

Sinking of local cargoboat "M20229A" on 4 June 2005 causing one fatality

1. The incident

- 1.1 In the evening of 4 June 2005, local licensed wooden cargo vessel "M20229A" (the Vessel) was loaded with used TV sets and departed from Chai Wan Public Cargo Working Area. Three crewmembers were on board.
- 1.2 At about 2145, when the Vessel was in the vicinity of Tuen Tsui, several consecutive huge waves approached the Vessel from the starboard side. The vessel rapidly listed to the port side and capsized.
- 1.3 After the Vessel capsized, two crewmembers escaped from the bridge front windows and got to the water surface. They got hold a piece of plank to keep them afloat. The Master however went missing and the Vessel sank after it capsized.
- 1.4 At about 2235, a Mainland Chinese coastal vessel rescued them and handed them over to the Hong Kong Marine Police.
- 1.5 The Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) conducted the search and rescue (SAR) operation for the missing person with nil result.
- 1.6 On 10 June 2005, the body of the missing person was found at 22° 26.67N 114° 22.05'E on the rocky coastline near Nam She Wan.

2. Findings

- 2.1 The Vessel was loaded with about 1,400 used television sets. The survived crewmembers stated that the cargo was loaded on deck with cardboard rigged on both sides similarly to those shown in the figure below. The under deck compartments had no cargo.
- 2.2 It was estimated that the average weight of a medium size television was about 25 kg, thus 1,400 used television sets weighed approximately 35,000 kg. The cargoes were all loaded on deck which would reduce the metacentric height.
- 2.3 Since the cargo could not be tidily stowed and secured, there were lots of broken

space in between the cargo. As a result the cargo was liable to shift at sea. When several consecutive huge waves struck from the starboard bow, the cargo would shift to the side causing the vessel to heel heavily to the port side.

- 2.4 Once the deck edge was submerged, the water quickly entered the cargo compartment as the cargo hatch covers were not completely watertight; hence the stability would diminish, leading to the capsizing and sinking of the vessel.

3 Lessons

- 3.1 The investigation established the sinking of the vessel was probably attributed to the shifting of the cargo which had been improperly loaded on board. The vessel heeled and sustained considerable diminution of stability after water found its way into the cargo compartments.



A wooden cargo vessel with the cargo loaded on deck on both sides