

PORT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Proposed replacement of Marine Department Notice No.68 of 2016 in relation to Towing Voyage Survey

Purpose

This paper informs members of the proposed replacement of Marine Department Notice (MDN) No. 68 of 2016 “Acceptance of Towing Voyage Survey Conducted by Non-Government Surveyors” (the Notice) as attached at **Annex**.

Background

2. Hong Kong, as an associate member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), adopts the advisory guidance set out in the IMO circular MSC/Circ.884 “Guidelines for Safe Ocean Towing” (IMO Guidelines) for ocean towing.

3. For the issuance of port clearance to a non-self-propelled vessel leaving Hong Kong to other area/country under tow, the Notice requires that the tug and tow are to be subject to a towing voyage survey for the intended voyage. The survey should be conducted either by surveyor of a Marine Department (MD) recognized organization (RO)¹ or Authorized Surveyors (AS) appointed by MD in pursuant to the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance².

4. However, there were a number of cases that the ROs could not carry out towing voyage surveys as the concerned vessels were not classed with them; or that the foreign flag States of the concerned vessels had assigned their own recognized surveyors instead of MD’s ROs or ASs to complete the towing voyage survey. Under such circumstance, the shipping industry has requested that towing voyage survey conducted by vessel’s flag State should also be acceptable to MD.

¹ MD recognized organizations at present are: - (i) American Bureau of Shipping (ABS); (ii) Bureau Veritas SA (BV); (iii) China Classification Society (CSS); (iv) DNV AS (DNV); (v) Korean Register (KR); (vi) Lloyd's Register Group Limited (LR); (vii) Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (NK); (viii) RINA Services S.p.A. (RINA); and (ix) Russian Maritime Register of Shipping (RS).

² The List of Recognized Authorities, Authorized Organizations and Authorized Surveyors is available at: https://www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/pub-services/pdf/lvs_list.pdf

Proposed Amendments

5. In order to facilitate the operation of shipping industry more efficiently, MD considers that a towing voyage survey conducted by foreign flag State's authorized surveyor/inspector is acceptable, provided that there are proof to show that such survey has been conducted in accordance with the IMO Guidelines. In this respect, MD will make the following amendments (highlighted in blue) to paragraphs 4(b), 5(b) and 6 of the Notice: -

- (a) Paragraph 4(b): "for long distance coastal towing voyages to Mainland ports outside (a) above and ocean towing voyages to other countries, **only** surveys conducted by **either** surveyors of a **MD** recognized organization **or recognized surveyors of the concerned vessel's flag State** will be accepted.";
- (b) Paragraph 5(b): "issue an appropriate recognized organization **or concerned vessel's flag State** survey report for voyages prescribed in paragraph 4(b) above."; and
- (c) Paragraph 6: To facilitate the survey for short distance coastal towing voyages, guidance notes are provided at Annex 2. For long distance coastal and ocean towage, surveyors of **MD** recognized organization **or recognized surveyors of the concerned flag State** are required to take into account the **guidance guidelines** provided in IMO circular MSC/Circ. 884, and any relevant requirements of the **MD's** recognized organization **or recognized surveyors of the concerned flag State (where applicable)** in respect of the concerned vessels involved in towing.

Way Forward

6. MD will issue a revised MDN to supersede the Notice to reflect the amendments as stated in paragraph 5 above.

February 2024

Passenger Ships Safety Section

Marine Department

Enclosure:

Annex: Marine Department Notice No. 68 of 2016 - Acceptance of Towing Voyage Survey Conducted by Non-Government Surveyors