

## **Guidelines for Controlling Noise from Cargo Handling Activities and the Use of Loudhailers and Public Address (PA) Systems on Board of Vessels**

### **The Problem**

Noise from cargo handling activities and hand-held loudhailers or mounted PA systems used on board of vessels have been causing disturbances to nearby residents, in particular during the night. To minimize the potential noise impact that may cause to the vicinity, this guidelines outline various factors that the readers should pay attention to in carrying out cargo handling activities or using loudhailers or PA systems on board of vessels.

### **Locations for Cargo Handling**

- ♦ Load or unload cargoes at designated public cargo working area (such as cargo working areas managed by the Marine Department) as far as possible.
- ♦ Familiarize with the land lease provisions and restrictions (such as restriction on operation hours, permission and prohibition of certain activities) if the cargo handling area is acquired through government land lease.
- ♦ Make certain whether cargo handling activities are allowed in the area concerned that is acquired through private land lease.
- ♦ Ensure no excessive noise is produced from cargo handling activities at public piers where such activities are not prohibited. The police may prosecute the relevant cargo operators for causing noise nuisance at public places.
- ♦ Avoid cargo handling activities in the vicinity of residential areas as far as possible.

### **Operations of Cranes on Barge and Ground**

- ♦ Regularly inspect and maintain cranes so as to avoid mechanical wear resulting in production of excessive noise.
- ♦ Close the doors and windows of the engine room when the cranes are in operation.
- ♦ Consider to install noise enclosures or barriers to shield off the engine so as to reduce the noise when cargo handling activities are carried out in the vicinity of residential areas. To achieve a desirable result, there should not be direct line of sight between the nearby residents and the engine parts.
- ♦ Apply adequate lubricants to crane joints and other moving parts as appropriate to reduce noise caused by friction between metals.
- ♦ Pay special care in loading and unloading heavy or metal objects (such as metal pipes) to avoid loud noise produced from falling objects at a height; and consider to place wooden planks or rubber mats on the ground to minimize the impact on

the ground.

- ♦ Understand the crux of the problem upon receiving complaints from nearby residents; and adjust the operation as appropriate to reduce the noise disturbance to the residents with a view to fostering a good neighbourhood relationship.

#### Period for Operation

- ♦ Stop all loading and unloading activities between 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- ♦ Carry out loading and unloading activities from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. as far as possible.
- ♦ Observe the permitted operation time in cargo working areas where the operation hours are strictly controlled.

#### Use of Loudhailer and Public Address System

- ♦ Avoid the use of loudhailers and public address systems from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. as far as possible.
- ♦ Use alternative means of communication (such as mobile phones or walkie-talkies equipped with earphone) instead of loudhailers and public address systems as far as possible.
- ♦ If the use of loudhailers and public address systems is unavoidable, efforts should be made to:
  - adjust the volume at an appropriate level;
  - use loudhailers and public address systems of a smaller size and locate them closer to the receivers;
  - close all doors to engine rooms or compartments to minimize the operational background noise to increase the intelligibility of the message sent; and
  - prohibit the use of loudhailers and public address systems for chatting or calling for workers on board.

#### Others

- ♦ Minimize the noise if there is a genuine need for barges to be towed in or out of the cargo working area from midnight to dawn.
- ♦ Barge workers should avoid chatting volubly and loudly from midnight to dawn.
- ♦ Cooperate with officers of the Police or Environmental Protection Department in investigation of noise complaints and take their advice as far as possible to minimize the disturbance caused to nearby residents.

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