

# Updates for merchant shipping safety and prevention of pollution regulations proposed

The Government proposes to amend five regulations under the Merchant Shipping (Safety) Ordinance and the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution) Regulation to incorporate the latest requirements under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships of the International Maritime Organization into local legislation.

The five regulations to be amended under the Merchant Shipping (Safety) Ordinance are the Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Construction and Survey) Regulation, the Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Cargo Ship Construction and Survey) (Ships Built Before 1 September 1984) Regulations, the Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Cargo Ship Construction and Survey) (Ships Built On or After 1 September 1984) Regulations, the Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Fire-fighting Appliances and Fire Protection) Regulation and the Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Life-Saving Appliances and Arrangements, Musters and Training) Regulation.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said today (August 13), "The proposed amendments to the regulations on merchant shipping safety mainly aim at enhancing the safety of passenger ocean-going vessels; harmonising the survey periods of bulk carriers, oil tankers and other cargo ships; specifying the fire safety requirements for ships carrying vehicles with fuel in their tanks in cargo spaces and for helicopter landing areas on board ships; and setting out the requirement of damage control drills for passenger ships. Furthermore, the amended Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution) Regulation seeks to regulate the emission of air pollutants from ships by requiring ships of 400 gross tonnage and above to fit or designate sampling point(s) for verifying the compliance of fuel oil used on board."

The Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development, the Hong Kong Fleet Operation Advisory Committee and the Local Vessels Advisory Committee have been consulted on the legislative proposal. Members supported the proposal.

The legislative proposal was gazetted today and will be tabled at the Legislative Council on August 18 for negative vetting.