

**For information
on 2 May 2023**

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development

Management of Typhoon Shelters and Sheltered Anchorages

Purpose

This paper reports the updated situation on the management of typhoon shelters and sheltered anchorages.

Demand and supply of sheltered spaces in Hong Kong

2. The Government is committed to ensuring that sufficient sheltered spaces are provided within Hong Kong waters for local vessels therein to take refuge during typhoons or inclement weather, so as to safeguard the safety of the vessels and their crew members. There are currently 14 typhoon shelters¹ located in different parts of Hong Kong waters, providing 423 hectares of sheltered space for use by vessels.

3. It is the established policy of the Government to provide sheltered space in Hong Kong on a territory-wide basis and assess the demand for typhoon shelters in a holistic approach. The Marine Department (MD) carries out assessments of the territory-wide supply and demand situation of sheltered spaces on a regular basis. MD has commissioned The Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct a new round of assessment in 2021 and completed the latest Assessment of Typhoon Shelter Space Requirements 2022-2035 (the Assessment) in end-2022. The results of the Assessment revealed that the overall territory-wide supply of sheltered space could substantially meet the demand of local vessels throughout the

¹ The 14 gazetted typhoon shelters include Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter, Aberdeen West Typhoon Shelter, Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter, Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter, Hei Ling Chau Typhoon Shelter, Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter, New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter, Rambler Channel Typhoon Shelter, Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter, Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter, Shuen Wan Typhoon Shelter, To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter, Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter and Yim Tin Tsai Typhoon Shelter.

period up to 2035. The results of the Assessment have been reported to the Local Vessels Advisory Committee (LVAC) in end of last year, and the relevant report has also been uploaded onto the website of MD for public information in January this year.

4. In addition, according to the record of MD, during the passage of super typhoon Mangkhut and hoisting of typhoon signal No. 8 in 2018, only three (namely Rambler Channel, To Kwa Wan and Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelters) amongst the 14 typhoon shelters in Hong Kong reached their full occupancy, while there were still sheltered spaces available for use in the remaining 11 typhoon shelters, including Aberdeen West, Cheung Chau, and Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelters which were more frequently used by fishing vessels, as well as Yim Tin Tsai Typhoon Shelter located in Sai Kung. The occupancy rates of the 14 typhoon shelters across Hong Kong were similar during typhoon periods last year. MD will continue to monitor the overall supply and utilisation of typhoon shelters.

Expansion of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter

5. The “Invigorating Island South” initiative was announced in the 2020 Policy Address and one of the main projects under the initiative was the expansion of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter. The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) commenced in April last year a consultancy on investigation, design and construction for the expansion of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter to address the strong regional demand in Hong Kong Island South for sheltered space, particularly from pleasure vessels, and to support tourism, leisure and recreation development in the Southern District. The proposed expansion area is about 30 hectares. Site investigation works have just been completed, and various detailed impact assessments, gazetting and detailed design will be carried out later. Construction works are expected to commence in 2025 tentatively. Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) and MD will continue to work closely with the Invigorating Island South Office and relevant departments on this project.

Designating different berthing areas for vessels

6. Under section 4 of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Typhoon Shelters) Regulation (Cap. 548E) (the Regulation), generally all local vessels are allowed to enter into typhoon shelters for refuge. Subject to no obstruction being made to marine traffic, vessel owners are free to choose a safe and suitable space in a typhoon shelter for mooring based on the size and draft of their vessels. The Regulation does not empower the Director of Marine to assign a designated area in a typhoon shelter for the mooring of certain class of vessels only. In spite of this, in response to the request of the industry, MD has launched a pilot scheme through administrative arrangements in 2018 for the exclusive mooring of non-pleasure vessels within the Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter, under which non-pleasure vessels berth at the southern area of Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter, whereas the northern area is for the berthing of all classes of vessels.

7. Drawing on the experience of Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter in the designation of different berthing areas, MD responded to relevant requests and actively explored with relevant stakeholders (including Legislative Council members, fishermen's groups and other marine users of the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter) again in June last year on designation of different berthing areas for vessels in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter through administrative arrangements. After many rounds of discussion with the stakeholders, a consensus on the trial-run arrangements for the designation of different berthing areas was largely reached. MD plans to implement the trial-run arrangements for the designation of different berthing areas in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter from the middle of this year. The trial-run arrangements will be reviewed in one year's time upon implementation.

Enhancing the capability in responding to fire incidents

8. To enhance the capability in responding to fire incidents at typhoon shelters and to ensure the execution of duties by fireboats during emergency, MD and Fire Services Department (FSD) reviewed the layout of 14 typhoon shelters across the territory last year and suggested making

adjustments to and widening the passage areas of five of the typhoon shelters, including Aberdeen South, Kwun Tong, Shau Kei Wan, Tuen Mun and Hei Ling Chau, so that FSD will be able to deploy the most suitable fireboats within the typhoon shelters to perform the firefighting and rescue work required. Relevant suggestion was endorsed by LVAC in December last year and the adjustments to the passage areas were implemented on 31 January 2023, except that to Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter which will be implemented in May this year.

9. Apart from making adjustments to the passage areas in typhoon shelters, MD proactively assists FSD in organising thematic talks on fire prevention for users of typhoon shelters regularly to remind vessel owners of the precautions when using and maintaining electrical installations on vessels and to show them the correct way to use a fire extinguisher etc. During peak seasons of vessels berthing in typhoon shelters including the fishing moratorium and major festive periods, fire drills are conducted to enhance awareness of fire prevention. In addition, MD broadcasts fire prevention messages to vessels when conducting patrols in typhoon shelters, carries out inspections to ascertain whether adequate fire prevention appliances are equipped on board and distributes promotional leaflets on fire prevention to vessel owners, in order to prevent occurrence of fire incidents. MD will continue to carry out relevant publicity and education work and maintain close communication with the industry.

