

## **PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **Reporting of Issues Discussed at PAC Working Group Meeting held on 20 January 2010**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to report to the PAC on the issues discussed at the PAC Working Group meeting held on 20 January 2010.

#### **Discussion Items**

##### ***PACWG Paper No. 1/2010 – “Government Mooring Buoy (GMB) Mooring Arrangement”***

2. Hong Kong Pilots Association Limited (HKPAL) indicated their concern on the safety of mooring/unmooring operations as there was a rising trend in the number of accidents associated with this type of operation. There were an average of eight mooring crew injuries yearly since 2005. They further commented that it would be difficult to bring the vessel to static for a smooth GMB mooring/unmooring operations as recommended in the Coroner’s Report. They therefore suggested that more advanced mooring buoys and components such as mooring cables, slip rope, etc. should be considered to replace the existing ones.

3. Attendees from various Sections of MD considered that the operations were prone to risk and had conducted research and contacted with buoy component manufacturers. However, no suitable quick release component could be identified at present. Since movement of the GMB by the wake of passing vessel was identified as one of the causes of accident, MD would promote this safety awareness issue in the seminar scheduled to be held in early February advising local masters not to pass GMB in close range when mooring/unmooring operations are observed.

4. To develop more safety measures, the PAC Working Group suggested that the Marine Industrial Safety Section should conduct a site visit on the mooring/unmooring operation. The relevant parties should continue to discuss and formulate long term recommendations to PAC.

***PACWG Paper No. 2/2010 – “Introduction of higher-powered tugs to the Port of Hong Kong”***

5. As the size of vessels calling at Hong Kong was increasing significantly in recent years, the demand for higher-powered tugs would be inevitable in the near future. From safety point of view, members generally supported the introduction of higher-powered tugs to the Port of Hong Kong.

6. The Hong Kong Liner Shipping Association (HKLSA) also supported the proposal for safety reason, but was concerned about the tug charges which would be likely linked to the tug’s power. HKPAL advised that high-powered tugs of over 5,000 bhp would only be deployed for heavy loaded large vessels and HKLSA would be consulted before actual implementation.

7. The introduction of high-power tugs has in general received the support from members for safety reasons. Users would be consulted on the criteria of deployment when these tugs are introduced into the port of Hong Kong and before incorporating the criteria in the BGL.

***PACWG Paper No. 3/2010 – “Additional Requirements Imposed by Pilots”***

8. Members were briefed about the 2 incidents that additional requirements were imposed by pilots. There is provision in paragraph 2 of Chapter 2 “General Remarks” of the BGL to allow HKPAL some flexibility to deviate from the guidelines under abnormal or urgent conditions.

9. Members were of the view that it would be logical to require extra

resources under abnormal conditions. The flexibility provided in the existing BGL was necessary and the guidelines were in order. Members also concluded that both incidents might be caused by communication problems and suggested HKPAL to provide supporting grounds and detail information to ship owners or agents in advance in order to avoid any dispute in future.

10. After discussion, the meeting concluded that paragraph 2 of Chapter 2 (General Remarks) of the BGL was in order and no amendments would be necessary.

***PACWG Paper No. 4/2010 – “Suspension of Ma Wan Night Transit for Bulker and Tanker”***

11. Following the court ruling of the collision incident of “Yao Hai” and “Neftegaz 67” (“Yao Hai” case) on 15 January 2010, HKPAL had announced the suspension of Ma Wan night transit for bulker and tanker of 198m to 230m on the same day. Though paragraph 8 of the General Remarks in Chapter 2 of the BGL states that the guidelines were subject to change without notice, any amendments to the BGL which are not emergency in nature should be discussed and endorsed by PAC.

12. Although HKPAL had provided their reasons for the suspension, some members opined that the service should be resumed until a decision could be made in the coming PAC meeting scheduled on 4 February. HKPAL responded that the suspension would continue unless the issues raised had been resolved.

13. The matter would be further elaborated in PAC Paper No.4/2010.

***Marine Department  
January 2010***