

# Updates to merchant shipping laws proposed to prevent pollution

The Government proposes to amend the regulations under the Merchant Shipping (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Ordinance to incorporate the latest requirements of Annex II to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in relation to ships carrying noxious liquid substances (NLS) in bulk into local legislation.

Amendments will be made to the Merchant Shipping (Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Regulations, the Merchant Shipping (BCH Code) Regulations and the Merchant Shipping (IBC Code) Regulations.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said today (May 18), "Taking into account the latest knowledge about the impact of NLS chemicals on the marine environment, the IMO has updated MARPOL Annex II to give clearer guidelines and procedures on the transport of NLS in bulk.

"Major amendments include revising the categorisation of NLS, tightening the maximum residual quantity of NLS allowed on ships, putting in place discharge restrictions and mandating the carriage of an approved stability instrument on ships carrying NLS in bulk."

The Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development and the relevant consultative committee of the Marine Department have been consulted. Members supported the legislative proposal.

The proposed legislative amendments were gazetted today and will be tabled at the Legislative Council on May 23 for negative vetting.