

**Local Vessels Advisory Committee**  
**Joint Sub-committee on Class I and Class IV Vessels**

**Practical Operation Assessment**

**Purpose**

This paper sets out the proposal of the Marine Department (MD) to introduce a practical operation assessment to the examination for local certificates of competency.

**Background**

2. At the adjournment debate of the Legislative Council's sitting on 18 October 2012, the Secretary for Transport and Housing proposed ten measures to enhance the safety of local passenger vessels. One of the measures is to enhance the training courses and system for examination of coxswains in order to raise their professionalism and awareness of navigational safety.

3. Currently, candidates for various grades of certificates of competency for coxswains and pleasure vessel operators are not required to take any practical operation assessment<sup>1</sup>.

**Proposal**

4. To raise the professionalism and awareness of navigational safety among coxswains, MD proposes requiring coxswains to pass a practical operation assessment before they are allowed to operate the following types of vessels –

- (a) Class I vessels of more than 24 metres in length or 26.4

---

<sup>1</sup> Apart from candidates who become eligible for the Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate by having completed an approved training course and passed the approved practical test conducted by the Hong Kong Sailing Federation.

- metres in length overall; and
- (b) pleasure vessels let for hire or reward of more than 15 metres in length overall.

The practical operation assessment will be conducted with a navigation simulation system.

5. At present, only holders of Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate may operate vessels of more than 24 metres in length or 26.4 metres in length overall, and only holders of Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate may operate pleasure vessels of more than 15 metres in length overall. To implement the proposal in paragraph 4 above, we propose –

- (a) further dividing Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate into two levels or making an endorsement on the certificate so as to require candidates to pass a practical operation assessment before they are allowed to operate Class I vessels of more than 24 metres in length or 26.4 metres in length overall; candidates who have not taken or fail to pass a practical operation assessment but have been granted a Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate may still operate Class II and Class III vessels of more than 24 metres in length or 26.4 metres in length overall; and
- (b) further dividing Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate into two levels or making an endorsement on the certificate so as to require candidates to pass a practical operation assessment before they are allowed to operate pleasure vessels let for hire or reward of more than 15 metres in length overall through; candidates who have not taken or fail to pass a practical operation assessment but have been granted a Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate may still operate pleasure vessels not let for hire or reward of more than 15 metres in length overall.

The above changes will only be applicable to certificates granted after the proposal comes into effect. Those who have been granted a Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate or Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate

before the effective date of the proposal will not be affected. They remain to be qualified to operate Class I vessels of more than 24 metres in length or 26.4 metres in length overall, or pleasure vessels let for hire or reward of more than 15 metres in length overall, without taking or passing the practical operation assessment.

### **Way Forward**

6. MD will submit the above proposal to the Local Vessels Advisory Committee for discussion and endorsement. Subject to the advice of the Department of Justice, MD will amend the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Local Certificates of Competency) Rules, Examination Rules for Local Certificates of Competency, and Examination Rules for Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate of Competency to implement the above proposal.

### **Advice Sought**

7. Members are invited to comment on this paper.

**Marine Department**  
**August 2014**