

# **Fatal incident on board general cargo vessel "*J Real*" at Suao, Taiwan on 21 January 2005**

## **1. The Incident**

- 1.1 At 1156 (local time) on 21 January 2005, m.v. "*J. Real*" (see fig. 1) arrived at berth No. 10 of the port of Suao, Taiwan for loading cargo. At 1515, the crewmembers started to close all the hatch covers due to the rain.
- 1.2 During closing, a hatch cover was slightly misaligned and the pin stopper could not be inserted to lock the hatch cover in position. Instead of the pin stopper the crewmembers used a thin steel wire to secure the hatch cover.
- 1.3 In closing the other half of hatch covers, the Bosun stood on top of the unsecured cover to give signal to the winch operator. During the hatch closing, the thin steel wire suddenly parted and the unsecured hatch covers started to roll backward. As a result the Bosun was trapped and was crushed as the covers slid further backward (See fig. 2). He was sent for medical treatment after the accident and was certified dead upon arrival to the hospital.

## **2. Findings**

- 2.1 A trim of 2m by stern was reported at time of the incident. The slope of trim to the length of vessel was about 1 in 50. In such condition the hatch covers could slide to the aft of the vessel if it was not properly secured. Moreover, as the other section of hatch covers was closing, the movement between covers could cause vibration and further aggravate the situation.
- 2.2 The crewmembers had improperly used a thin steel wire rope instead of the stopper pin to secure the hatch cover.

## **3. Lessons**

- 3.1 It would be a dangerous practice for crewmember to stand on unsecured hatch covers for signaling operation.
- 3.2 Operation of hatch covers should take into account the excessive trim of the vessel. When necessary the trim of vessel should be suitable adjusted for safe operation of the hatch covers.



Fig. 1 Photo of m.v. "J. Real"

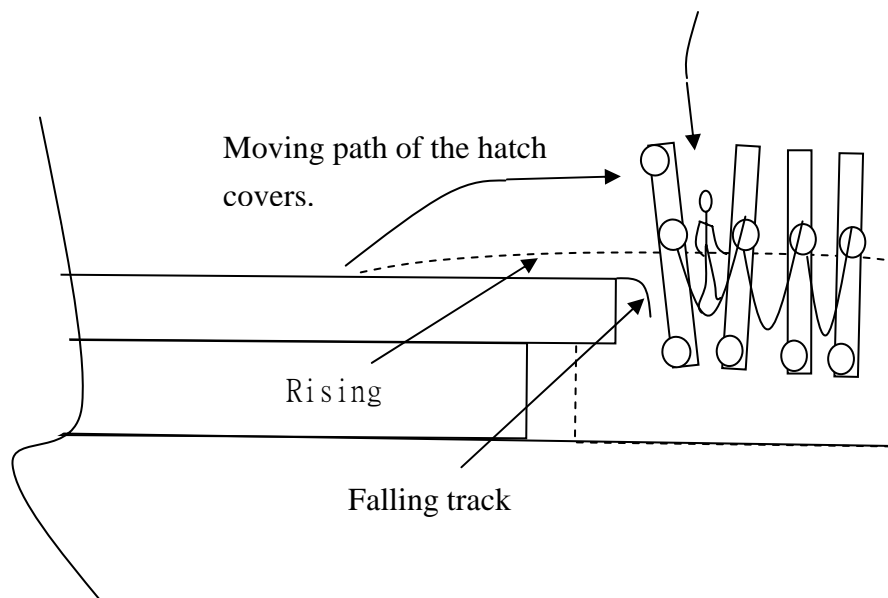


Fig. 2: The Bosun was trapped and crushed between the foldable hatch covers.