

## **Man slipped during mooring whilst standing on top of a fender and his leg was caught between the fender and the seawall**

### **A. The Incident**

1. At about 2050 hours on 30 January 2003, one of the crewmembers of the dumb steel lighter “Wah Fai 8” (華輝 8), slipped during mooring operation while he was standing on top of a large rubber tyre fender (Fig. 1). At that instant the lighter was pushed by a tug to moor at berth 37 of the River Trade Terminal (RTT) in Tuen Mun. At time of accident the fender was almost in contact with the seawall. The deceased slipped himself while holding the mooring wire. As he slipped he clung onto the quayside with his right leg hanging between the fender and the seawall. The lighter continued to close in and the fender crushed his right leg against the seawall and resulted in serious injury. He was sent to Tuen Mun hospital for emergency treatment and was certified dead at 2350 hours at the hospital.

### **B. Findings**

1. The footwear worn by the deceased did not belong to any type of anti-slip shoes that aim to prevent people from slipping when working on smooth and wet surface. Also the rubber tyre fender chained to the side of the Lighter did not provide a stable, flat surface for people to stand on it (Fig. 2).
2. The weight of the mooring wire imposed difficulty for the deceased to maintain his balance. Furthermore, when both of his hands were engaged in holding the wire, he could no longer use them to maintain balance in case of any sudden movement. The lighter could be subjected to unexpected jerk and bumping movements when it was being pushed by a tug. These sudden movements might cause the crew to lose foothold temporarily if he is not holding on to some fixtures.

### **C. The Lessons**

1. The dangerous mooring practice employed in this incident is considered to have contributed to the accident. The deceased was standing on a non-stable, curved surface on top of the rubber tyre fender which was susceptible to movements during the mooring operation while holding the mooring wire in both hands. Also the shoes worn by the deceased did not offer much protection against

slipping on wet surfaces.

2. Although fixed landing ladders are provided for the crew to access ashore for mooring, it is not always used because more shifting works may be required. However, it would be much safer if a crewmember could land ashore first before receiving the mooring line from other crewmembers.



Fig. 1 A similar Lighter at moor in River Trade Terminal  
(Note the location of forward fender and the bollard)



Fig. 2 The topside surface of the fender where the deceased stood