

LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the 35th Meeting

Date : 19 December 2024 (Thursday)
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Marine Department Conference Room A, 24/F, Harbour Building

Present

Chairman: Mr SHI Qiang Deputy Director, Marine Department (MD)

Members: Mr CHEUK Kwan-kin General Manager/Operations, MD
Mr SHU Bong-tai General Manager/Local Vessels, MD
Ms WU Minyi Marine Insurance Industry
Mr WONG Chi-ming Seafarers' Training
Mr YANG Kaiqiang Seafarers' Associations
Mr LEE Kim-fung, Kenneth Cargo Vessels' Operations
Mr ZHENG Chengqi Launch and Excursion Vessels' Operations
Mr CHEUNG Tai-kee Ferry Vessels' Operations
Mr LI Yajin River Trade Cargo Operations
Mr LAM Kit-tong Fishing industry
Mr CHAN Fong Ship Building and Repairing Industry
Mr CHEN Wai-sang, Simon Naval Architecture
Mr TIAN Bin Ship Survey Work

Secretary: Ms LIU Ka-yu, Athena Executive Officer (General and Committee), MD

In Attendance

Mr CHAN See-yin Assistant Director/Local Vessels and Examination, MD
Mr NG Ngai-wing, Jammy General Manager/Seafarers and Examination, MD
Mr LAM Kong-hei, Yale David Senior Surveyor of Ships/Local Vessels Safety, MD
Mr HUI Pok-hing, Miller Senior Surveyor of Ships/Quality Management, MD

Absent with apologies

Ms CHAN Ching-yin, Ivy

Superintendent (Operations) (Marine Regional Headquarters), Hong Kong Police Force

Mr WOO Cho-wing, John

Pleasure Boating Operations

Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting and introduced the members of the Local Vessels Advisory Committee (LVAC) for the term of 2024-2026 as well as the persons in attendance. The Chairman also apprised all of the house rules of the LVAC.

I. Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

2. With the Chairman's confirmation, members unanimously endorsed the minutes of the last meeting. The minutes had been uploaded to the website of MD.

II. Information Paper

LVAC Paper No. 12/2024 – Consolidated amendments to Code of Practice – Safety Standards for Class I, II, III and IV Vessels

3. Mr HUI Pok-hing, Miller (Senior Surveyor of Ships/Quality Management, MD) explained Paper No. 12/2024. Members noted and endorsed the paper.

III. New Discussion Item

LVAC Paper No. 13/2024 – Introduction of new Code of Practice for Safety and Operational Standards for LNG bunkering and local vessels using alternative fuels

4. Mr SHU Bong-tai (General Manager/Local Vessels, MD) explained the paper.
5. Mr CHEUNG Tai-kee (Ferry Vessels' Operations) expressed support for the paper. He pointed out that the guidelines concerned were brand-new and therefore hoped the department would reserve more time for briefing the industry

on the paper, and indicated that the standards set out in the guidelines should be applicable to local situations. Mr YANG Kaiqiang (Seafarers' Associations) agreed that the industry needed more time to digest the content. Mr CHEUNG pointed out that the content of the Code in Annex 2 was drawn up according to the standards of ocean-going vessels and hoped the guidelines would allow for flexibility for the local vessel industry. In addition, he hoped to receive meeting papers earlier in the future.

6. Mr TIAN Bin (Ship Survey Work) agreed to introduce the new Code of Practice. He opined that publicity should be carried out as soon as practicable and training should be arranged for the industry.
7. The Chairman said the target of the paper was to first reach a consensus with the industry on relevant standards and set a clear direction. MD would conduct publicity and education on such basis, including arranging talks, seminars, etc. The department would also conduct regular reviews with the industry to continuously optimise the content of relevant Code of Practice. Mr SHU Bong-tai (General Manager/Local Vessels, MD) supplemented that continuous betterment needed to be made to the technical papers including, among others, relevant bunkering guidelines after taking the actual operation of the bunkering operators into consideration. The department would enhance communication with the industry and introduce amendments as appropriate.
8. Ms WU Minyi (Marine Insurance Industry) said that at present, over 1 000 ocean-going vessels were using different types of alternative fuels in the world, accounting for 6% of the total number of ocean-going vessels. The industry estimated that 40% of ocean-going vessels would use LNG in the future. Related issues included safe storage of the fuels during transportation. The Chairman added that there were currently two local vessels using LNG, and it was believed that vessels would increase the use of alternative fuels in the future.
9. Mr LEE Kim-fung, Kenneth (Cargo Vessels' Operations) suggested that participants could comprehend the paper in the context of the standards for handling local dangerous goods.
10. Mr LI Yajin (River Trade Cargo Operations) expressed support for the paper and agreed that relevant training should be enhanced. He recommended that corresponding safety standards for other new energy sources should be developed

as soon as possible and incorporated into the Code of Practice. He also suggested that safety standard for gas carriers should be added to Annex I to the Paper, for example, by making reference to International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s technical requirements for such transportation.

