

# Proposed measures to enhance marine safety

The Government proposes to amend the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Safety and Survey) Regulation (Cap. 548G) and the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) Regulation (Cap. 548F), with a view to strengthening the existing requirement for the provision of lifejackets on local vessels and enhancing marine safety during major events at sea.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau today (October 25) said, "The proposed measures include requiring all local vessels to carry on board suitable lifejackets, the quantity of which should be not less than the total number of persons the vessel is licensed to carry. As the passenger mix in terms of adults and children for each trip may vary, a vessel will have to carry on board different combinations of adult and child lifejackets for each journey if the two groups of passengers require lifejackets of different standards. To ensure the practicability of the proposal, a lifejacket suitable for use by both adults and children (the Common Lifejacket) has been developed with the assistance of a local tertiary institution."

In addition, to enhance marine safety during major events at sea, the Government proposes to give legislative backing to the existing administrative arrangements to require children on board to wear lifejackets at all times and that a list of passengers and crew be kept by the coxswain of the vessel for emergency purposes.

The Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development, the Local Vessels Advisory Committee and relevant trade associations have been consulted on the legislative proposals. All supported the proposals.

The proposed legislative amendments were gazetted today and will be tabled at the Legislative Council on October 30 for negative vetting.