



Singapore, 15 December 2023 | **For immediate release**

## **Staying Safe at Sea during the Year–End Holiday Season**

The northeast monsoon season is expected to last till early March 2024 with moderate to heavy rain and heightened lightning risks. Under these conditions, there may also be poor visibility at sea. During this period, Singapore waters will also experience strong winds, choppy seas and heavy swells.

### Passengers and Commuters

2. The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) would like to remind passengers and commuters travelling on ferries and craft to exercise care and remain vigilant when at sea. Passengers and commuters should also exercise basic safety practices such as using handrails when embarking, remaining seated during the passage, exercising care when disembarking between the craft and landing steps, and to ensure that life jackets are worn when boarding and alighting vessels at sea. Travellers are advised to maintain good personal hygiene, take precautions and wear masks if they feel unwell.

### Port Users

3. For port users, MPA would like to remind all owners, operators, ship masters and crew that ships and cargoes must be properly secured for sea, and ships' firefighting and life-saving equipment on board must be in good working condition and in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) regulations. Additionally, the crew must be familiar with safety and emergency procedures, especially when embarking and disembarking passengers during adverse weather conditions. All vessels must proceed at safe speed when navigating in port waters. Ship masters must also remain alert while at anchor, keep a safe anchor watch, regularly check the weather conditions, ensure engines are ready for manoeuvring, and observe the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS). When alongside, ship masters must ensure that mooring lines are safely secured and tightened. Port users are also encouraged to wear life jackets for their personal safety when boarding and disembarking from ships at the anchorage.

### Safety Reminders for Public Engaging in Recreational Activities at Sea

4. The public is reminded to be responsible for their personal safety as well as the safety of those under their care when engaging in recreational activities at sea. MPA

urges individuals participating in activities such as canoeing, kayaking, skiing, sailing, wind surfing, boating, to wear the appropriate personal flotation devices and ensure these devices are in good working condition. They should check the weather forecast prior to engaging in any activities at sea, and exercise caution. If they decide to proceed with their activity, they should also observe best practices and relevant safety guidelines, know the emergency protocols and be equipped with the appropriate safety equipment.

### Enhanced Safety Checks by MPA

5. During the monsoon period, MPA inspectors will also conduct additional safety checks on ferries, harbour and pleasure craft. Besides observing the general condition of the vessels, the inspectors will also inspect the embarking and disembarking process, the state of firefighting and life-saving equipment on board, and operators' familiarity with emergency procedures.

6. Captain Chong Jia Chyuan, Port Master of MPA, said, "Safety at sea is a collective effort. Members of the public and pleasure craft community engaging in recreational activities at sea must prioritise personal safety and have the appropriate safety equipment, training, and understanding of the safety procedures when conducting those activities. Port users must remain vigilant when conducting operations or at anchor as the weather and sea conditions may intensify during the monsoon season".

### Partnerships to Enhance Safety at Sea

7. 2023 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Safety@Sea Singapore Campaign. Under this framework, the National Maritime Safety at Sea Council<sup>1</sup> (NMSSC) and its safety work groups implement initiatives to create greater safety awareness among users of the sea space, build a strong and proactive safety culture, improve navigation safety, and promote other safe practices at sea. MPA is currently working with the NMSSC to develop and train community volunteers to complement government agencies' search and rescue efforts within Singapore waters. Further details will be shared in due course.

8. Mr Ishak Ismail, Chairman of NMSSC said, "Safe practices at sea is not just a matter of compliance, but a responsibility that we owe to ourselves, our crew, and our loved ones. The NMSSC is committed to promoting safety at sea to ensure the safety

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<sup>1</sup> The National Maritime Safety at Sea Council (NMSSC) spearheads Singapore's drive for maritime safety on a national level and ensures the sustainability of safety efforts. The Council serves as an advisory body to MPA on maritime safety matters and its first priority is to address issues related to navigational safety and raise levels of maritime safety standards.

of our maritime community. We recognise that the effectiveness of maritime safety depends on the strong collaboration between the government and industry. We will endeavour to champion this collaboration through the new volunteer programme by harnessing the power of community spirit and working together to make our waters safer for all.”

9. MPA is also working with various stakeholders, including interest groups, the Singapore Canoe Federation, and Sentosa Development Corporation, as part of an ongoing safety review of recreational activities off the waters at Sentosa and other areas with potentially higher risk. While the safety review is ongoing, equipment rental operators are to ensure that pre-activity safety briefs are conducted, including the use of personal protective equipment. MPA will also step up its patrols and surveillance of the open waters off Sentosa during this period. The public are reminded to avoid activities during inclement weather and that operators have the right to refuse service if they assess users pose safety risks to themselves or others, or if weather conditions are deemed to be unfavourable.

10. A new national standard – the Code of Practice (COP) for inland and open water sporting activities, will be launched in the first quarter of 2024 to help strengthen health and safety practices for open water sports. The COP was developed by a multi-stakeholder Working Group<sup>2</sup> led by Sport Singapore and supported by the Singapore Manufacturing Federation – Standards Development Organisation (SMF-SDO) and the Singapore Standards Council, which is overseen by Enterprise Singapore. The Working Group was appointed by the Technical Committee on Workplace Safety and Health under the purview of the Safety and Quality Standards Committee, managed by SMF-SDO.

-End of Release -

### **About the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)**

MPA was established on 2 February 1996 with the mission to develop Singapore as a premier global hub port and international maritime centre, and to advance and safeguard Singapore’s strategic maritime interests. MPA is the driving force behind Singapore’s port and maritime development, taking on the roles of port authority, port

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<sup>2</sup> Key stakeholders in the Working Group comprises Advance Safe Consultants Pte Ltd, Changi General Hospital, JTAY International Pte Ltd, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, National Parks Board, Outward Bound Singapore c/o National Youth Council, OrangeTee and Tie Pte Ltd, People's Association, Police Coast Guard, Public Utilities Board, Republic Polytechnic, SAFRA National Service Association, Sentosa Development Corporation, SGS Testing and Control Services Singapore Pte Ltd, Singapore Armed Forces, Singapore Boating Industry Association, Singapore Canoe Federation, Singapore Civil Defence Force, Singapore Dragon Boat Association, Singapore Life Saving Society, Singapore Power Boat Association, Singapore Sailing Federation, Singapore Sports Hub, Singapore Swimming Association, Singapore Underwater Federation, Singapore Waterski and Wakeboard Federation, Sport Singapore, The Institution of Engineers, Singapore, Triathlon Singapore, TÜV SÜD PSB Pte Ltd.

regulator, port planner, international maritime centre champion and national maritime representative. MPA partners with industry and other agencies to enhance safety, security and environmental protection in our port waters, facilitate port operations and growth, expand the cluster of maritime ancillary services, and promote maritime R&D and manpower development. MPA is responsible for the overall development and growth of the Port of Singapore. In 2021, Singapore remained as the world's busiest transshipment hub with a container throughput of 37.5 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs).

For more information, please visit <https://www.mpa.gov.sg>

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