

LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Navigation Simulation Assessment

Purpose

This paper sets out the proposal of the Marine Department (“MD”) to introduce a navigation simulation assessment to the examinations 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 which was to enhance the training courses and system for examination for coxswains in order to raise their professionalism and awareness of navigational safety¹.

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,

¹ Vide item 4 on page 518 of “Legislative Council - 18 October 2012 Official Record of Proceedings” at <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1018-translate-e.pdf>.

pass the Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Examination, or have completed an approved course and passed the approved practical test.

Proposal

5. MD considers it necessary to raise the professionalism 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 navigation simulation assessment before being granted 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 navigation simulation assessment in addition to the existing examination.

6. The requirement to pass the navigation simulation assessment is applicable to candidates for Coxswain Grade 1 Certificate or Pleasure Vessel Operator Grade 1 Certificate to be 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 navigation simulation assessment will not be subject to reassessment.

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

8. There will be no one-off examination for the proposed navigation simulation assessment conducted with a navigation simulator. During the navigation simulation assessment course of about 3.5 days (i.e. about 26 hours), a course instructor will observe the performance of the attendees and will assess their competency in navigation during the navigation simulation. An attendee will be considered to have passed the assessment

if the course instructor finds his/her performance satisfactory. MD will recognise suitable courses for the navigation simulation assessment and the assessment results by instructors, and will conduct random inspections of the courses and assessment process to ensure quality.

Joint Sub-committee on Class I and Class IV Vessels

9. The Joint Sub-committee on Class I and Class IV Vessels discussed the issue at its meetings on 28 August, 27 November 2014, 12 March and 25 June 2015, and agreed at its meeting on 25 June 2015 to submit the proposal set out in paragraphs 5 to 8 above to this Committee for discussion.

Way Forward

10. If supported by members, MD will revise the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Local Certificates of Competency) Rules², Examination Rules for Local Certificates of Competency³, and Examination Rules for Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate of Competency⁴. It is envisaged that the proposal will be implemented in early 2016 the earliest.

Advice Sought

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

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

² Please refer to http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/pdf/cocrules.pdf

³ Please refer to http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/pdf/examrules_lv.pdf

⁴ Please refer to http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/pdf/examrules_ploc.pdf