

## LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Regular Medical Examination for Coxswains

#### Purpose

This paper sets out the proposed arrangement for regular medical examinations for coxswains of local passenger vessels put forward by the Marine Department (“MD”).

#### Background

2. At present, coxswains of local vessels are not required to undergo regular medical examinations upon acquiring their qualifications until the age of 65. Moreover, they are only subject to an eyesight test on their application for extending the validity of their certificates after the age of 65.

3. It was recommended in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Collision of Vessels near Lamma Island on 1 October 2012 (“CoI Report”) that all coxswains of vessels permitted to carry more than 100 passengers should have a basic medical examination and eyesight test at an interval of not exceeding five years<sup>1</sup>. MD agrees with the recommendation made in the CoI Report and is of the view that it will help enhance the safety of passenger vessels.

#### Proposed Arrangement for Medical Examination

4. MD notes that vessel operators of relatively larger scale have arranged regular medical examination for coxswains on their own. To help regain public confidence in marine safety in Hong Kong waters, MD will fully implement this proposal which helps boost the safety of passenger vessels as early as possible for enhancement of local vessel and navigational safety.

5. The draft guidelines on regular medical examination for coxswains of vessels permitted to carry more than 100 passengers are set out in the **Annex**.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide para. 443(6) of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Collision of Vessels near Lamma Island on 1 October 2012 at <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/edev/papers/edev0527-rpt20130430-e.pdf>.

## **Joint Sub-committee on Class I and Class IV Vessels**

6. The Joint Sub-committee on Class I and Class IV Vessels discussed the issue at its meetings on 28 August, 27 November 2014 and 25 June 2015, and agreed at its meeting on 25 June 2015 to submit the draft guidelines set out in the **Annex** to this Committee for discussion.

### **Way Forward**

7. Subject to members' consent, MD intends to encourage shipping companies early next year to make such arrangement promptly for their coxswains so as to avoid too many coxswains going for medical examination at the same time upon implementation of the proposal. Medical examinations conducted before implementation of the proposal will be recognised if the requirements in the **Annex** are met.

### **Advice Sought**

8. Members are invited to give their views on the paper.

Shipping Registry and Seafarers' Branch  
Shipping Division  
Marine Department  
August 2015

## **Guidelines on Regular Medical Examination for Coxswains of Class I Vessels**

### **Introduction**

Class I vessels include vessels that are frequently used by the public. It is reasonable and prudent for the vessel owners or operators to review the physical conditions of the coxswains they employ from time to time to see if they are fit for operating vessels. The coxswains should also pay attention to their physical conditions, and if physical conditions that affect their operation of vessels arise, they should inform their employers immediately to make suitable arrangements.

2. This paper aims to provide the employers of coxswains of Class I vessels with guidance on arranging regular medical examinations for their coxswains. The guidelines provided here were formulated in consultation with the local vessel industry, and endorsed by the Local Vessels Advisory Committee at its meeting on [ ]. The Marine Department (“MD”) requests the employers of coxswains of Class I vessels to arrange regular medical examinations for their coxswains in accordance with these guidelines.

### **Regular Medical Examinations**

#### Examination Frequency

3. For coxswains of Class I vessels permitted to carry more than 100 passengers, if they are employed on or after the issue date of these guidelines, their employers should arrange medical examinations for them upon their appointment and subsequently at an interval of not exceeding five years.

4. For coxswains who were employed before the issue date of the guidelines and operate a vessel carrying more than 100 passengers, their employers should arrange one medical examination for them within five years from the issue date of these guidelines and subsequently at least once every five years.

5. Apart from those mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, for coxswains who are qualified to operate a vessel carrying more than 100 passengers, if they have undergone a medical examination that conformed to these guidelines within five years before the issue date of the guidelines, such medical examination would be regarded as one medical examination that was carried out

in compliance with these guidelines. Subsequent to that medical examination, their employers should arrange another medical examination for coxswains anew at least once every five years.

6. The employers may consider arranging regular medical examinations for their coxswains on a more frequent basis.

#### Items under Examination

7. Regular medical examinations should at least include the following items:

- (a) General examination (including weight, height, blood pressure, pulse measurements, etc.);
- (b) Urine test (albumin and glucose test);
- (c) Chest X-ray;
- (d) Eyesight test;
- (e) Blood test (haemoglobin test); and
- (f) Hearing test.

8. The employers may consider including more items for examination.

#### Examination Results

9. The employers should refer to the results of medical examinations and medical practitioner's comments or opinions on the overall physical conditions of the coxswains to carry out human resources management where appropriate in relation to these coxswains.

10. The employers should keep the medical examination reports (including examination results and medical practitioner's comments or opinions) of the coxswains properly for a reasonable period. When handling the medical examination reports of the coxswains, the employers should comply with the relevant provisions stipulated in the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap 486) as well as the relevant codes and guidelines issued by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data.

## **Enquiry**

11. For enquiries about these guidelines, please contact the Shipping Registry and Seafarers' Branch of the Shipping Division of MD.

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Shipping Division  
Marine Department  
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