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HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Collision of Vessels outside Zhoushan Qundao

To : Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters and Officers

Summary

A collision between a Hong Kong registered vessel and a Chinese registered vessel outside Zhoushan Qundao resulted in the sinking of the Hong Kong registered vessel with the loss of seventeen crew members. This Note draws the attention of the shipboard staff to the importance of adhering to the requirements of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code.

The Incident

1. In March 2007, a Hong Kong registered vessel collided with a Chinese registered vessel outside Zhoushan Qundao. The collision occurred in good visibility condition. At time of the collision the third officers of both vessels were keeping watches on the bridge. As a result of the collision, the Hong Kong registered vessel sank and seventeen crew members including the watchkeeping third officer on board the vessel were lost at sea.
2. Investigation into the incident identified that the Chinese registered vessel being a give-way vessel, had failed to take early action to keep out of the way of the Hong Kong registered ship in the crossing situation. The Hong Kong registered ship being a stand-on vessel, had taken the advice via VHF from the Chinese registered vessel by altering course to port which was against the Collision Regulations. It was found that the third officers of both vessels had not notified their masters before taking avoiding actions themselves.

Lessons Learnt

3. In accordance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, in a crossing situation and when there is a risk of collision, a give-way vessel should take early action to avoid collision and a stand-on vessel should not alter course to port for a vessel on her own port side.

4. The officer in charge of the navigational watch shall notify the master immediately if the traffic conditions or the movements of other ships are causing concern. The master, who have more knowledge and experience, shall be able to make better judgment and provides the necessary instructions for precautionary measures.

5. The attention of ship managers, ship operators, masters and officers is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

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