

Marine traffic control and safety measures to be implemented at 2023 National Day Fireworks Display

With regard to the 2023 National Day Fireworks Display to be held on October 1, the Marine Department (MD) will strictly enforce marine traffic control and strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels on the event day to ensure that safety requirements are met.

The MD will establish a Closed Area in the waters off the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai, where barges and pontoons for the fireworks and pyrotechnics display will be anchored, from 2pm to about 11pm on the event day. All vessels will be prohibited from entering the area. A Restricted Area will be established in the Central Harbour from 8pm to about 10pm on the event day. Other than authorised vessels, no vessels will be allowed to enter. Scheduled ferry vessels with permission may continue services until 8pm. All public landing steps within the Restricted Area will be closed temporarily from 7.30pm to about 10pm on the event day. In addition, spectator vessels could stay inside the Specified Area other than the Restricted Area and the Closed Area for viewing, from 7pm to 10pm.

In order to improve maritime safety during a major event at sea, coxswains of spectator vessels in specified area during specified period must ensure children on board are accompanied by an adult and wear a lifejacket at all times. Coxswains must also keep a passenger and crew list on board for emergency purpose. The MD will step up vessel inspection. If any vessel fails to meet these requirements, the department will initiate prosecution.

In addition, to ensure vessels disperse in an orderly manner, the Eastern and Western Cordon Lines of the Restricted Area will be lifted in stages after the event. The Western Cordon Line will be lifted first at about 10pm. Spectator vessels behind the Western Cordon Line and those wishing to move to the east must follow the instructions of officers from the MD and the Police at the scene. The Eastern Cordon Line will be lifted later depending on traffic conditions in Victoria Harbour. It is anticipated that the Restricted Area will be lifted by about 10.15pm.

Buffer Zones at Kowloon Public Pier, Kwun Tong Public Pier and Central Piers 9 and 10 will be established immediately after the event for safe and orderly disembarkation of passengers. Coxswains and crew members should remind passengers to pack their personal belongings before the vessels arrive alongside the landing steps, as well as assisting passengers to disembark. Coxswains and passengers should follow the instructions of the MD and the Police at the scene.

The MD and the Marine Police will also strengthen law enforcement, especially on conditions of life-saving appliances, speeding and overloading. Coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels should check again and reconfirm

that the operating licence, the certificate of survey and the third party risk insurance are valid before setting sail.

MD Notice No. 159 of 2023 on the marine traffic control and safety measures has been issued and is available for viewing on the MD's website (www.mardep.gov.hk).