on a shorter bridging course.

22. Both **Mr. LI Chi-wai** and **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** pointed out that the operator interface and functions of radar devices on various vessels were different, and the radar model in training institutions was outdated. Therefore, it would be more suitable for individual shipping companies to provide their own training. **The Chairman** responded that the transmission mode of a high speed radar and that of a regular one were not the same. If coxswains could not differentiate the two, they might make a wrong judgement, which would easily lead to accidents. The high speed craft radar simulator course aimed at enhancing learners' understanding of the differences between high speed craft radars and regular radars, and the general operation of the former.

23. **Mr. WU Ka-shun** remarked that currently local ferries were not required to install a high speed craft radar, and therefore he had doubts about the practicality of the training course. **The Chairman** responded that although MD currently did not make it mandatory for local ferries to install a high speed craft radar, the industry were welcome to install it on their own initiative.

24. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** considered the installation of a high speed craft radar on local ferries not very useful as the radar reflector of most low speed vessels was not detectable by high speed craft radars. Therefore, he suggested that MD should first regulate low speed vessels and promote the basic radar course. **Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai** remarked that in some dangerous waters, even installing a high speed craft radar might not be effective in enhancing safety. Thus, he considered it not very practical to introduce a high speed craft radar simulator course.

25. **Mr. KWOK Tak-kee** enquired about the differences between a high speed craft and a fast speed vessel. **The Chairman** responded that the former was defined by calculations based on international formula (mainly dependent on displacement), while the definition of the latter was mentioned in the previous discussion item. **Mr. KWOK Tak-kee** suggested that MD should ensure the industry understood clearly the definition of both types of vessels before implementing the policy.

26. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** reiterated that local ferries only accounted for approximately 10% of the total (number of vessels), and there were risks to other vessels as well. MD should not regulate the former only. He remarked that MD should solve the manpower shortage of the industry and ensure that the crew of all types of vessels had received basic training before implementing advanced training courses and strengthening the regulation of the local ferry industry.

27. **The Chairman** concluded that as members had many views on the subject, MD would consider them carefully and collect further relevant information for future discussion.

(iii) Amendments to the Code of Practice – Safety Standards for Class I, II and III Vessels and the Code of Practice – Safety Standards for Class IV Vessels (Paper No. 3/2016 and Annex)

28. **The Chairman** invited **Mr. K. P. LEE** to present Paper No. 3/2015 and its Annex.

29. **Mr. K. P. LEE** reported that Class I, II and II vessels currently used the same code of practice and it would be divided into three volumes after the amendment, while Class IV vessels would continue to have a separate volume. The four volumes of code of practice would be amended based on the latest statutory requirements as well as opinions in expert reports. In the 30th meeting of the Sub-committee on Survey Works of Local Vessels held on 6 June 2016, a member requested MD to provide the details of the amendments. After that meeting, MD had prepared a detailed version of the

amendments which was provided at the Annex for members' reference. Regarding the amendments related to Class I and IV vessels, he would explained them separately.

30. **Mr. KWOK Tak-kee** and **Mr. WONG Hon-kuen** pointed out that members had only received the Annex one day before the meeting, it was impossible to process all the amendments in this meeting as the industry needed more time to study them. **The Chairman** responded that the aim of this meeting was to introduce the details of each amendment to members and they could provide their opinions within one month after this meeting. All amendments had to be endorsed by the Local Vessels Advisory Committee before they were implemented.

Class I vessels, Section 1.4 (P.7 of the Annex of the Paper)

31. **Mr. K. P. LEE** reported that, for newly built launches and ferry vessels, a new requirement would be added requiring the window of passenger space to be made of breakable glass to facilitate escape. **Mr. Johnny LEUNG** commented that, same as the comment he made in the meeting of the Sub-committee on Survey Works of Local Vessels held on 6 June 2016, for situation in which water had filled up the space, even if it was fitted with window that could be easily broken, people might still be unable to escape. Thus he questioned the practicability of such amendment. **The Chairman** said that members' comments would be taken into consideration and discussed later.

Class I, II and III vessels, Section 2.2 (P.7 of the Annex of the Paper)

32. **Mr. K. P. LEE** reported that MD proposed updating the sections related to fire-fighting apparatus to comply with the latest requirements of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Safety And Survey) Regulation (Cap 548G).

33. **Mr. Bill CHAN** suggested MD provide the contents of that regulation so that members could see the changes more easily. **The Chairman** said that MD would circulate the related documents after this meeting for members to read.

