

Crew fatality and injury while working at the aft deck of M.V. Heibei Progress on 18.8.2005

1. The Incident

- 1.1. On 18 August 2005, the Hong Kong registered ship “Heibei Progress” (the Vessel) was en-route from Brazil to China via south of Africa. At around 1000, a man overboard accident occurred when the Vessel was passing the Cape of Good Hope in heavy sea condition. The Bosun was washed over the shipside by the following sea waves which shipped over the aft deck. At time of the accident the Bosun was recovering the mooring ropes with three other crews at the aft deck. The waves also caused injury to the other three crews. After the accident the ship returned to search for the Bosun but could not find him.

2. Findings

- 2.1. The mooring ropes were left at the aft deck and had not been stowed in a sheltered space during the sea passage. As a result of rough following seas the mooring ropes were washed out of the locker and scattered over the aft deck.
- 2.2. The crew did not assess adequately the wave condition before carrying out the emergency recovery of mooring ropes at the aft deck.
- 2.3. The Master had not changed the ship’s course to alter the approaching direction of the sea waves in order to provide a sheltered quarter for the crew to work at the aft deck.

3. Lessons

- 3.1. There was a general lack of appreciation of the dangerous nature of the operation. The Chief Officer could have initiated a better planning in coordination with the Master before sending the crews into operation.
- 3.2. Selfless acts by individuals in undertaking work of a dangerous nature

without taking reasonable and necessary precautions will put them at risk and should not be encouraged.

- 3.3. Under the situation the Master could have provided a sheltered area for the crews by turning the ship to a westerly course so that the aft deck could be sheltered from the waves.