Providing more landing facilities

10. In response to the request of fishermen community in Tuen Mun, a landing facility constructed outside Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter has been opened for public use since November 2021.

11. Concerning the trade's proposal for building a landing facility in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter for use by small vessels, after site visits with relevant stakeholders and consultation on the design proposal, three sets of additional landing facilities will be constructed. One will be located at Aberdeen West Typhoon Shelter on Ap Lei Chau Praya Road (near Ap Lei Chau Bridge), the construction of which started in late 2022 and is expected

to complete in mid-2023. The other two sets will be located at Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter on Ap Lei Chau Praya Road (near Marina South) and the construction works notice was gazetted in accordance with the Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance on 6 January 2023. Their construction is expected to commence in the second half of this year.

12. TLB, together with MD and CEDD, met with representatives of fishermen organisations in Cheung Chau in November 2022 on the impact of the reconstruction of the Cheung Chau Pier in Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter on embarkation of fishermen, and the unique geographical environment, sea conditions and landing modes in the local area. To facilitate embarkation of fishermen, CEDD and various departments are studying the proposal to provide more landing facilities in Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter and its technical feasibility. Local stakeholders will be consulted in due course.

Combating illegal activities by vessels berthing in typhoon shelters

13. MD carries out patrols in typhoon shelters from time to time to ensure that fairways and passage areas inside typhoon shelters are unobstructed and vessels are berthed in a safe and orderly manner. If a vessel is found to have breached the marine legislation, MD will take follow up actions as appropriate. Meanwhile, MD also conducts joint operations with FSD and the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) to crack down on illegal activities and irregularities by local vessels.

14. During the period from 28 December 2021 to 31 December 2022, MD, together with FSD and HKPF, conducted 19 special operations in Aberdeen, Kwun Tong and Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelters to combat illegal activities and contraventions by local vessels. During the operations, MD prosecuted 22 vessels for various alleged offences such as unlicensed operation, being let for hire or reward without endorsement, carrying more than the authorised number of passengers, inadequate life-saving appliances or fire-fighting apparatus on board, failure in the production of policy of insurance, breach of licensing conditions, pleasure vessels being used for non-pleasure purposes, etc. During the period from

January to March 2023, MD and HKPF conducted four special operations in Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter to combat the use of local vessels for illegal activities.

15. In the past six years (as of end of March 2023), of the 56 successful prosecutions by MD against pleasure vessels being used for non-pleasure purposes, 13 cases involved pleasure vessels being used as guesthouses. MD will keep enhancing patrol in typhoon shelters and taking enforcement actions to combat contraventions.

Water and electricity connection and hygiene problems for vessels in typhoon shelters

16. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) provides for safety requirements for electricity supply, electrical wiring and products in accordance with the Electricity Ordinance (Cap. 406) and the Water Supplies Department (WSD) controls the waterworks and of all water therein according to the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102). The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) regulates any trade or business for the purpose of which any person engages in the handling of food or food which is sold by means of a vending machine in accordance with the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X). MD will strive to provide assistance and carry out inspections in conjunction with relevant departments.

17. In response to the fire accident in the Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter in June 2021, MD together with EMSD and the relevant power companies carried out 20 inspections in the Aberdeen, Sam Ka Tsuen, Tuen Mun, Kwun Tong and Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelters from July 2021 to the end of March 2023. EMSD and the power companies issued a total of 56 improvement notices in relation to electricity safety while MD also found four vessels suspected of violating marine legislation with prosecutions initiated.

18. From July 2021 to end of March 2023, MD and WSD have also conducted nine joint inspections in the typhoon shelters at Aberdeen, Tuen

Mun and Sam Ka Tsuen. During the joint inspection in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter, two vessels were respectively found to be suspected of operating without a licence or breaching licence conditions. During the joint inspection in the Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter, WSD discovered a situation of illegal pipe connection to the water meter. MD and WSD are taking follow-up actions on the irregularities. In order to meet the operational needs of local vessels, WSD currently has seven water selling kiosks in place for local vessels. In addition, it is exploring strengthening water supply in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter. MD will provide appropriate advice and assistance.

19. If any local vessel is used as a restaurant or canteen to provide food to the public without an appropriate licence, it is not only a suspected violation of the ordinance related to food safety but also a suspected breach of the relevant restrictive clauses of the Operating Licence issued by MD. FEHD and MD have currently established a mechanism to regularly inspect the target vessels in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter. FEHD, MD and HKPF also conduct joint operations in other typhoon shelters and sheltered anchorages from time to time. From July 2021 to end of March 2023, FEHD, HKPF and MD conducted 39 joint operations and one violation case was found. Moreover, during routine or joint operations, if any vessels are found to be suspected of violating the Electricity Ordinance, the Waterworks Ordinance or the Food Business Regulation, MD will refer such cases to EMSD/ power companies, WSD or FEHD to follow up.

Way forward

20. TLB and MD will continue to study and discuss matters relating to the management of typhoon shelters and sheltered anchorages with relevant departments. We will consult stakeholders when appropriate and take forward the various initiatives in a steady manner.

Transport and Logistics Bureau
Marine Department
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