

Local Vessels Advisory Committee

Seeking members' endorsement of measures to enhance the safety of local vessels and navigation

Background

1. In response to the Lamma Incident of 1 October 2012, the Local Vessels Advisory Committee, at its 12th meeting held on 26 October 2012, decided to establish a "Joint Sub-committee on Class I and Class IV Vessels" (the Sub-committee) to determine measures to enhance the safety of local vessels and navigation.

Measures agreed by the Sub-committee

2. The Sub-committee has conducted 5 meetings, namely on 08-11-2012, 29-11-2012, 28-12-2012, 21-02-2013 and 11-04-2013. Agreement was reached on the following three measures :

2.1 Adjusting the weight of the relevant knowledge in existing examination syllabuses

The Sub-committee agreed that the examinations for Coxswain Grade 2 and Grade 3 certificates should put greater weight on the subjects of sailing attitude, safety awareness and emergency preparedness. The computer programme for the examination system had been modified accordingly in February 2013 pending members' endorsement for implementation scheduled for June this year.

2.2 Preparatory Maritime Course and Proof of In-Service Training

In order to ensure that candidates planning to obtain the Coxswain Grade 3 certificate have possessed a certain level of professional and navigational knowledge, the Sub-committee agreed that candidates should complete a preparatory maritime course organized by the Maritime Services Training Institute, workers' unions or trade associations. The time required to attend the course can be counted towards the qualifying service period for taking the coxswain examination. In addition, candidates would also be required to complete in-service training for certain basic items under coxswains' supervision and with employers' proof of the completion of such training. Since the implementation of

this measure does not require legislative amendment, the measure can be implemented in January 2015 subject to members' endorsement.

2.3 Continuous Learning for Coxswains of Local Passenger Carrying Vessels

In order to ensure that the professional standards and navigational knowledge of coxswains operating local Class I passenger carrying vessels could be maintained at all times, the Sub-committee agreed that these coxswains should attend a "one-day refresher course for coxswains of local vessels" organized by the Maritime Services Training Institute, workers' unions or trade associations once every 3 years and hold the attendance certificate. The refresher course would cover such aspects as collision prevention at sea, contingency measures, life-saving at sea and awareness of navigational safety. Since the implementation of this measure requires legislative amendment, shipping companies will be encouraged to arrange for their coxswains to attend refresher courses as soon as possible on a voluntary basis starting from early next year in order to avoid last-minute rush when the amended legislation is enacted. Attendance records for refresher courses obtained during the voluntary period will be recognized.

Members' endorsement sought

3. Members' endorsement is sought for the above measures as agreed by the Sub-committee.

Marine Department
April 2013