Class I, II and III vessels, Section 13.3.2 (P.9 of the Annex of the Paper)

34. **Mr. K. P. LEE** reported that MD proposed clarifying the requirements for the structural fire protection of the hulls of Category A vessels. The structures of engine room boundaries, including hulls, bulkheads, supporting columns and decks shall be provided with structural fire protection, either by the structure itself or by insulating materials and

the protection should be able to maintain the required strength of the structure for 30 minutes or more. If the hull structures below waterlines were fitted with insulating materials, these materials should extend downward to at least 300 mm below the lightship waterline. The bulkheads and decks separating wheelhouses from passenger and crew spaces shall be of gastight construction insulated with non-combustible fire resisting materials.

35. **Mr. KWOK Tak-kee** said that members had already expressed their reservations about such amendment in the 30th meeting of the Sub-committee on Survey Works of Local Vessels. **The Chairman** responded that MD would record these views which would be discussed later.

Class I, II and III vessels, Annex U-4 (P.17 of the Annex of the Paper)

36. **Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai** enquired about the detailed contents of Annex U-6 "Guideline on the Minimum Safe Number of Crew for Ferry Vessels and Launches". **Mr. K. P. LEE** responded that such annex was already included in the prevailing code of practice and members would be provided with the related documents later.

Class I, II and III vessels, Section 1 (P.11 of the Annex of the Paper)

37. **Mr. YANG Kai-qiang** said that he noticed the amendment proposed by MD about changing the requirement of engine operators regarding "total propulsion power" to "total power". He enquired whether it meant the power of all machines would be taken into calculation after the amendment. **Mr. Jammy NG** responded that, after the implementation of the amendment, the total power would still be calculated based on all propulsion engines fitted on a vessel that an engine operator would operate. This "total power" could be found on the Certificate of Survey.

38. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** said that the amendment would limit the number of machines each engine operator could operate and thus greatly affect the daily operation of vessels.

39. **Mr. Jammy NG** responded that, according to the restriction placed by the certificates of engine operators of different grades on the total power of local vessels they could operate, total power referred to the total power of all propulsion engines (calculated in kW) of a vessel as specified in its Certificate of Survey or Certificate of Inspection issued under the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Safety And Survey) Regulation

(Cap 548G). The amendment proposed by MD aimed to standardise the wording of certificates of competency and the code of practice, and thus the current operations of vessels would not be affected.

Consultation Direction and Time Limit

40. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** pointed out that most of the amendments were made to keep up with international standards such as ISO or SOLAS. He questioned whether it was necessary for vessels to meet the standards for ocean-going vessels when they were operating in inland waters and thus suggested MD collect information of other countries. He also pointed out that most of the members attending this meeting were representatives of the business operations of local vessels and no representative of technical staff was here. He therefore requested MD to hold a separate meeting to discuss the technical details.

41. Both **Mr. KWOK Tak-kee** and **Ms. Sandy MAK** viewed that since members had yet to understand the details of each amendment, it was not appropriate to endorse all the amendments in the meeting of Local Vessels Advisory Committee which would be held in June. Since different amendments were proposed for different classes of vessels, separate meetings should be held for explaining the details of the amendments.

42. **Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai** agreed that separate meetings should be held to discuss the amendments of the vessels of the same class and MD should review whether the principle of "new rules for new vessels, old rules for old vessels" was still valid. If MD did not fully consult the industry before making the amendments, the actual situations might differ from those in the proposals and strict enforcement would make the industry and frontline staff to be at a loss as to what to do.

43. **The Chairman** concluded that MD understood more time was needed for the industry to consider the proposed amendments and thus reasonable time would be provided to collect views and discussion would be held later.

IV. Any Other Business

(i) Use of Tugs in an Emergency

44. **Mr. NG Siu-yuen, Nelson** pointed out that towage of laid-up vessels had to be done by

tugs approved by the authority as required by MD. Given the number of tugs approved by the authority was limited, he enquired whether the use of tugs from ferry companies was allowed in an emergency.

45. **Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai, Demen** also pointed out that many vessels needed to berth in typhoon shelters in times of typhoon and inclement weather. However, the supply of tugs approved by the authority did not meet the demand and danger could arise if the waiting time was too long.

46. **The Chairman** said that this situation would be brought to the attention of the patrol section.

(ii) Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate Examination Guidebook

47. **The Chairman** reported that on 8th June, MD had published the "Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate Examination Guidebook" which introduced the criteria for the Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate Examination, the examination format and the syllabus, and provided sample questions for reference. The Guidebook had been uploaded to MD's website for public viewing.

V. Details of the Next Meeting

48. The date and time of the next meeting would be confirmed in due course.

VI. End of Meeting

49. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Marine Department
July 2016