

## Marine Department conducts seminar to promote navigational safety (with photo)

The Marine Department (MD) conducted the Navigational Safety Seminar 2024 today (January 30) to reinforce and enhance the awareness of navigational safety among members of the industry. The Acting Director of Marine, Mr Wong Sai-fat, reminded coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels that they have the responsibility to strictly comply with marine legislations to uphold safety at sea.

Mr Wong pointed out that coxswains and crew members should take appropriate and adequate safety precautions, and draw up contingency arrangements before setting sail. Vessels should have sufficient life-saving and fire-fighting equipment. Coxswains and crew members should ensure that vessels, engines and equipment are maintained in conditions that are suitable for navigation. In addition, they should acquaint themselves with the contact numbers of the vessel traffic control unit and units that provide emergency services, and be fully aware of the latest weather conditions and related MD notices.

To avoid accidents caused by fatigue at work, owners and operators of all local vessels must ensure that all crew members, including coxswains, have sufficient rest. Coxswains and crew members should also strengthen lookouts, sail at safe speeds and comply with regulations for preventing collisions while navigating in restricted visibility.

During major events at sea, owners and operators of all local vessels should check again and reconfirm that their operating licence, certificate of survey and third-party risk insurance are valid before setting sail. Moreover, coxswains and crew members must ensure that children on board are accompanied by an adult and wear a lifejacket at all times, as well as keep a passenger and crew list on board for emergency purposes. The MD will enhance enforcement work and initiate prosecution if any vessel fails to meet these requirements.

To enhance marine safety and protect the safety of persons on board a vessel, a bill to enact a new legislation to regulate drink and drug boating in Hong Kong waters was introduced into the Legislative Council for first reading on January 10, 2024. The new legislation states that any person involved in operating a vessel, including those who control, navigate or pilot a vessel, or perform designated duties, i.e. relating to the safety and security of the vessel and the protection of the marine environment on board a vessel that is underway, will commit an offence if the person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the extent of being incapable of having proper control of the vessel, or has alcohol exceeding the prescribed limits in the person's body, or has any specified illicit drugs in the person's

