

Marine Department Notice No. 63 of 2006

(Statutory Requirements and Related Information)

Cargo Loading Safety of Wooden Cargo Vessels

Since February 2005, a total of 12 wooden cargo boats (M2), most of them converted from fishing vessels or of fishing vessel design, have capsized or grounded in the north-eastern waters of Hong Kong leading to the death of 3 crew with a further 4 crew injured as well as causing pollution to the sea and beaches. Investigations revealed that these vessels were fully laden with large quantities of deck cargo, such as frozen poultry or used computer monitors, of unknown weight. This caused the vessels to capsize due to instability arising from improper loading or overloading.

2. In February 2005, all newly licensed wooden M2 vessels were required to comply with additional safety measures to ensure adequate stability and to observe safe loading practice. Due to continued incidents, all existing wooden M2 vessels are now required to comply with those additional safety measures with immediate effect.

3. The attention of owners, operators, agents and coxswains of local wooden cargo vessels are urged to observe the recommendations of the safety measures given in Annex I of this Notice. Any of these vessels found in an unsafe loading conditions and not in compliance with the safety measures on stability and cargo loading safety practice given in this Notice would be directed to rectify the situation immediately and may be liable to prosecution.

4. For enquires, please contact the Local Vessels Safety Section, 23/F Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong, telephone number 2852 4433 or facsimile number 2542 4679.

5. Marine Department Notice No. 26 of 2005 is hereby revoked.

W. K. Lee
Director of Marine (Ag.)

Marine Department
Government of the HKSAR
Date: 18 April 2006
Action file ref.: SD/S 800/3/1

Cargo Loading Safety of Wooden Cargo Vessels (M2)

With immediate effect from the date of this Notice, owners/operators/coxswains of all wooden cargo vessels are required to meet and observe the following safety measures:-

- (I) (a) ensure that the vessel has been assessed for adequacy of freeboard and stability appropriate for its safe loading operation and properly marked in the manner as described in paragraph (I)(a)(i) and (ii) respectively. If these measures have not been attended to, owners/operators are required to attend to them without delay and not later than the coming renewal survey date of the vessel for the renewal of Certificate of Inspection (M.O. 393):
- (i) submit stability and cargo loading calculations to Local Vessels Safety Section of Marine Department for approval, followed by a rolling period test to verify that the transverse metacentric height (GM_T) is not less than a minimum of 0.3m. Alternatively, owners/operators of M2 vessels may appoint competent persons to examine the stability, cargo loading calculation and carry out the rolling period test. A competent person shall be a surveyor of a recognized Classification Society or a Registered Professional Engineer (Marine & Naval Architecture) with relevant experience acceptable by Director of Marine. A copy of the document containing the calculations which have been examined and confirmed satisfactory by the competent person should be submitted to Marine Department for record; and
 - (ii) mark on a conspicuous position of the vessel the maximum cargo weight and stowage position in the language understood by the vessel's crew. The information on the maximum cargo weight and stowage position will also be endorsed on the vessel's licence.
- (b) If the renewal survey is due shortly and within 3 months after the effective date of this Notice such that the owner/operator does not have sufficient time to complete the requirement in (a) above prior to the survey, the Certificate of Inspection will be issued with 3 months validity temporarily. Provided that the requirements are completed satisfactorily afterwards, the certificate would be extended to the normal one year validity.

(II) observe diligently the following cargo loading safety practice during operation:

- (a) ensure the vessel is loaded in accordance with the marked position and limits as described in above paragraph (I)(a)(ii), and in such a way that sufficient freeboard and stability are maintained taking into consideration the prevailing weather and sea conditions of the voyage;
- (b) ensure that the cargo is properly distributed and cleared from access passages for operation, and to avoid loading heavy items on deck;
- (c) ensure that all cargo is properly stowed and secured in order to avoid cargo shifting or falling due to the vessel's pitching and rolling motion while underway or in adverse weather condition;
- (d) take immediate action to stop loading and discharge the cargo, commencing with the deck cargo, if the vessel becomes unstable at the time when cargo is loaded;
- (e) suspend the voyage if there is any doubt over the stability of the vessel;
- (f) when deck cargo is carried, closely monitor the condition of the vessel to ensure that it does not become unstable (this may be indicated by the rolling period of the vessel increases and in some cases a list is developed) at any stage of the voyage; and
- (g) if the vessel is considered to be unstable at any stage of the voyage, immediately go to the nearest pier or cargo working area and discharge part or all of the cargo. Deck cargo should always be unloaded first.