

## **Pilotage Advisory Committee**

### **Berthing Guidelines Amendment Procedures**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to seek members' support in reaffirming the current amendment/updating procedures of the Berthing Guidelines (BGL) and the proposed measures in handling any urgent changes to the BGL.

#### **Background**

2. The BGL serve as a code-book and provide guides to stakeholders regarding details of the pilotage services. Any updating or proposed amendments would be discussed initially at the Pilotage Advisory Committee Working Group (PACWG) and then submitted to the Pilotage Advisory Committee (PAC) for endorsement. Such procedure has been adopted for many years and has worked effectively.

3. In fact, the BGL stipulate the minimum requirements such as numbers of pilots and tugs required as well as transiting windows for various types and sizes of vessels under normal weather, sea and swell conditions. They also provide the flexibility for pilots to amend the minimum requirements in response to special situations or in circumstances beyond normal working parameters as depicted under paragraphs 2 and 9 in Chapter 2 of the BGL (see Annex).

#### **Recent Temporary Suspension of Pilotage Service**

4. Members will recall that the BGL amendment procedures and temporary suspension of Ma Wan night transit for bulkers and tankers (PAC Paper No. 4/2010) was discussed in the last PAC meeting held on 4 February 2010. Without going through the amendment process, the Hong Kong

Pilots Association Limited (HKPAL) announced on 15 January 2010 with immediate effect and until further notice a temporary suspension of pilotage services for night transit of bulkers and tankers of 198m - 230m in length at Ma Wan. Though some members in that meeting opined that it was not necessary to suspend the night transit as an emergency measure given the circumstances and were of the view that any requirements to amend the BGL should be discussed in detail in the meeting, HKPAL maintained its position on the suspension measure.

5. The sudden suspension of services disrupts the stability of the pilotage services. Not only has it cast doubts on the transparency of the pilotage services, it also raises the question on the appropriateness of the existing paragraph 8 in Chapter 2 of the BGL as it stands.

### **The Proposal**

6. In this regard, it is proposed to delete paragraph 8, “All entries in these Guidelines are subject to change without notice.” in Chapter 2 of the BGL (see Annex). To enhance the transparency and stability of the pilotage services, it is proposed that all stakeholders should follow the established amendment procedures to the BGL detailed in paragraph 2 above. Under special circumstances or emergency situations where a change to the BGL is required imminently, HKPAL will inform Marine Department (MD) immediately in writing with details and the reasons of the changes for MD to circulate it to the PAC members electronically for their urgent comments or to convene an urgent PAC meeting to discuss the matter.

### **Advice Sought**

7. Members are requested to offer their views/comments on the above proposals.

**Marine Department**  
**June 2010**

## Berthing Guidelines

PAC endorsed on 16 February 2009

## Chapter: 2

## GENERAL REMARKS

- (1) These guidelines should be construed as the operations to be performed are conducted under normal conditions with due regards to weather, ship maneuverability, sea and swell etc.
- (2) The conditions hereto as regards to the number of tugs deployed and the working parameter require are based on the experience gained by pilot members in normal weather, sea and swell, and ship's manoeuvring conditions; and are deemed to be the minimum requirements as such. Should the condition and circumstances be changed which may affect any working parameter; the pilot may at his discretion to amend any requirements therein. Any additional tug in excess of the said requirement as required by the Master and/or ship's operators to enhance the safety be concurred and encouraged by all pilots. When two or more Grade II tugs are stipulated in the Berthing Guidelines, they should not be replaced by one Grade I tug.
- (3) Transverse thruster or thrusters in good working condition at one end may be accepted to substitute for one tug. Transverse thruster with under-power will not be considered as equivalence to one tug.
- (4) An under-keel clearance of 10% of the vessel's deepest draught is required in maneuvering basins, sheltered fairways and approaches to berths. 15% under-keel clearance for any exposed waterways including East Lamma Channel, West Lamma Channel, Western Fairway, Ma Wan Fairway, Urmston Road and Tathong Channel. To ensure safe navigation, the required UKC must be maintained throughout the entire Berthing/Unberthing operation or transit all tidal conditions. Ample margin must be allowed for the following when calculating the effective UKC:
  - (i) Listing due to e.g. inadequate GM (Vessel Tender),
  - (ii) Delay of berthing/unberthing due to delayed schedule, traffic congestion, weather etc. particularly on a falling tide.

Warning:  
Owners or masters of vessels may be liable to lighten their vessels to avoid touching of bottom due to insufficient UKC.
- (5) The depths of the berths provided in these guidelines are as declared by the berth operators. Close liaison among the ships agent, berth operators and pilots should be maintained at all times to ensure sufficient depth for berthing and unberthing of the vessels. Good liaison should be maintained among all concerned parties for vessels required to 'wedge-in' and 'wedge-out' to ensure ample and safe fore-and-aft clearances are achieved.
- (6) For vessel moving to and/or from a buoy, the working pilot may take a passage at the time he considers to the best and safest route for such vessel.
- (7) In any special circumstance of the case arises, e.g. adverse weather, No.3 or above typhoon signal is hoisted up, boisterous sea and swell, different pilot embarking and disembarking areas, hampered vessels or vessels with special construction or characteristics, etc., special requirements for tugs, working condition, servicing time, etc. need to be further consulted.
- (8) All entries in these Guidelines are subject to change without notice. (proposed deletion)
- (9) All Guidelines should be exercised with flexibility subject to circumstances arising.