

Information Paper

**LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Subcommittee on Class IV Vessels**

Requirements of VHF Radiotelephone for Certain Class IV vessels

Purpose

This information paper informs Members of the implementation date of the VHF radiotelephone requirements for certain Class IV vessels. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Background

2. In 2020, the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) Regulation (Cap.548F) and the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Safety and Survey) Regulation (Cap.548G) were amended to impose the requirements that the following Class IV vessels must have on board radiotelephone equipment for VHF radiotelephone communication that is capable of operation on specified VHF channels and a certificated operator must be present on board the vessel at all times when it is underway:

- (i) A Class IV vessel that is licensed to carry 13 to 60 passengers and is let for hire or reward; and
- (ii) A Class IV vessel that is licensed to carry more than 60 passengers

Commencement of the new requirements

3. The legislation amendments were enacted in 2020. In order to provide adequate time for the industry to carry out preparation work, such as installation of equipment, taking training course and examination for obtaining radio operator licence, and etc., the requirements related to VHF radiotelephone will come into operation on a day to be appointed by the Secretary for Transport and Housing by notice published in the Gazette.

4. MD had planned that the new requirement on radiotelephone equipment would come into force in mid-2021 and informed the industry in 2020 accordingly.

Meanwhile, MD has been closely monitoring the progress of course attendance and examination result so as to determine the final implementation date with a pragmatic approach.

5. With active participation by Class IV vessel operators, and thanks to the great efforts from Small Craft Workers Union and OFCA, an increasing number of operators have completed training course and passed the licensing examination. Therefore, the new requirement will come into force on 1 January 2022. Abstracts of section 6 of Cap.548F and Cap.548G are at the **Annex** to this Paper showing changes to the legislation.

Way Forward

6. Members are invited to note the planned implementation date of the VHF radiotelephone requirement on 1 January 2022, and to encourage Class IV vessel operators to apply for the required certificate as soon as possible.

Marine Department

June 2021