



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Suspected Falling Overboard of Deck Cadet

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

Summary

A fatal accident occurred on board a Hong Kong registered ship. A deck cadet was found missing and was suspected to have fallen overboard when emptying his garbage bin over the shipside on the main deck. This Note draws the attention of the ship management company and shipboard staff to pay more attention to newly-joined and / or inexperienced junior officers and ratings on their safety awareness in shipboard environment.

The Incident

1. At about 1700 hours on 5 August 2008, while a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier was enroute from Antwerp, Belgium to Mobile, USA, a Deck Cadet who was on his first voyage at sea for about four months was found missing in rough weather. It was suspected that he had fallen overboard while he was throwing domestic garbage overboard at the port side on main deck alone without being seen by other crew members at time between 1500 to 1530 on the same day. After searching the whereabouts of the Deck Cadet was in vain and the Bosun reported that he had earlier found the weathertight door leading to the main deck port side was opened, and soft drink cans, a rubber sandal and a cabin's garbage bin were found in the area, the Master declared Man Overboard at 1900. Despite the Search and Rescue operation which was jointly conducted by the vessel and other vessels as well as a SAR aircraft in the vicinity, the missing Deck Cadet could not be found.

2. The investigation into this fatal accident has established that the incident was caused by the failure of the Deck Cadet to follow the Master's instructions of not going out on to the open deck in rough weather without his permission.

Lessons Learnt

3. It is important for the Masters to take measures to ensure that in rough weather, no crew members will be allowed to go on open deck without their permission. Special attention should be paid by Masters and Officers to newly-joined and / or inexperienced junior officers and ratings on their safety awareness in shipboard environment.
4. The attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters and officers is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

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