



Ministry of Transport reinforces compliance with passenger vessel safety

1 September 2011

**The verification of compliance and implementation of safety standards by ship owners/operators form part of the main obligations and safety oversight responsibility of the Marine & Ports Division of the Ministry of Transport (MoT-MPD). The objectives of the verification of compliance and implementation of maritime safety standards are to ensure:**

- (i) safety of life at sea
- (ii) safety and security of property
- (iii) compliance with domestic maritime legislation, and
- (iv) to improve inter-island shipping services

The MoT-MPD aims to improve inter-island transport services in terms of reliability, safety and accessibility in alignment with the Tonga Strategic Development Framework.

Accordingly, the MoT-MPD commenced the enforcement of the safety requirements of the Shipping Act 1988 as amended, and the maritime legislation on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2011. This has resulted in a number of passenger vessels identified as not complying with the load lines and marking requirements.

These passenger vessels have been granted a fixed time period by which they must fully comply, however, during this period, as an additional risk mitigating safety measure, the Minister of Transport has reduced the number of passengers that is approved for carriage by these passenger vessels by 50%. The 5 passenger vessels affected include:

- MV 'Alaimoana
- MV Langifo'ou
- MV Ikale
- MV Pulupaki
- MV Siupeli Koula

The Ports Authority have been advised to assist in enforcing this condition as part of their Departure Clearance approval process, supported by spot-checks & surveillance conducted by MoT-MPD.

The MoT-MPD wishes to reinforce the importance of compliance with all aspects associated with safety by all the stakeholders operating within the maritime sector.

ENDS

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**Verify passenger vessel safety**

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