11. Mr LAM Kong-hei, Yale David (Senior Surveyor of Ships/Local Vessels Safety, MD) supplemented that MD would discuss with the industry on individual cases and co-operate to work out a code of practice applicable to Hong Kong, for instance, for vessels using methanol as fuel. In addition, he pointed out that MD had already regulated gas carriers under the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk (IGC Code) in 2023. Mr SHU Bong-tai (General Manager/Local Vessels, MD) said that relevant wordings would be added to the Paper after the meeting.
12. Mr CHAN See-yin (Assistant Director/Local Vessels and Examination, MD) added that the foreword (3) of the new Code of Practice stated that the application of the Code would be progressively extended to cover more types of alternative fuels as necessary.
13. Mr CHAN Fong (Ship Building and Repairing Industry) enquired whether LNG-fuelled vessels would be treated in the same way as other local vessels, for example, in terms of vessel construction or stability check.
14. Mr CHAN See-yin (Assistant Director/Local Vessels and Examination, MD) indicated that there was no difference between local LNG-fuelled vessels and other similar non-LNG-fuelled vessels in terms of plan approval and surveying. However, as LNG-fuelled vessels were more dangerous, the requirements for safe operation would be relatively tighter. The Chairman supplemented that relevant codes of practice for other alternative fuels, such as methanol, would be drawn up in succession.
15. Regarding Annex II, the Chairman indicated that the codes of practice were determined after discussion with the industry, and MD would make continuous enhancements to the relevant Safety and Operational Guidelines.
16. Mr CHEUNG Tai-kee (Ferry Vessels' Operations) enquired, regarding the Marine Traffic Impact Assessment, whether local LNG bunkering vessels, as a supplier, were required to submit an individual assessment report for each bunkering

location. In addition, he asked how MD would handle the local LNG bunkering vessels during the onslaught of typhoons in Hong Kong. He hoped that MD would consider imposing a requirement for notifying MD within 24 hours of bunkering operations. Mr CHEUNG hoped that MD would take into consideration the actual situation of local vessels to formulate appropriate safety standards for alternative fuels, so that local vessels could also support and contribute to environmental protection.

17. Mr LAM Kong-hei, Yale David (Senior Surveyor of Ships/Local Vessels Safety, MD) stated that the requirements for the Marine Traffic Impact Assessment were intended to address the risks of LNG, whereby bunkering services could only be carried out at certain locations and no other operations were allowed to take place in the vicinity. In addition, suppliers were required to obtain approval from MD for LNG bunkering operations with each pair of LNG bunker supplier (“LBS”) and LNG bunker receiver (“LBR”) vessels, where the relevant approval was valid for one year, and the approval was for a pair of vessels, i.e. an LBS vessel and an LBR vessel. Mr SHU Bong-tai (General Manager/Local Vessels, MD) added that the code of practice was developed based on the industry standards of the LNG industry with reference to the practices in other ports, and no other additional standards had been added. The Chairman added that the vessels concerned could seek safe refuge or leave Hong Kong waters during typhoons, and that MD might consult the industry about the study on the provision of safe refuge for green fuel-powered vessels within 2025.
18. Mr LI Yajin (River Trade Cargo Operations) enquired about the contents of paragraphs 3.2 and 5.1. Mr LAM Kong-hei, Yale David (Senior Surveyor of Ships/Local Vessels Safety, MD) clarified that each approval was for a period of 12 months, i.e. multiple bunkering operations could be carried out within the 12-month period. Mr NG Ngai-wing, Jammy (General Manager/Seafarers and Examination, MD) stated that crew members may submit their certificates to MD for approval upon completion of training at the relevant organisations, and MD would add the endorsement to the relevant local certificates of competency after review. Mr WONG Chi-ming (Seafarers’ Training) suggested that amendments should be made to the wordings. MD agreed to use clearer wordings.
19. Ms WU Minyi (Marine Insurance Industry) raised concerns about the safety of transporting and storing the relevant vessels, expressing worries that while the crews were qualified, they might be inexperienced. Mr NG Ngai-wing, Jammy

(General Manager/Seafarers and Examination, MD) indicated that the relevant training standard adhered to the international standard, i.e. crew members were required to have one month of practical onboard operational experience, including a minimum of three bunkering operations. Mr SHU Bong-tai (General Manager/Local Vessels, MD) added that relevant quantitative risk assessment reports included casualty assessments, and relevant requirements were also stipulated in bunkering management plans. Mr LAM Kong-hei, Yale David (Senior Surveyor of Ships/Local Vessels Safety, MD) stated that MD required shipping companies to implement relevant management systems and ensure that crew members had clear working procedures to verify their suitability for carrying out the operations.

20. After discussion, members agreed to the relevant papers. The Chairman observed that further publicity and explanation would be conducted by MD, and that the relevant code of practice would be continuously improved.
21. Mr CHEN Wai-sang, Simon (Naval Architecture) indicated that FM 200 had been prohibited by the EU two to three years ago and enquired whether there was a need to amend the relevant codes of practice, as well as MD's position on the approval of unmanned vessels. Mr CHAN See-yin (Assistant Director/Local Vessels and Examination, MD) stated that the relevant information on FM 200 would be examined before making a decision. Mr LAM Kong-hei, Yale David (Senior Surveyor of Ships/Local Vessels Safety, MD) added that MD would consider new types of fire-fighting systems on a case-by-case basis. Regarding unmanned vessels, the Chairman expressed that it could be added to the special agenda for the next meeting.

IV. Any Other Business

22. Mr NG Ngai-wing, Jammy (General Manager/Seafarers and Examination, MD) apprised the attendees of the results of the trial run of medical fitness certificates; Mr CHEUK Kwan-kin (General Manager/Operations, MD) explained the content of the Marine Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Ordinance; and Mr TIAN Bin (Ship Survey Work) briefed the attendees on the alternative fuels.

V. Adjournment of Meeting

23. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.