

Local Vessels Advisory Committee

Result of Consultation on an Additional Grade to Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate of Competency

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to inform members regarding the result of a consultation to the LVAC Sub-Committee on Class IV Vessels in February 2011 to introduce an additional Grade 3 in the Pleasure Vessel Operator's Certificate of Competency for operation in marinas.

Background

2. The Marine Department received a proposal from a member of the public on 20 February 2011 requesting for the introduction of a new "Grade 3 Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate" in the existing pleasure vessel operator's certification system for small pleasure of less than 15 metres for operation in marinas. He observed that children and operators were operating dinghies at high speed and some even using mobile telephones during the process. These operators do not seem to understand the 'rule of the road' and the collision regulations. And there were many frequent near misses.

3. He proposed to introduce a new Grade 3 Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate for small pleasure vessels of less than 15 metres for restricted operations within marinas. He believed that the introduction of such a Grade 3 Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate would:

- i) bring more boat operators under the safety net of the Marine Department licencing system;

- ii) give operators the basic boat handling knowledge to operate in a safe manner; and
- iii) reduce the possible number of accidents and near misses.

4. The LVAC Sub-Committee members on Class IV Vessels were consulted on this proposal and the comments to the proposal were summarized in the following paragraphs.

Comments from LVAC Sub-Committee on Class IV Vessels

5. The comments from the sub-committee members for the introduction of a new Grade 3 Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate for small pleasure vessels operated within marinas are summarized as follows:

- i) the two tiers pleasure vessel operator certificate system has covered smaller vessels already, i.e. people who want to operate small pleasure vessels should take the Grade 2 certificate examination instead of creating a new examination type for a limited number of persons;
- ii) a one day course will be insufficient for the learner to acquire the necessary knowledge for operating a boat;
- iii) the danger to others will increase when an outsider coming into the marina is unaware that a Grade 3 operator does not have the same knowledge background as he does;
- iv) the introduction of a new Grade 3 certificate will not solve the problems as identified above e.g. children driver, speeding, using mobile telephone while driving etc; and
- v) implementation of club rules in marinas should be the key to address the identified problems.

6. The comments returned from the sub-committee members were in general not in favour of introducing a new Grade 3 Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate for small pleasure vessels operating in marinas. The proposal to introduce a new Grade 3 Pleasure Vessel Operators' Certificate of Competency will, therefore, not be pursued further.

Action Requested

7. Members are invited to take note of this paper and make comments where necessary.

Marine Department
Shipping Division
Shipping Registry and Seafarers' Branch

August 2011