

LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Proposal of Expanding the Pool of Authorized Surveyors Under the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance

(Supplementary Edition of the LVAC Paper No. 6/2008)

PURPOSE

As a follow-up action to the proposal contained in the LVAC Paper No. 6/2008 and discussed in the last LVAC meeting held on 24 April 2008, this paper aims to update the LVAC members on the latest development and to seek further views and endorsement from the members on the above proposal.

BACKGROUND

2. The delegation of survey works to Authorized Surveyors (AS) was started since the implementation of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (LVO) in January 2007. At the beginning of 2007, the Marine Department sent letters to invite all Registered Professional Engineers (RPE) under the Marine and Naval Architecture Discipline of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) to become AS. Eventually, only 11 RPEs showed interest and were registered as AS in 2007. As a matter of fact, the inspection service provided by a small number of active AS could not meet the industry's needs and expectation after one year's delegation of survey work to AS. On the strong request of the industry, expanding the pool of AS was then proposed at the last LVAC meeting.

3. The proposal was made under Section 7 of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance. It aims at providing better quality survey services to the industry without lowering the survey standard as stipulated in the LVO. The proposal was thoroughly discussed in the last LVAC meeting. With the exception of the AS representatives, the majority of the members supported the proposal.

4. On 5 May 2008, the Marine Department (MD) representatives and the AS/Engineers Registration Board representatives exchanged their views on the proposal during a meeting held in a LegCo meeting room. The AS representatives expressed that more time should be allowed for improvement to be observed. MD agreed to monitor the further development of the survey work carried out by AS in the coming months.

Survey Statistics of AS in 2007 and the First Nine Months of 2008

5. The following table shows the numbers of vessels surveyed by AS in 2007 and the first nine months of 2008:

	Authorized Surveyors	Numbers of Vessels (other than *DG Vessels, Oil Carriers, #NLS Vessels, Class I and Class IV Vessels) Surveyed in 2007	Numbers of Vessels (other than *DG Vessels, Oil Carriers, #NLS Vessels, Class I and Class IV Vessels) Surveyed in 2008 (up to end September 2008)
1	AS 1	36	36
2	AS 2	24	17
3	AS 3	23	31
4	AS 4	8	3
5	AS 5	2	3
6	AS 6	1	1
7	AS 7	0	1
8	AS 8	0	0
9	AS 9	0	0
10	AS10	0	0
11	AS 11	0	0
12	AS 12	--	0
Total		94	92
Vessels available for AS		1,018 (9.2%)	650 (14.15%)

*DG : Dangerous Goods

#NLS: Noxious Liquid Substances

6. Excluding DG Vessels, Class I and Class IV Vessels, a total of 650 local vessels were available for AS to conduct the survey in the first nine months of 2008 , but only 92 vessels had actually been surveyed by AS. It can be seen that the number of active AS remains the same as in 2007, which is 3, and these 3 active AS have performed 91% of the total number of surveys conducted by AS. There is no material improvement in respect of the number of surveys conducted by the other AS.

7. On the other hand, the local shipping industry continued to express their dissatisfaction on the shortage of active AS to conduct surveys for their vessels, and the marine professionals other than Registered Professional Engineers (RPE) have great concerns on the development of the proposal too. Enquires on the updated status of the proposal have been received from time to time since the last LVAC meeting.

Proposal

8. The small number of active AS available in the market and the limited number of surveys performed by AS are not able to meet the industry's needs and expectation. Under such circumstance, it is recommended that to improve the present situation, we should proceed with the plan to expand the pool of AS by adopting the proposed new requirements as shown in Annex.

Endorsement Sought

9. Members are invited to endorse the above proposal.

Local Vessels Safety Branch
Marine Department
October 2008

Annex

	Existing requirements	Proposed new requirements
Qualification	Registered Professional Engineer –(Marine and Naval Architecture Discipline) under section 7 of the Engineers Registration Ordinance, Cap 409.	(a) Registered Professional Engineer – (Marine and Naval Architecture Discipline) under section 7 of the Engineers Registration Ordinance, Cap 409. Or (b) Corporate (professional) membership of a maritime Institute acceptable to the Director of Marine.
Experience	At least 4 years maritime engineering experience as the Director considers appropriate, including either – (i) 9 months practical experience gained in the field on plan approval, inspection or survey of vessels, testing of engine and its auxiliaries, or (ii) 1 year practical experience gained in the field on maintenance, operation, technical services or ship design with at least 3 months experience as specified in paragraph (i).	At least 4 years relevant experience as the Director considers appropriate, including either – (I) 9 months practical experience gained in the field on plan approval, inspection or survey of vessels, testing of engine and its auxiliaries, or (II) 1 year practical experience gained in the field on maintenance, operation, technical services, ship design or teaching/training with at least 3 months experience as specified in paragraph (I).