(Question Serial No. 3578)

Head: (100) Marine Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (4) Services to Ships

Controlling Officer: Director of Marine (Maisie CHENG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:
Regarding the Local Certificates of Competency (CoCs), please advise on:

(a) the procedures for taking the Coxswain Certificate and Engine Operator Certificate examinations, and the staffing and expenditure involved;
(b) the number of people who failed to renew their Local CoCs at the age of 65 in the past three years; and
(c) whether the Government will consider, by providing a grace period, stepping up promotion or other methods, addressing the issue that fishermen, at present, will have their CoCs expired if they forget to apply for renewal before they attain the age of 65 and they have to re-take the examinations immediately in order to continue to operate vessels, in view of the fact that some fishermen obtained their Local CoCs in early years and somehow forget to apply for renewal after several decades as they are not required to do so until they attain the age of 65.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 47)

Reply:

(a) Any person who wishes to take the Local Coxswain Certificate Examination or the Engine Operator Certificate Examination is required to submit in person to the Seafarers’ Certification Section of the Marine Department (MD) the required documents including a completed application form of the examination that the person wishes to take, and pay the specified fee in relation to the examination he/she applies for. Candidates who pass the examination will be issued with the relevant certificate after ten working days. Candidates who fail the examination may apply for re-examination.

The Seafarers’ Certification Section has an establishment of 17 staff members. As examination matters form part of the normal duties of the MD staff, there is no separate breakdown of the expenditure involved.

(b) In the past three years (i.e. 2016 to 2018), a total of 56 holders of Local CoCs who are aged 65 or above failed to extend the validity of their certificates.
Under the established system, MD would send letters by post to remind CoC holders to extend their certificates three months before the expiry of their CoCs. In the past three years, a total of 2,442 such reminders have been sent. In addition, as a one-off measure to facilitate CoC holders who have forgotten to renew their expired certificates, between January and July 2018, MD had allowed CoC holders whose certificates had been expired for not more than 36 months to renew their CoCs without having to go through examination again.

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