

Crane Operator Falling from “A”-mast on board Dumb Lighter “*Chun Wah*” on 13 September 2007

1. The Incident

- 1.1 An industrial accident happened on board a Hong Kong licensed dumb lighter "*Chun Wah*" loaded with boulders when under tow in Shenzhen waters, near Bao An Airport on 13 September 2007. While a crane operator was carrying out repairs to the braking system of the winch of derrick crane near an open edge at the 3rd level of the “A”-mast, he lost his balance and fell down to the bottom of the cargo hold and sustained fatal injuries.
- 1.2 Before the accident, the crane operator had worked overnight with interrupted rest periods. He had taken cold medications which might cause side effect of drowsiness.

2. Lessons

- 2.1 When working aloft where there is a risk of falling more than 2 m, workers should wear a safety harness attached to a lifeline as far as reasonably practicable.
- 2.2 Workers should be aware of the danger of carrying out high risk work such as working aloft when feeling tired or under the influence of medications. Any worker on board who has taken medications should inform his employer or person in charge of vessel.
- 2.3 Workers should have reasonable rest period in order to prevent onset of fatigue, particularly at high risk work.
- 2.4 No repair work should be carried out on board unless it is supervised by a works supervisor who has completed the works supervisor safety training.
- 2.5 Suitable means of communication device such as walkie-talkie or mobile telephone should be provided between the towing vessel and the vessel being towed to facilitate communications in an emergency.