

Man-overboard accident onboard a Chinese registered river trade container vessel *Shi Tai 818* at Kwai Chung Container Terminals

1. The incident

- 1.1 An accident happened on board a Chinese registered river-trade container vessel *Shi Tai 818* at Kwai Chung Container Terminals on 14 May 2009. At the time of the accident, the Master was manoeuvring the vessel for mooring alongside another Chinese registered container vessel *Yue Hai 891* at crane disposition 72. While mooring operation was in progress, the Master received a new instruction to berth the vessel at crane disposition 84. He shouted to the Chief Engineer and a sailor at the bow and a mechanic at the stern to unfasten the mooring ropes. When the vessel moved away from *Yue Hai 891*, the mechanic at the stern was struck by the parted mooring rope, fell overboard and drowned.
- 1.2 The investigation revealed that the main contributory factor to the accident was the Master of the vessel did not check and confirm all mooring ropes were unfastened before departure.
- 1.3 A lack of effective communication among the team during mooring operation is considered as another contributory factor to the accident.

2. Lessons Learnt

- 2.1 To avoid recurrence of similar accidents, the attention of owners and masters of all vessels are drawn to the following important advice:
 - Effective communication arrangement must be maintained between the mooring team and the master on the bridge of a vessel at all times during berthing/unberthing operations
 - The master must ensure all mooring ropes are let go before manoeuvring the vessel off the berth