

**Application for Approval-in-Principle Letter
for Certification and Licensing of Local Vessels**

The Certificate of Ownership (COO) and Operating Licence (OL) shall be obtained prior to operating a vessel in the waters of Hong Kong. The owner should first apply to the Director of Marine for an Approval-in-Principle Letter (AIP letter) before applying for the COO and OL of the vessel. In general, the application involves three processes which include:

- (i) applying for the AIP letter at any District Marine Offices (see paragraphs 2 - 4 below);
- (ii) applying for approval of plans and survey at the Local Vessels Safety Section (“LVSS”) of the Marine Department after receipt of the AIP letter (see paragraphs 5 - 6 below); and
- (iii) applying for the COO and OL after the vessel has been granted the approval of plans and completed the survey (see paragraphs 7 - 9 below).

Approval-in-principle Letter

2. The owner of a vessel or his agent should first send an application letter to any District Marine Offices indicating the class and type of the vessel to be certificated/licensed and the particulars of the vessel, and provide copies of the following documents:

- (a) a copy of Certificate of Incorporation from the vessel’s owner;
- (b) a copy of Business Registration Certificate from the vessel’s owner;
- (c) if the vessel is owned by an individual, a copy of his/her Hong Kong Identity Card;
- (d) in case of application made by an agent:
 - (i) a letter from the vessel’s owner authorising the agent to apply for the COO and OL on behalf of the owner;
 - (ii) the notice of appointment of agent from the vessel’s owner for the purpose of section 7 of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Certification and Licensing) Regulation (Cap. 548D);
 - (iii) the acceptance of appointment from the agent;
 - (iv) a copy of Certificate of Incorporation from the agent;

- (v) a copy of Business Registration Certificate from the agent;
 - (vi) if the agent is an individual, a copy of his/her Hong Kong Identity Card;
- (e) two copies of the vessel's General Arrangement Plan in A4 size; and
- (f) if the vessel is a used vessel, copies of the vessel's previous Certificate of Registry or licence, Builder Certificate and Deletion Certificate.

3. If the vessel is an oil carrier, the application letter shall be sent to the Central Marine Office and the prerequisite of having a typhoon mooring arrangement for the oil carrier shall be complied with. In this connection, the Kau Yi Chau Dangerous Goods Anchorage will not be accepted as the typhoon mooring arrangement. The prerequisite of having a typhoon mooring arrangement is also applicable to vessels with length overall in excess of 50 metres.

4. Upon approval, the owner of the vessel or the agent would receive an AIP letter setting out the licence conditions to be imposed on the vessel when the OL is issued. The AIP is valid for one year from the date of issue.

Approval of Plans and Survey

5. On receipt of the AIP letter, the owner or agent should apply to LVSS for approval of plans and arrangement of survey for the vessel. They are required to pay the prescribed fees for approval of plans and survey.

6. Subject to the approval of plans, a date will be fixed for the survey. For enquiry or application, please contact LVSS at 2852 4444 or visit its office at 23rd Floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong.

Certificate of Ownership and Operating Licence

7. After the completion of survey of the vessel, the owner or agent should provide the following documents to any District Marine Offices (the Central Marine Office if the vessel is an oil carrier) for issue of the COO as well as the OL:

- (a) the AIP letter for the vessel concerned;
- (b) the arrival documents for the vessel, i.e. the Composite Permit and demand note issued by the Marine Department; and

- (c) a completed form M.O. 70 “Application for Certificate of Ownership/Operating Licence for Local Vessel” (or form M.O. 407 if the vessel is a pleasure vessel) and the required documents set out in the guidance notes. The relevant forms and guidance notes can be downloaded from the Marine Department’s website at:
<http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/forms/home.html#localvess>

8. Please take note of the following:

- (a) the prescribed fees for the issue of OL have to be paid before the issue of the COO and OL;
- (b) the Certificate of Survey will be issued together with the COO and OL;
- (c) in general, the AIP letter will be issued within 21 days upon receipt of an application with all the necessary documents;
- (d) the AIP letter is not applicable to the following vessels which are not required to undergo survey prior to issue of the COO and OL:
 - (i) Class IV pleasure vessels other than those carrying more than 60 passengers, of more than 150 gross tonnage or of novel construction;
 - (ii) Class II transportation sampans which are made of any material, not fitted with propulsion engine and with an area not exceeding 25m²;
 - (iii) Class II work boats which are made of non-metal, not fitted with propulsion engine and with an area not exceeding 25m²;
 - (iv) Class III fishing sampans which are made of non-metal, not fitted with propulsion engine and with an area not exceeding 25m²; and
 - (v) Class III outboard open sampans which are made of non-metal, less than 10m in length overall and are fitted with a petrol outboard engine of power not exceeding 12kW.

9. For enquiry or application, please contact the officer-in-charge of any District Marine Offices, details are available at:

<http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/forms/distoffi.html>