

New amendment regulations to enhance marine safety come into effect

The Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Safety and Survey) (Amendment) Regulation 2019 and the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulation 2019 come into effect today (December 23). The new regulations strengthen the existing requirements for provision of lifejackets on local vessels and enhance marine safety during major events at sea.

A spokesman for the Marine Department (MD) said, "According to the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Safety and Survey) (Amendment) Regulation 2019, all local vessels are required to carry on board suitable lifejackets, the quantity of which must be not less than the total number of persons which the vessel is licensed to carry. Furthermore, all commercial passenger-carrying local vessels which are licensed to carry more than 12 passengers must carry on board infant lifejackets, the quantity of which must not be less than 2.5 per cent of the number of passengers the vessel is licensed to carry."

As the number of children and adults on board each journey may be different, to ensure the practicability of the amendment regulation, the Government has successfully developed a life jacket suitable for use by both adults and children (the Common Lifejacket) with the assistance of a local tertiary institution. The Common Lifejacket has commenced production and is now available in the market.

As well, to enhance marine safety during major events at sea, the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulation 2019 requires children on board to wear lifejackets at all times during the events. A list of passengers and crew must also be kept by the coxswain of the vessel for emergency purposes.

The MD will launch publicity work to enhance public awareness of the new regulations.