

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 107 OF 2002

(Navigational and Seamanship Safety Practices)

Notice to Owners, Operators and Persons-in-charge of Locally Licensed Lighters - Safety in Anchor Handling

The Accident

A fatal accident happened on 13 December 2001 in that a worker on a locally licensed dumb steel lighter was hit by a wire sling whilst transferring the lighter's anchor from its secured position on port main deck back to its original position at the bow. During the operation the anchor was first hoisted up from the main deck and then lowered into the sea by means of the lighter's derrick together with a wire sling with looped ends. The wire sling was first led through the ring of the anchor stock and then both looped ends were attached to the derrick hook. When the anchor was lowered and resting on the seabed, one end of the wire sling was detached from the derrick hook and the other end was being hoisted up in order to pull it out from the anchor stock. However the looped end of the wire sling in the water was jammed in the anchor stock ring. The subsequent clearing of the jam due to the weight of the anchor and possible movement of the lighter caused the wire to bounce in an uncontrolled manner and jump out of the derrick hook. The bouncing wire hit the worker who was standing nearby serving as a signaller in the operation, causing him to fall overboard. Although the worker was rescued almost immediately, he later died in the hospital. A [diagram](#) showing the operation is attached in the appendix.

Lesson learnt

2. The danger of uncontrolled movement of steel wire due to sudden release of tension is well known and has in the past caused casualties to personnel working on board ships. The method employed by the workers in shifting the anchor in this incident is therefore considered not a safe practice, as there is no guarantee that the wire sling would not jam. Furthermore, since the anchor was submerged in the water, it was not possible for the workers to tell what was happening with the anchor and to take appropriate actions.

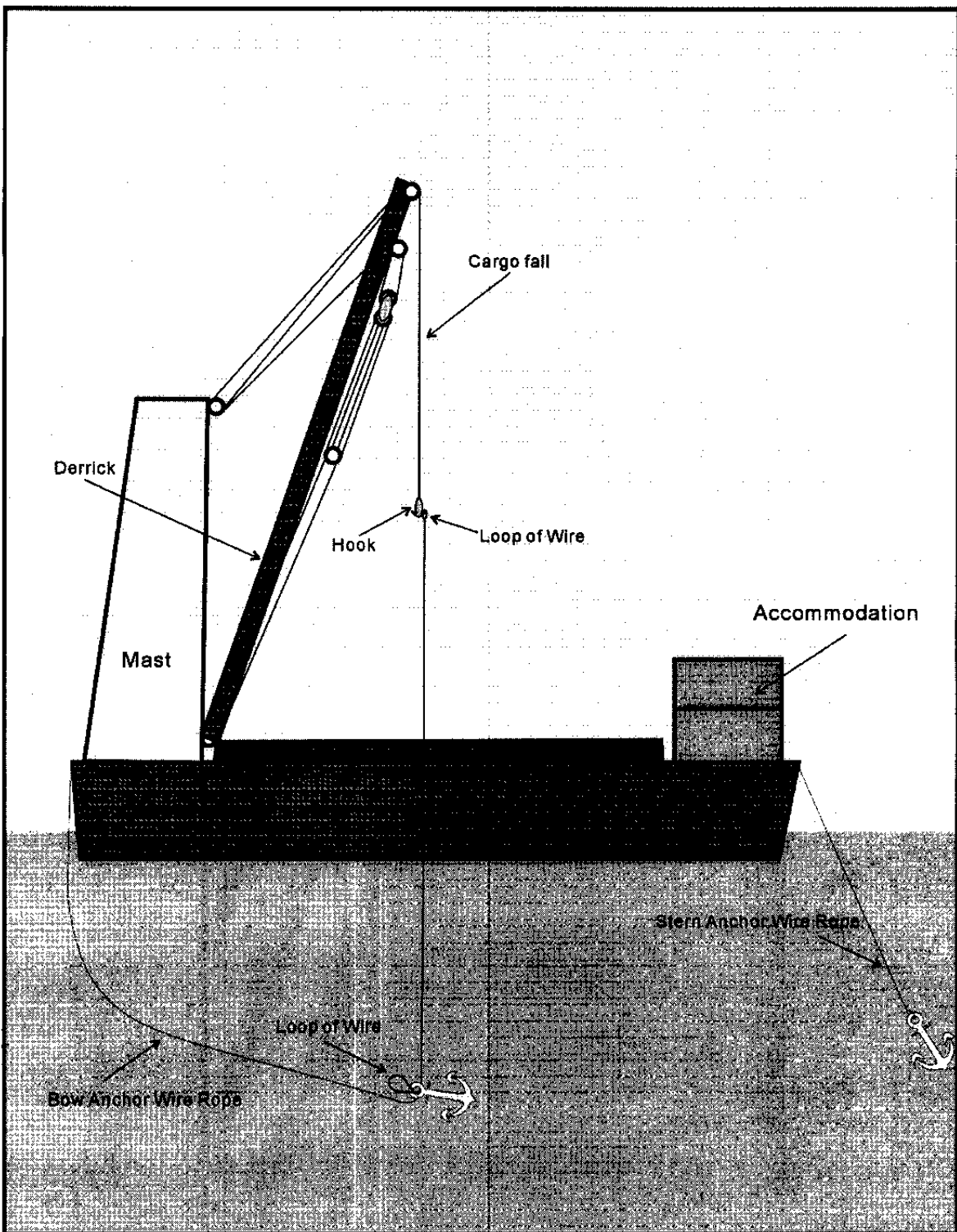
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3. Owners, operators and Persons-in charge of local licensed lighters are requested to take note of the above-mentioned accident and the lesson derived therefrom, and to consider employing safer practices as appropriate in shifting of anchors or other heavy weights in order to avoid any uncontrolled movement of wire slings.

(M.C. TSANG)
Director of Marine(Ag.)

Marine Department,
Government of the HKSAR
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Appendix



The loop of wire and the bow/stern anchors in water