

Fatal accident of a lighterman onboard local dumb steel light *Pak Lee* at Stonecutters Island Public Cargo Working Area

1. The Incident

- 1.1 An industrial accident happened on board the local licensed dumb steel lighter *Pak Lee* at Stonecutters Island Public Cargo Working Area on 13 January 2009. When the derrick crane on the lighter was lifting and transferring laden containers from shore to a river-trade cargo vessel, a lighterman onboard the lighter was found lying at the bottom of the cargo hold. The lighterman was suspected to have fallen down from the second level of the “A”- mast to the bottom of the empty cargo hold of the lighter and sustained fatal injuries.
- 1.2 The investigation revealed that the accident was probably caused by the removal of the fencing provided at the open edge on the second level of the “A”- mast.
- 1.3 The slippery footwear of the deceased, poor housekeeping, the swaying of the lighter due to the wave motions and the movement of derrick boom are also considered as contributory factors to the accident.

2. Lessons Learnt

- 2.1 To avoid recurrence of similar accidents, masters and crew of local and river trade vessels should adhere to the following when loading and discharging cargo :-
 - a) all workplaces shall be securely fenced, and the fence shall be maintained in good condition ready for use. Such fence should not be removed unless in the case of necessity, and it should be restored as soon as possible thereafter;
 - b) all crew whether directly engaged in cargo operations or not should wear suitable safety footwear such as slip resistant safety shoes while at work on deck, on container top, in cargo hold or in machinery space;
 - c) any oil spilled on floorings should be cleaned up as soon as possible.