

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 103 OF 2003

(Navigational and Seamanship Safety Practices)

Notice to Owners, Operators, Masters and Persons-in-charge of Locally Licensed Vessels – Observance of Good Seamanship Practices, Awareness of Dangerous Working Places and Importance of Communication during Mooring Operation

The Accident

A fatal accident occurred on 7 May 2003 in that a crewmember on a coastal vessel was killed after being hit by the mooring wire of a sand barge at the stern of the coastal vessel. In the incident, the coastal vessel after finishing cargo work was leaving its berth at Tsing Yi Island. At that moment a sand barge was engaging in a mooring operation to an adjacent berth off the stern of the coastal vessel. As the coastal vessel moved astern for departure, its stern ran into the mooring wire of the sand barge. The mooring wire being pressed by the coastal vessel suddenly became taut and jumped off from the stern frame of the coastal vessel. It hit the deceased who was strolling aft from forward. The deceased sustained injury to his abdomen and later died in the hospital. On the sand barge a look-out person was deployed to watch the mooring wire at the aft. However he was not provided with any means for communication with the winch operator operating the winch at forward of the barge.

Lessons Learnt

2. Important lessons that should be learnt from this incident are:
 - (1) Good seamanship practices should always be observed in the handling of vessels. Masters or persons in charge of navigation should ensure that there is sufficient clear sea room for manoeuvring of their vessels before berthing or unberthing operations.
 - (2) Persons not involved in any related duties should stay away from hazardous working places on board vessels. Such hazardous working places should include mooring stations and cargo working areas during berthing/unberthing or cargo operations as appropriate, and in particular, places which may be hit or affected by wire ropes under tension.

- (3) If the view of the winch operator is restricted during mooring operation, proper look-out arrangement should be established and appropriate means of communication, e.g. walkie-talkie or loudhailer, should be provided to ensure effective communication between the winch operator and the look-out person. Similarly, there should always be an effective means of communication between the crew posted at the mooring stations and on the vessel's bridge during berthing and unberthing operations.
3. Owners, operators, masters and persons-in-charge of locally licensed vessels are required to take note of the above-mentioned accident, and to follow the lessons learnt in order to avoid reoccurrence of such accident in future.

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