



## 香港商船資訊

## HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

**Loss of Life Resulting from Improper Lowering of a Lifeboat**

*To : Classification Societies, Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, Officers and Crew*

**Summary**

An accident occurred on a Hong Kong registered container ship in which a lifeboat was detached from both lifeboat hooks during the lowering exercise. A crewmember was killed in the incident. This Note draws the attention of the shore management and shipboard staff to the importance of adequate training for crew and proper design of shipside structure and lifeboat skates that might affect safe launching of a lifeboat.

**The Incident**

1. In March 2006 a Hong Kong registered ship was conducting a lifeboat launching exercise during a Safety Equipment Survey. While the davit arms of the portside lifeboat were being swung out, the Third Officer inside might have intermittently applied the brake via the remote wire causing the lifeboat to swing heavily and hit against the shipside structure below the lifeboat deck. The forward skate of the swinging lifeboat was caught by the gangway stowed in the recess below the lifeboat deck. As the lifeboat continued to be lowered, it tilted to almost 90°. The forward and aft hooks disengaged from their positions when the hook rings were deformed by the force of tilting. The lifeboat dropped approximately 20 metres into the water and the Third Officer was drowned in the incident. Three other crewmembers inside the lifeboat managed to escape but one was injured.

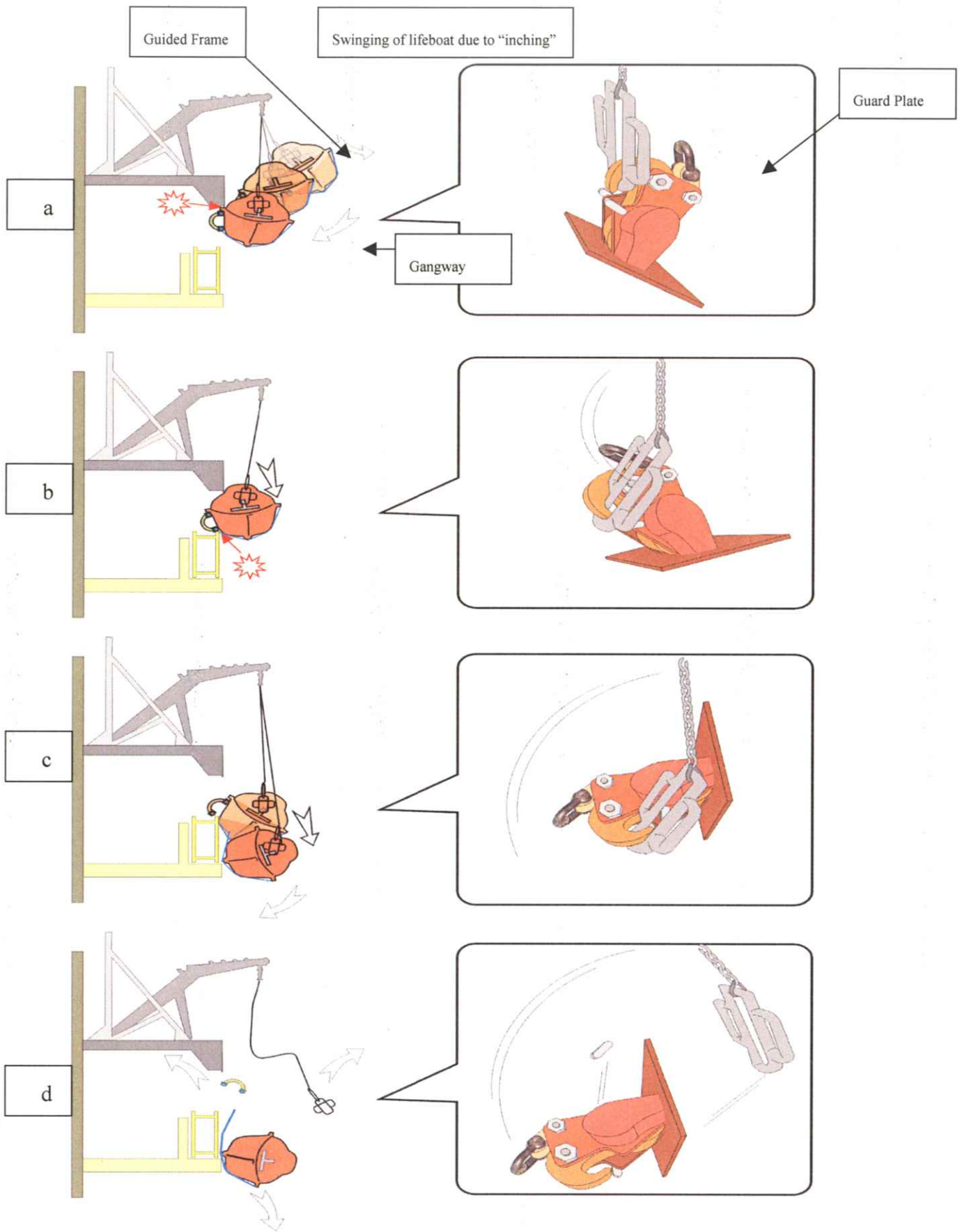
2. The investigation revealed that the probable cause of the accident was due to the improper lowering of the lifeboat which made the lifeboat to swing heavily. The recess opening immediately beneath the lifeboat deck and the design of the short lifeboat skates also contributed to cause the accident.

## Lessons Learnt

- 3.
- A short lifeboat skate and recess opening immediately below the lifeboat davit might pose a danger to launching of lifeboat. A lifeboat should be capable of being safely launched when the ship is listed to 20° either side in accordance to SOLAS requirements. As a lifeboat may slide or swing against the shipside during launching due to ship's motion, lifeboat skates and any such recess opening should be designed to ensure safe and smooth launching. It is important that anything e.g. gangway, stowed in the recess opening should not become a hazard or obstruction for smooth and safe launching of lifeboat.
  - The ship's crew should be given proper training to familiarize with lifeboat lowering procedures. Brake should not be applied intermittently when the davit arms are being swung out.
  - The person controlling the descent from the remote control wire should always keep an eye on the situation outside the lifeboat especially during a lowering drill to ensure everything is going smoothly in the launching operation.
  - Crewmembers should adhere to the "Guidelines on Safety during Abandon Ship Drills using Lifeboats", as annex to the Hong Kong Merchant Shipping Information Note No. 28/2006:

*"Before placing persons onboard a lifeboat, it is recommended that the boat first be lowered and recovered without persons on board to ascertain that the arrangement functions correctly. The boat should then be lowered into the water with only the number of persons on board necessary to operate the boat".*

4. The attention of classification societies, shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crew is drawn on the lessons learnt above.



Sketch of possible sequence of events leading to inadvertent release of the lifeboat (Not to Scale)