

Updates for merchant shipping safety and prevention of pollution regulations proposed

The Government proposes to introduce a new regulation under the Merchant Shipping (Safety) Ordinance and amend four regulations under the Merchant Shipping (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Ordinance to incorporate into local legislation the latest requirements in relation to ships operating in polar waters and the discharge of sewage within the Baltic Sea Special Area 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.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau today (March 29) said, "The new Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Ships Operating in Polar Waters) Regulation requires ships operating in polar waters to apply for a Polar Ship Certificate from their respective flag administrations, be equipped with effective means to remove and prevent snow and ice accumulation, and keep on board a Polar Water Operational Manual."

The four regulations to be amended are the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Oil Pollution) Regulation, the Merchant Shipping (Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Regulation, the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Sewage) Regulation, and the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Garbage) Regulation. The amendments cover the restriction on discharge of pollutants from ships in polar waters, the requirements to prevent oil leakage and accidental discharge of oil from ships, and the restrictions on discharge of sewage by ocean-going passenger ships within the Baltic Sea Special Area.

The Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development and consultative and advisory committees of the Marine Department 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 April 3 for negative vetting.