

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 20/2025

(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)

Safe Navigation in Poor Visibility

Masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels are hereby reminded to strictly comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 when navigating within Hong Kong waters, especially in poor visibility.

2. All vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters shall do so at a safe speed not exceeding the applicable speed restrictions. Extreme caution should be exercised when navigating in fog, heavy rain or restricted visibility. Appropriate sound signals shall be made in accordance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972.

3. The importance of Rules 5 (Look-out), 6 (Safe speed), 7 (Risk of collision), 8 (Action to avoid collision) and 19 (Conduct of vessels in restricted visibility) of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 should be borne in mind at all times when navigating with the aid of radar in restricted visibility.

4. It should be noted that when radar and/or Automatic Identification System is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities and full appraisal of the traffic situation, the traffic information obtained thereof is rather scanty and should be construed accordingly.

5. When the visibility in any part of Hong Kong waters or its approaches is reduced to less than two nautical miles, for example by fog or mist, the Vessel Traffic Centre (Call-sign "MARDEP") will broadcast visibility reports on the major traffic routes and other water areas on V.H.F. Channels 02, 12, 14, 63, 67 and 74. These will be broadcast on each hour until such time the visibility has improved to more than two nautical miles.

6. Masters of vessels issued with miscellaneous permits to proceed at a speed exceeding the maximum permitted speed stipulated under the Shipping and Port Control Regulations and the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) Regulation, formerly known as "Speed Restriction Exemption Permits", should strictly observe the condition specified on the permits.

7. In the event of an accident, this should be reported immediately to the Vessel Traffic Centre, either on V.H.F. (channel 02, 12, 14, 63, 67 or 74) or by telephone (no. 2233 7808).

8. This Notice supersedes Marine Department Notice No. 27/2024.

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Marine Department

Government of HKSAR

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