

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 70 OF 2003

(Navigational and Seamanship Safety Practices)

Notice to Owners, Operators, Masters and Persons-in-charge of Locally Licensed Vessels – Observance of Rules 5 and 6 of International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972

The Accident

A fatal accident occurred on 13 December 2002 when a helmsman was thrown overboard and killed after a locally licensed pleasure vessel he was operating rammed a pillar located at Wu Yeung Chau Pai. The incident occurred during the hours of darkness. The helmsman, who was not qualified to operate the pleasure vessel, was operating the vessel at a high speed and failed to detect the presence of the pillar in sufficient time to avert the collision. As a result of the collision, the helmsman suffered severe injuries and later died. The pleasure vessel sustained considerable damage while the pillar remained intact.

Lesson Learnt

2. Important lessons that should be learnt from this incident are:
 - (i) Vessels should only be operated by appropriately qualified personnel.
 - (ii) While a vessel is underway, a vigilant lookout by appropriate means must be maintained at all time.
 - (iii) When navigating during the hours of darkness and in areas where navigational hazards exist, it would be dangerous for a vessel to proceed at high speed, particularly when the vessel is not equipped with navigational aids to assist navigation under such circumstances.
3. Owners, operators, masters and persons-in-charge of locally licensed vessels are requested to take note of the above-mentioned accident and the lessons learnt, and to strictly observe Rules 5 and 6 of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 to maintain a proper look-out and proceed at a safe

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speed, especially during the hours of darkness and in areas where navigational hazards exist. To repeat, one should never operate any vessel which he/she is not qualified to operate.

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