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29 November 2007

To : *Shipowners / Ship Managers and Classification Societies*

Dear Sir/Madam,

GMDSS Radio Installations Operation and Maintenance

Your attention is drawn to the repeated occurrences of the following GMDSS radio deficiencies onboard Hong Kong registered ships, which have either been detected by PSC officers during PSC inspections or MD surveyors during our recent FSQC inspections. These deficiencies have already led to PSC detentions of a number of Hong Kong ships. They were :-

- a. Deck Officers holding valid GMDSS radio certificates were not familiar with the onboard radio installations and incompetent for operation;
 - b. Performance tests on the digital selective calling (DSC) radio installations were ended without acknowledgement and sometimes test records were not logged; and
 - c. Emergency source of power for the GMDSS radio installation was not properly maintained.
2. Our review on PSC records of Hong Kong ships reveals that GMDSS equipment including its operation, recording of communications and maintenance standard is one of the essential items focused by PSC officers. Ship managers are therefore urged to ensure that deck officers

are familiar with the use of the onboard radio installations, and include this item in the familiarization programme for new joining deck officers holding GMDSS radio certificates. Companies should also monitor the effectiveness of training of radio operation on board their ships and take appropriate actions should such training is found not satisfactory.

3. Test on DSC radio installations must be completed with reception acknowledgement so that the effectiveness of the equipment could be ensured. If no acknowledgement is received despite of numerous tests, the equipment may be defective and it should be recorded in the radio logbook and a shore engineer called upon to check and repair the DSC radio as necessary.

4. Malfunction of the emergency power source for the radio equipment is a serious deficiency and will invariably lead to detention of the vessel if detected during PSC Inspection. Officers responsible for the operation/maintenance of radio equipment should ensure its emergency power source is always in satisfactory condition.

5. If you have any questions related to GMDSS matters for Hong Kong ships, please contact Senior Surveyor/Cargo Ships Safety at

telephone number : (852) 2852 4510,

fax number : (852) 2545 0556;

email address : ss_css@mardep.gov.hk

Yours faithfully,



(S. W. Cheung)
Senior Surveyor/Cargo Ships Safety
for Director of Marine

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(\Circular GMDSS Nov 07.DOC)