

## **MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 31 OF 1999**

### **(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)**

#### **Practices to Ensure a Vessel's Stability and Safe Loading Condition in Carrying Containers between Hong Kong and Mainland Coastal/River-trade Ports**

Shipowners, cargo operators, masters and officers of all ships engaged in carrying containers between Hong Kong and mainland coastal/river-trade ports are advised to observe the recommendations of this notice to avoid the danger of capsizing or sinking of their ships due to improper loading of containers.

2. On 1st January 1998, a mainland coastal ship loaded with containers capsized and sunk at position 22° 29.'8N 114°21.'4E near Port Island. There were no loss of life, no injury and no oil pollution reported in the incident.

3. The investigation revealed that major contributing factors leading to the accident were as follows:-

- i. The master was not given any loading information regarding the weight of containers and their stowage plan on board.
- ii. Final loading condition of the vessel was not known at the commencement of the voyage.

4. To avoid recurrence of similar accidents, shipowners, cargo operators, masters and officers of all ships carrying container cargoes between Hong Kong and mainland coastal/river trade ports are required to observe the following practices:-

- i. A detailed loading and stowage plan including the weight and the stowage position of each container should be given to the master of the vessel prior to loading.
- ii. It is the master's responsibility to ensure that his ship is being loaded in accordance with the loading and stowage plan. He shall ensure that the containers are stowed safely on board and that the ship has adequate stability at all time during the loading period and throughout the voyage.

5. Any enquiries relating to this Marine Department Notice should be addressed to the Senior Surveyor in charge of the Cargo Ships Safety Section on telephone number: 2852 4510.

**(S.Y. TSUI)**  
**Director of Marine**

Marine Department  
Government of the HKSAR

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