

Cross Border Relations Strengthen in Talks with Guangdong

The marine chiefs of Hong Kong and Guangdong have concluded another round of talks aimed at improving maritime safety in the Pearl River delta region.



Held in the southern Chinese province, the meeting looked at the policy, procedures, safety and management facing Guangdong and Hong Kong local vessels which are trading in the busy Pearl River estuary and the Guangdong coastal waterways.

These important meetings have been held twice a year since 1998 and the most recent were attended by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's Marine Department Director, Tsui Shung-yiu, and the Harbour Superintendence Bureau (HSB) Director of Guangdong Province, Lu Jinjin.

The talks resulted in some major progress for the shipping industry as a whole. The introduction of the Nationality Certificate and Ship Inspection Certificate by the HSB, for instance,

will enable the Marine Department's harbour patrol officers to deal with suspected forged documents when they conduct certificate inspections on board coastal vessels.

Both parties also exchanged material relating to the technical requirements needed for lifting appliances. The Marine

Department has forwarded a Code of Practice, which stipulates compulsory training for all operators and workers engaged in container handling operations.

Mr Tsui and Mr Lu agreed that all Guangdong licensed ships, even those below 300 gross registered tonnage, will have to be fitted with a VHF radio to enhance safety and rescue response time in the event of an emergency.

Other topics which were discussed during the day-long meeting included the manning requirements for Hong Kong vessels plying their trade in the Pearl River; the arrangement for port clearance reporting for convention and non-convention ships; marine accidents in Hong Kong waters involving Guangdong ships; and third party insurance for non-convention ships.

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Hong Kong Leads the Way in Training on Port State Control

Hong Kong was invited by the Tokyo Memorandum of Understanding (Tokyo MOU) to share its expertise at an intensive training programme in Shenzhen, China, teaching participants the theoretical, practical and operational procedures required to carry out our port state control inspections.

A total of 37 staff from mainland ports took part in the eight-day course, which was con-

ducted in both English and Putonghua.

This Tokyo MOU expert mission was led by Mr M Y Chan, a senior surveyor of the Marine Department, and supported by his colleague Captain F. A. Kramer, a nautical surveyor.

Emphasis was placed on port state control officers being able to make objective judgements on the ability and competence of a ship's crew. Participants were also taught how to examine equipment while carrying out onboard inspections.



Examinations for seafarers to go on-line

Computer science has hit the shipping industry in more ways than one with the introduction of a hi-tech examination system for seafarers.

Programming for the computerised examination system was completed in this summer and trial runs have proved to be an overwhelming success with end users and administrators alike. The system is expected to be launched in a few months' time when the new local vessel examination system is implemented.

The online computer system has a number of tangible benefits making it more efficient than the traditional style of hand-written examinations. It will eliminate the need to prepare hard copy question books and reduce the time to update and modify examination questions. Marking of the papers will be done by the computers in a matter of seconds, therefore saving the examiners' time.

Candidates will be able to receive their examination results immediately after taking the test rather than waiting for results by mail while statistics and reports can be downloaded at the touch of a button.

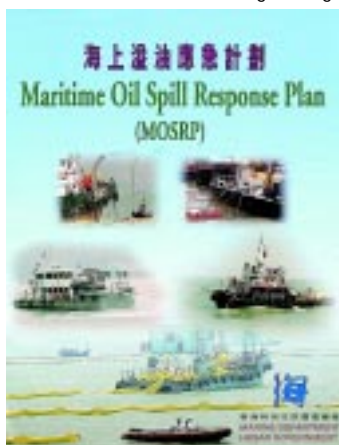
Maritime Oil Pollution Contingency Plan

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's Marine Department has prepared a new Maritime Oil Spill Response Plan (MOSRP) to comply with standards that are expected of a world-class port.

The plan is in line with the provisions of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 1990 (OPRC). It replaces an older version, which has been in use since 1974.

The MOSRP aims to ensure a quick and effective response to oil spills in local waters and allows Hong Kong to assist neighbouring ports in the event of a major crisis.

Marine Department officials have already been working closely with the neighbouring ports of Guangdong, Guangzhou, Macau, Shenzhen and Zhuhai to develop a co-ordinated contingency plan to cover the Pearl River and the region in general.



Search-and-Rescue and Oil Pollution Control Exercise



Hong Kong despatched six vessels and more than 50 emergency staff to help tackle one of the worst oil spills to hit the Pearl River Estuary. Fortunately, the incident was no more than an exercise but the experience proved the effectiveness of the Marine Department in dealing with a crisis situation.



The exercise was aptly held on World Environment Day and took place immediately west of Neilingding Dao about seven nautical miles outside Hong Kong waters.

Organised by the Maritime Safety Administration, the drill included emergency crew from the port authorities of Guangdong, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Macau as well as Hong Kong.

The crisis scenario involved a major spill of more than 500 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, which threatened the waters governed by all the participating authorities. The drill proved to be a success with excellent co-operation and teamwork displayed by all those involved.

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Safety Tips on Electrical Installations for Fishing Boats

A safety booklet giving guidance on the proper use of electrical installations on boats has been well received by the local fishing community.

The contents of the manual include: introduction of electrical installations, choosing the right equipment, the proper ways of using electrical equipment, detection system on earth faults, and the duties and responsibilities of engineers on board vessels.

Over 1,000 copies of the booklet were distributed at a Fishing Industry Safety Promotion Day held at Aberdeen, which was attended by more than 600 fishermen.

The booklet can be obtained from Marine Offices across Hong Kong. A series of safety promotion workshops covering various topics such as fire safety were held throughout Hong Kong during the ban on fishing in the South China Sea this year.



Fun Day to Promote Maritime Safety

More than 350 staff and family members from local shipping and port community enjoyed an action-packed afternoon of fun and games as they took part in the Maritime Safety Promotion Day held at the Government Dockyard, Stonecutters Island.

Jointly organised by the Marine Department, Marine Police, Customs and Excise, Fire Services Department and Immigration Department together with 14 private companies and organisations, the event was held to raise awareness to safety at sea.

Through a series of games, a quiz, displays

on navigational and shipboard safety, as well as demonstrations on fire fighting, first aid and the use of life saving equipment, the organisers ensured participants left the event with better knowledge of maritime safety. The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club didn't leave empty-handed either as they won the team category in the sports day.

General Manager of Vessel Traffic Services Ng Kin-man pledged that the Marine Department would continue to promote maritime safety through educating port users, improving safety measures and strengthening enforcement actions.

