

Marine Department conducts seminar to promote navigational safety (with photos)

The Marine Department (MD) conducted the Navigational Safety Seminar 2020 today (January 16) to reinforce and enhance the awareness of navigational safety among members of the industry. The Deputy Director of Marine, Mr Wong Sai-fat, reminded coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels that they have the responsibility to fully comply with marine legislation to uphold safety at sea.

Mr Wong pointed out that coxswains and crew members should take appropriate and adequate safety precautions and prepare 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 carry the contact numbers of the port traffic control unit and units that provide emergency services, and be fully aware of the latest weather conditions and related MD Notices.

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

To strengthen the provision and usage of lifejackets on local vessels and enhance marine safety during major events at sea, new legislative requirements came into effect on December 23, 2019. All local vessels are required to carry suitable lifejackets, the quantity of which should be not less than the total number of persons the vessel is licensed to carry. During major events at sea, children on board must wear lifejackets at all times and a list of persons on board should be kept by the coxswain of the vessel for emergency purposes. Coxswains, crew members and passengers must comply with the new legislative requirements.

Moreover, to protect members of the public engaged in water sports and facilities in fish culture zones, a legislative amendment will come into effect on April 1, 2020. Under the new amendment regulation, the number of speed-restricted zones (SRZs) will be increased from 22 to 30. The restriction period of SRZs and the penalty level will also be amended.

The MD organises regular education seminars and publicity campaigns to step up marine safety promotion. Over the past three years, the MD has posted information at three marine ferry terminals to remind passengers on high-speed craft plying between Hong Kong and Macao to fasten their seat belts. Similar publicity will be conducted again this year.

Today's annual seminar was attended by about 200 representatives from the shipping industries, coxswains and operators of local vessels, and representatives of marine works projects. The issues discussed covered the international regulations for preventing collisions at sea and its implementation in Hong Kong waters, new legislative requirements on lifejackets for local vessels, new legislative requirements relating to major events at sea, case analyses of marine accidents as well as recommendations on relevant investigation reports. Leaflets on navigational safety were also distributed at the seminar.

