

Marine Department Notice No. 89 of 1999

(Navigational and Seamanship Safety Practices)

Precautions to be taken by Owners, Agents and Coxswains of Oil-carrying Vessels

The recent sinking incidents of three locally licensed oil-carrying vessels have raised public concerns on the safety and pollution of the environment. Owners, agents and coxswains of all oil-carrying vessels are reminded to take necessary measures to ensure the safety of the vessels by adopting proper operational procedures and by taking precautionary measures in adverse weather conditions.

In this regard, following measures are to be observed in the operation of vessels :

- i) All closing appliances, e.g. air pipes, ventilators and entrances leading to the spaces below main deck should be maintained in good working condition. While the vessel is underway, especially in adverse weather, all closing appliances should be checked to ensure that they have been effectively closed to prevent the entry of water.
- ii) Unless permitted, no deck cargo/store of any kinds should be stowed on or above the main deck. Where permitted, the deck cargo/store should be properly secured to prevent shifting . In case where ballast weights are required in any service condition, the requisite quantity of the weights should be carried at the designated location and properly secured.
- iii) In order to avoid mal-operation of valves of cargo pumping system which may lead to oil spillage or stability problems, each valve in the system should be clearly marked to show the purpose it serves. An indicator should also be provided to show the direction of opening/closing of a valve.
- iv) During cargo transfer, care should be taken to maintain the vessel in an upright position as far as practicable. Frequent checks should also be made to confirm that cargo oil is transferred to or from the designated cargo tanks and that there is no escape of cargo into other compartments or overboard.
- v) All tankers should have established procedures ready for immediate implementation in the event of an emergency. The procedures should cover all types of emergencies which might be encountered, e.g. fire, flooding, collision, cargo spillage, etc. The personnel involved should be adequately trained in the procedures through drills and should clearly understand the actions they would be required to take when responding to an emergency.

- vi) Modification of vessels without prior approval from the Marine Department and carriage of cargo oil in unauthorized cargo compartments are not permitted.
- vii) With immediate effect, all oil-carrying vessels that have not been assigned with a load line mark and/or given stability approval should
 - (a) within one month from the date of this notice, be marked with a load line amid-ship on both sides to indicate the maximum allowable loading draft;
 - (b) conduct an inclining test during the next annual survey and submit the stability calculation for approval within 3 months after the test.

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Director of Marine

Marine Department
Government of the HKSAR
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