

LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Reserved Buoyancy Requirement for Fishing Sampans

Purpose

This paper aims to seek members' endorsement of the Department's proposed changes to the reserved buoyancy requirement for fishing sampans.

Background

2. According to paragraph 1.3 (b) in Chapter III B of the current Code of Practice – Safety Standards for Class I, II and III Vessels concerning the requirement for hull reserved buoyancy, a fishing sampan should have:

(b) 100% internal reserved buoyancy (vessel under full load condition), or the underdeck hold filled with non-combustible plastic foam.

3. The industry has indicated that the requirement in the above-stated paragraph (b) is impractical since the buoyancy tank required to be provided for compliance with the stipulation takes up considerable hull space of vessels, especially for those with heavier hull or shallower hull depth, leading to a significant reduction in space available for fish hold and causing inconvenience in vessel operation. Moreover, as a result of insufficient internal storage space, fishing gears have to be placed on deck, which may have an impact on vessel stability.

Proposal

4. The requirement of the Code of Practice mentioned in paragraph 2 above was originally formulated by reference to open lifeboats/rescue boats used for general purposes, which may not be suitable for fishing sampans that are meant to carry a certain payload of fish hauls or fishing gears. In light of the views of the industry as stated above, and after conducting sampling inspections to certain fishing sampans and studying the relevant data, the Department proposes revising the foregoing paragraph (b) as follows on the premise of ensuring vessel safety:

- (b) (i) The minimum freeboard appropriate to the vessel length (L) according to the following table:

Vessel Length (L) (m)	$L \leq 5$	$L = 15$
Minimum Freeboard at Fully Load Condition (mm)	350	650

The minimum freeboard of intermediate length should be obtained by interpolation.

- (ii) Buoyancy tank with volume sufficient to support the lightship weight of the vessel (i.e. the aggregate of the vessel's own weight and the weight of propulsion machinery excluding fish hauls). For example, a vessel with a gross weight of 1 000kg can be equipped with one or several buoyancy tanks based on its hull design, but the gross volume of buoyancy tank should be at least 1m^3 , and so on.

5. Regarding the proposed amendment to the requirement in paragraph (b)(i) as mentioned above, the safety standards of minimum freeboards have been applied to some local vessels and they are widely accepted by the industry. In addition, since fishing sampans have an open hull (i.e. without continuous deck), waves or heavy rain may result in flooding of water into the hull during inclement weather, it is therefore necessary for these sampans to maintain buoyancy tanks of a certain volume as mentioned in paragraph (b)(ii) to fulfill the requirement of reserved buoyancy of vessels. In this regard, the amended requirements mentioned above will be applicable to all existing fishing sampans that are licensed as well as new fishing sampans that are not yet licensed.

Advice sought

6. At its meeting on 11 June 2015, the Sub-committee on Class III Vessels endorsed the proposed amendments in paragraph 4 above and consented to submission of the proposed amendments to the Local Vessels Advisory Committee for discussion. Members are invited to comment on and endorse the proposed amendments in paragraph 4 above.

Local Vessels Safety Branch
Shipping Division
Marine Department
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