



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Grounding of Vessel in Heavy Weather

To : *Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters and Officers*

Summary

During the passage of a severe tropical storm at Kashima in Japan, a Hong Kong registered vessel ran aground after departing from berth in an attempt to seek shelter outside the port. This Note draws the attention of shipboard staff to the importance of taking refuge at an early stage before the onset of boisterous weather.

The Incident

1. On 24 October 2006, a Hong Kong registered vessel while departing from Kashima, Japan with a view to seeking shelter from atrocious weather caused by a depression, she hit against the northern extremity of the South Breakwater and later ran aground. At the time of unberthing, the wind was northerly at force 10 and the visibility was about 4 cables. The starboard bottom of the vessel sustained considerable damages. Three cargo holds and the engine room were flooded with sea water. All the crew members were rescued by a helicopter. No casualties and oil pollution were reported. Although a number of attempts had been made to refloat the vessel by a salvage company, the vessel broke into halves on 27 December 2006.
2. Investigation into the incident revealed that the accident was caused by atrocious weather due to severe tropical storm. It was found that based on the available weather information the Master, the charterer's agent and the port authority had underestimated the effect of the approaching severe tropical storm and neither of them made a correct assessment of the safe window to evacuate the port. The severity of the storm was not predicted to enable an early departure to open sea and when the vessel departed the berth, the conditions were unsafe to do so. The grounding could have been avoided if the vessel departed at an early stage.

Lessons Learnt

3. When a depression or typhoon was approaching a port, Masters should obtain the latest weather information and liaise with the agent and port authority with a view to seeking shelter outside the port from atrocious weather at an early stage.

4. The attention of ship managers, ship operators, masters and officers is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

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