

**LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Joint Sub-committee on Class I and Class IV Vessels**

**Practical Operation Assessment**

**Purpose**

This paper further elaborates on the practical operation assessment proposal.

**Background**

2. Paper Nos. 4/2014 and 6/2014 were discussed at the Joint Sub-committee meetings on 28 August and 27 November 2014 where members expressed their views on the impact of the proposal on local vessels, and the details and method of the assessment.

**Proposal**

3. Under the current examination rules, coxswain certificates are issued in three grades for holders to act as coxswains of Classes I, II and III vessels of different lengths. For the issue of the Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate, candidates must pass a written examination. To be eligible for the Coxswain Grade 2 Certificate, candidates must pass a written examination, a practical chart work examination and an oral examination. For the Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate, candidates who possess certain years of service in addition to having passed the Coxswain Grade 2 Examination and meeting some other criteria will be granted the Certificate without having to pass other examinations or assessments.

4. Pleasure vessel operator certificates are currently issued in two grades for holders to act as operators of pleasure vessels of different lengths. For the issue of the Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 2 Certificate, candidates must pass a written examination, or have completed an approved course and passed the course assessment. To be eligible for the Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate, candidates must, apart from having the necessary operation experience and meeting some other criteria, pass the Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Examination, or have completed an approved course and passed the approved practical test.

5. The Marine Department (MD) considers it necessary to raise the expertise and awareness of navigational safety of holders of the Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate in respect of local passenger carrying vessels and holders of the Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate in respect of pleasure vessels let for hire or reward. As such, MD proposes requiring holders of the Coxswain Grade 2 Certificate to pass a practical operation assessment before their application for the Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate for operation of Class I vessels of more than 24 metres in length or 26.4 metres in length overall. For holders of the Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 2 Certificate to be eligible for the Grade 1 Certificate to operate pleasure vessels let for hire or reward of more than 15 metres in length overall, they should also be required to pass a practical operation assessment in addition to the existing examination.

6. The requirement to pass the practical operation assessment is applicable to holders of Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate or Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate issued after the implementation of the proposal. Holders of Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate or Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate issued before the proposal comes into effect will not be affected. Those who have passed the practical operation assessment will not be subject to reassessment.

### **Assessment Details and Method**

7. At present, the examinations for various coxswain certificates and pleasure vessel operator certificates organised by MD are conducted in the form of written examination or oral examination, which cover navigational knowledge, the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and response actions in the event of emergency. The proposed practical operation assessment in the mode of

navigation simulation will cover similar areas to assess candidates' understanding and response in various sea conditions.

8. According to the information provided by potential course providers for the practical operation assessment, the assessment will not be conducted in the form of an one-off examination at the end of the course. Candidates will operate a navigation simulator in class under the observation of an instructor and will be assessed continuously throughout the course in accordance with their attendance rate and performance. As the course involves the operation of a navigation simulator, it will at least take about 3.5 days (i.e. about 26 hours). In response to members' concern that in-service coxswains may have difficulty in finding time to attend the course, potential course providers remark that candidates may accumulate their course hours. Candidates may also opt to attend the course in the evening.

### **Way Forward**

9. Upon gaining members' support, MD will submit the proposal regarding the practical operation assessment to the Local Vessels Advisory Committee for endorsement. Subject to the advice of the Department of Justice, MD will implement the above proposal by revising 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.

### **Advice Sought**

10. Members are invited to give their views on this paper.

**Marine Department**

**6 March 2015**