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SINGAPORE

MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

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Harbour Craft Community  
Pleasure Craft Community  
Shipping Community

## **GUIDELINES FOR SAFE TRANSFER OF PERSONS BETWEEN VESSELS AT ANCHORAGES**

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore has conducted a safety analysis and identified that some of the common causal factors contributing to persons falling overboard during transfers between vessels at the anchorages, were due to slips and trips, unsuitable embarking/disembarking arrangements and unfavourable weather conditions. Whilst majority of such personnel transfers are conducted under proper supervision and with appropriate personal protective equipment, such as donning of lifejackets, there were still some who did not observe such safe practices. These have resulted in a few injuries and/or loss of lives, which could have been prevented.

2. Under the ambit of the National Maritime Safety at Sea Council to raise safety awareness, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore and the Harbour Craft Safety Working Group represented by industry stakeholders, have prepared a set of guidelines to promote safe practices while conducting transfer of persons between vessels at the anchorages. The guidelines aim to prevent persons falling overboard incidents during transfers between vessels at the anchorages. Please see attached **ANNEX A**.
3. Safety at sea not only prevents economic losses, but more importantly, protects people and the environment from harm. It is important for every individual in the harbour and shipping community to share the responsibility towards fostering good habits and a culture of safety.
4. Please call Capt. Scott Ngiam at Tel: (65) 6773-7401 or Ms. Eunice Pui at Tel: (65) 6325-2477 if you have any queries regarding this circular.

CAPT KEVIN WONG  
PORT MASTER  
MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

## **GUIDELINES FOR SAFE TRANSFER OF PERSONS BETWEEN VESSELS AT ANCHORAGES**

1. The guidelines are applicable to persons who are exposed to risk of falling into the water during transfers between vessels at the anchorage. Such persons include, but are not limited to, ships' crew, harbour pilots, boarding officers of shipping agencies, marine surveyors, marine superintendents, repair crew and other service personnel that board ships at the anchorages.
2. Under the MOM WSH Workplace Safety and Health (General Provisions) Regulation 23 - *Measures to be Taken to Prevent Falls*:

*It shall be the duty of the employer of a person who is exposed to the risk of falling into water and of drowning to provide –*

- a) equipment and means of rescuing and resuscitating drowning persons; and*
  - b) suitable life jackets or other equipment for keeping such persons afloat in the event that they fall into the water.*
3. Due to the physical nature of the activity and the risk involved, all parties should keep good situation awareness, exercise extreme caution and made aware of the risk assessment of the impending transfer operation when conducting the transfer.
  4. In order to prepare for safe transfers, persons are strongly recommended to wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including a working SOLAS type-approved life-jacket or a life-jacket<sup>1</sup> meeting International ISO 12402 - performance level 100, or higher.
  5. Suitable boarding arrangements, such as accommodation ladder, pilot ladder and/or combination ladder, are to be properly rigged and assessed to be safe for use, by an authorised person from the vessel providing the boarding arrangements.
    - a) A safely rigged pilot ladder might be the most appropriate means for boarding a vessel from a service boat. However, where the vessel's freeboard exceeds 9 meters, a combination of pilot ladder and accommodation ladder should be used.
    - b) Where pilot ladders are used for embarkation and disembarkation, they should conform to the requirements of IMO Resolution A.1045(27).
    - c) Steep angled accommodation ladders (>55 degrees to horizontal) should not be used for embarking or disembarking at anchorages into or from a service boat.
  6. Embarkation/disembarkation areas of the service boats shall be free of slipping or tripping hazards, have sufficient handholds, be free of obstructions, be within line-of-sight of the boat's operator, and be sufficiently illuminated during hours of darkness.

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<sup>1</sup> User shall determine the suitability of the lifejacket to be worn by considering factors such as conditions of the work environment, manufacturer's donning instructions, weather conditions, size and weight of the user etc.

7. Persons embarking or disembarking a ship at anchorage should maintain 3-point contact at all times when embarking or disembarking.
8. Risk assessments are to be conducted by the owner/operator of the service boats and translated as safety guidelines displayed prominently on board as guidance to the master, crew and passengers of the service boat.
9. The master of service boats should consider the weather conditions and sea state before deciding on proceeding with the transfer of personnel at the anchorages.
10. The master, crew and passengers of service boats are encouraged to report any unsafe practices to the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore using the following means:
  - a) MPA's MyMaritime App; or;
  - b) MPA Marine Safety Control Centre (MSCC)
    - i. Email: [pms@mpa.gov.sg](mailto:pms@mpa.gov.sg)
    - ii. Telephone: +65 6325-2488 / 2489

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This is a joint initiative by the National Maritime Safety At Sea Council - Harbour Craft Safety Working Group and the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore.

07 Aug 2020

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