

New Director of Marine

Miss Agnes Wong assumed the post of Director of Marine on May 14, succeeding Ms Maisie Cheng, who has assumed the post of Permanent Secretary for the Environment/ Director of Environmental Protection. Miss Wong said that she will strive to lead the Department to promote excellence in marine services and will continue to collaborate with the industry to enhance Hong Kong's status as an international maritime centre.

In August 2018, the Department created the assistant rank for the two professional grades (i.e. the Marine Officer and the Surveyor of Ships grades). New recruits have reported duty since the first quarter of this year. Miss Wong added that the Department will continue to strengthen promotion and training of talents. The objective is to attract more aspiring youngsters to join the marine profession to ensure sustainability of the industry.

Knowing more about Aids to Navigation

The marine traffic in Hong Kong is always busy. Aids to navigation (AtoNs) are therefore placed at sea to mark (a) structures such as piers and breakwaters; (b) waterway boundaries and turns; and (c) hidden dangers such as rock outcrops. Following our previous article on the maintenance work of AtoN managed by MD's Aids to Navigation and Mooring Unit (ANMU), we would like to introduce some common AtoNs within Hong Kong waters.

Lighthouse

Lighthouse, a kind of beacons, is a tower or any structure with navigation lights installed to facilitate safe and efficient navigation. It is a kind of commonly recognised AtoN that scatters within the Hong Kong waters, mainly locating in the coastal areas and outlying islands. It makes use of different lighting features, such as colour and rhythms, to provide navigational information to the vessels. The visible distance of lights installed for navigation in the outer waters usually have a longer range. For example, the range for Waglan Lighthouse can be up to 24 nautical miles, which is about 44 km!

Operating since 1875, Cape D'Aguiar Lighthouse is the oldest serving lighthouse in Hong Kong. Lighthouse keepers were stationed at the lighthouse at that

time as it had to be controlled manually. With the advancement of technology, all lighthouses are now automated and unmanned. At present, five existing lighthouses, namely Cape D'Aguilar Lighthouse, the old and new Green Island Lighthouses, Waglan Lighthouse, and Tang Lung Chau Lighthouse, are declared monuments. These lighthouses are under the management of MD and they are not open to the public due to security and operational reasons.

Lighted buoys

A lighted buoy floats on the water. It is installed with a light and attached to a concrete sinker by a mooring chain. The compact navigation light that is currently used by ANMU contains the following components: solar module, secondary battery, lantern, flasher, photo cell and bird deterrent spike. Lighted buoys are widely distributed along the waterways, special waters such as anchorages, restricted areas or marine parks to provide navigation information. According to MD's record, the geographically-oldest lighted buoy is the safe water mark in Hung Hom Fairway, which was first installed in 1941.

Port-hand lighted buoy

Generally used to mark the port side of well-defined channels

Starboard-hand lighted buoy

Generally used to mark the starboard side of well-defined channels

Safe Water lighted buoy

Generally used to mark the middle of channel and landfall approach

Special lighted buoy

Not primarily to assist navigation but to indicate special features

Isolated Danger lighted buoy

To station over dangers with navigable water around them

Emergency wreck marking lighted buoy

To mark new dangerous wrecks

Cardinal lighted buoy

To indicate navigable water to the named side of the lighted buoy

Departmental News

Two induction programmes were held on March 28 and May 31 respectively for new recruits of the Marine Officer and the Surveyor of Ships grades. The Director of Marine and senior management of MD welcomed these officers and encouraged them to unleash their potential.

Represented by the Assistant Director (Shipping), Ir Y M Cheng, MD received an award of "Outstanding Contribution to Professional Development" from the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology on March 15, 2019. The award is to commend the Marine Department on the establishment of the training programme for the Assistant Marine Officer and Assistant Surveyor of Ships (Nautical) for training them to become Chartered Marine Technologists.

Rowing teams representing several government departments, maritime-related associations and companies demonstrated their physical fitness and team spirit at the Dragon and Colour Boat Races, organised by MD, at the Government Dockyard on June 22.

MD, the Hong Kong Police Force and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department held the 2019 Safety Afloat Educational Seminar on May 21. The Deputy Director of Marine, Mr Wong Sai-fat, reminded the public to pay special attention to safety when participating in water sports. He also appealed to about 160 representatives of the shipping industry, representatives of the water sports industry and the captains or vessel operators, who attended the seminar, to make appropriate preparations before setting sail and navigate carefully during voyage.

The Harbour Patrol Section recently acquired a new launch (MD25) and a few drones to assist MD's officers to enhance marine traffic control.

In addition to the daily work of collecting and scavenging floating refuse, MD conducted Special Clean-up Operations at Chai Wan Cargo Handling Basin, Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter and Aberdeen Typhoon Shelters in April to step up in keeping the sea clean. Promotional leaflets are also distributed by MD's officers to remind the public to keep the harbour clean.

To enhance passenger awareness of fastening seat belts on high-speed craft plying between Hong Kong and Macau, MD launched a new round of publicity

campaign in March at the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal in Sheung Wan, the China Ferry Terminal in Tsim Sha Tsui and the Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal.