



Report of Investigation
into the Fatal Accident of a
Crewmember when Working
Outboard of “Hebei Friendship”
on 9 November 2005



The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Marine Department
Marine Accident Investigation Section

Purpose of Investigation

This incident is investigated, and published in accordance with the IMO Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents promulgated under IMO Assembly Resolution A.849(20). The purpose of this investigation conducted by the Marine Accident Investigation and Shipping Security Policy Branch (MAISSPB) of Marine Department is to determine the circumstances and the causes of the incident with the aim of improving the safety of life at sea and avoiding similar incidents in future.

The conclusions drawn in this report aim to identify the different factors contributing to the incident. They are not intended to apportion blame or liability towards any particular organization or individual except so far as necessary to achieve the said purpose.

The MAISSPB has no involvement in any prosecution or disciplinary action that may be taken by the Marine Department or others resulting from this accident.

Table of Content

Page

1	Summary	2
2	Description of the Vessel	3
3	Sources of Information	4
4	Outline of Events	5
5	Analysis of Evidences	6
6	Conclusions	8
7	Recommendations	8
8	Submissions	8

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 At about 1045 on 9 November 2005, while the Hong Kong registered ship *Hebei Friendship* was loading maize cargo alongside a berth at Dadong Port in China, an Able Seaman (AB) fell into the water when he was climbing down a Jacob ladder from the poop deck to take the after draught reading of the Vessel.
- 1.2 The Able Seaman was found floating in the water. He was recovered from the water and sent ashore to the hospital for medical treatment. However, he was certified dead after medical treatment was given by the hospital.
- 1.3 The cause of the accident was due to the failure of the crew members to follow the safety precautions as laid down in the International Safety Management Manual of the Vessel when working outboard.

2. Description of the Vessel

2.1 *Hebei Friendship*

IMO No.	:	7827691
Call Sign	:	VRXV9
Type	:	General Cargo Ship
Length Overall	:	145.66 metres
Breadth	:	21.60 metres
Gross Tonnage:	:	10,512
Classification Society	:	China Classification Society
Year of Built	:	1981
Propulsion Power	:	Diesel, Sulzer 4RND68M/5,294 kW



Figure 1 – Photograph of *Hebei Friendship*

3. Sources of Evidence

- 3.1 The Master of the Vessel;
- 3.2 The Chief Officer and Crews of the Vessel;
- 3.3 The ship management company of the Vessel;
- 3.4 Accident report submitted by the Master of the Vessel;
- 3.5 The ship's file in the Hong Kong Register.

4. Outline of Events

- 4.1 The Vessel berthed alongside No.7 Berth at Dadong Port in China at 1000 on 6 November 2005 and commenced loading maize cargo at 1230.
- 4.2 At about 1030 on 9 November 2005, the Chief Officer tasked an Able Seaman (AB) to take the readings of the forward and after draughts of the Vessel. The AB went to the poop deck and took a Jacob ladder from the aft peak store. He rigged and secured the ladder on the handrail with a view to climbing down the ladder to take the after draught reading.
- 4.3 At 1045 a shore labour informed the duty sailor who was keeping the gangway watch that a man had fallen into the water from the stern of the Vessel and the duty sailor reported to the Master immediately.
- 4.4 At 1048 two sailors jumped into the water to recover the AB to shore who was found unconscious and floating in the water. Ambulance service was also summoned by the Master.
- 4.5 At 1050 the AB was sent to the hospital for medical treatment. He was certified dead at 1140 by the hospital and the cause of death was drowning.

5. Analysis of Evidences

Experience of the AB

- 5.1 The AB had a total sea service of about 30 months. He had worked as an AB for about 14 months.

Physical condition of the AB

- 5.2 The AB had a medical examination prior to joining the Vessel in July 2006. There was no evidence that the AB had suffered from bad health or fatigue. The other crew members were not aware that the AB had taken any medicine or alcohol before he commenced duty in the morning.

Rigging of ladder

- 5.3 The Jacob ladder was rigged by the AB himself and it was secured on the handrail on the poop deck (Figure 2). After the accident, it was found that the Jacob ladder was in good working condition and it was rigged and secured properly.



Figure 2 – Jacob Ladder secured on Handrail

Working Outboard – Safety Precautions

- 5.4.1 The ISM Manual of the company had laid down the safety precautions for carrying out works outboard. It was stipulated that when climbing down a Jacob ladder to read draught, the crewmember should wear lifejacket and safety harness attached to a lifeline. Two persons should carry out the job together and a lifebuoy attached with a buoyant line should be on standby at the scene.
- 5.4.2 In this particular case, it appeared that the above safety precautions had not been followed. The AB did not wear lifejacket and safety harness when he climbed down the ladder to read the after draught, nor was there any crewmember on standby on the poop deck. As a result, the AB fell into the water without the attention of other crewmembers on board and immediate assistance was not available.

Weather condition

- 5.5 The weather was cold i.e. 6° C and cloudy with a force-3 southeasterly wind. There was a slight sea and a good visibility.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 At about 1045 on 9 November 2005, an AB on board the Hong Kong registered ship *Hebei Friendship* fell into the water and was drowned when he was climbing down a ladder to read the after draught from the poop deck. The Vessel was loading maize cargo alongside a berth at Dadong Port in China.
- 6.2 The safety precautions laid down in the company's ISM Manual were not taken since the AB did not wear any lifejacket or safety harness and there was no crewmember on standby on the poop deck.
- 6.3 Weather, health condition, fatigue, medicine and alcohol were not considered as contributory factors in this accident.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 A copy of the report should be sent to the ship management company of the vessel. They should be advised of the findings of the accident and the importance of instructing their crewmembers to strictly comply with the safety procedures as laid down in the ISM Manual.

8. Submissions

- 8.1 In the event that the conduct of any person or organization is commented in an accident investigation report, it is the policy of the Marine Department to send a copy of the relevant part of the draft report to that person or organization for their comment.
- 8.2 The draft report was sent to the ship management company, the Master and the Chief Officer of the vessel and there was no reply from the above parties.