

Collision Between High Speed Passenger Craft *Nan Hua* (南華) and Dumb Steel Lighter *Shing Wai No. 2* (成威2) On 28 March 2005

A. The Incident

1. At about 0902 on 28 March 2005, the Chinese registered high speed passenger craft (HSC) *Nan Hua* collided with the Dumb Steel Lighter *Shing Wai No. 2* (成威2) which was under towed by the tugs *Hoi Sing* (海星) and *Wo Shing 5* (和盛5) (Figure 1). The collision occurred in the position 22° 19.6'N 114 5.1'E, 0.26 mile northwest of Tsing Yi West Buoy. At the time of the accident, the visibility was poor.
2. *Nan Hua* sustained structural damage to its bow while *Shing Wai No. 2* sustained a minor dent to its starboard side shell plating. The collision caused 10 passengers and 5 crew members of *Nan Hua* to suffer minor crash injuries. No injury on board *Shing Wai No. 2* was reported.

B. Findings

1. The investigation has revealed that the Master of *Nan Hua* failed to observe Rule 5 of colregs to maintain a proper lookout and Rule 6 of colregs to proceed at a safe speed in the prevailing circumstances and conditions; and the Master of the tug *Hoi Sing* failed to observe Rule 9 of colregs to keep the tugs and tow as near to the outer limit of the Ma Wan Fairway on their starboard side resulting a head on situation with *Nan Hua*.
2. The investigation has also noted the following observations:
 - (i) A number of HSC were found frequently speeding in thick fog.
 - (ii) The Chief Officer of *Nan Hua* had not effectively conveyed the radar information to the Master for collision avoidance in time of restricted visibility.
 - (iii) Most of the injured crew members suffered injury while standing and working at the time of the collision.
 - (iv) The tug Master of *Hoi Sing* was under the pressure of the company to commence the towing operation in thick fog although he was reluctant to do so.

C. New measures

1. A number of new measures has been introduced after the accident to ensure safe navigation of HSC in Hong Kong waters when visibility is below one nautical mile due to fog. The new measures include:
 - (i) MD will remind individual HSC operators/companies that the Speed Restriction Exemption Permit (SREP) granted to their vessels are not valid when the visibility is below one nautical mile;
 - (ii) MD will alert masters of HSC that the SREP of their HSC have ceased to be valid before they are issued permission to depart from the berth at China Ferry Terminal and Macau Ferry Terminal. The HSC would need to proceed at a safe speed; and
 - (iii) All HSC will be required to install an automatic identification system (AIS) as early as practicable to facilitate better monitoring of movements of these vessels¹.

Note 1

Under the revised Chapter V of the Safety of Life At Sea Convention (SOLAS), all existing HSC irrespective of their sizes and routes are required to install AIS on board by 1 July 2008.

D. Lesson

1. It is important that the Masters of HSC should strictly observe Rule 5 of colregs to maintain a proper lookout and Rule 6 of colregs to manoeuvre at a safe speed when the visibility is below one nautical mile.
2. The HSC operators/companies should ensure adequate training to the bridge team members of HSC so that the Chief Officer can effectively convey the radar information to the Master for collision avoidance in time of restricted visibility.

Figure 1 VTS System plots showing the tracks of Nan Hua and the tugs and tow

