



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Fatal accident while climbing down a vertical ladder in cargo tank

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

Summary

During an inspection of a cargo tank of a chemical tanker, a superintendent fell down from a vertical ladder to the bottom of the cargo tank. He died in the accident. This information note draws the attention of Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, Officers and Crew to the lessons learnt from this accident.

The Accident

1. A Hong Kong registered chemical tanker arrived at the anchorage area in Fujairah, UAE for tank inspection. A superintendent and two paint supervisors boarded the tanker to inspect the coating conditions in the cargo tanks.
2. When the superintendent was entering the No. 4S cargo tank by climbing down a vertical ladder, he fell down from the vertical ladder to the bottom of the cargo tank.
3. The superintendent was rescued and sent to a hospital ashore for treatment immediately. However, he was later declared dead by a local doctor there.
4. The investigation into the accident revealed the most probable contributing factors to the accident:
 - a) the superintendent might have suffered from heat exhaustion that caused him to lose his grabbing on the vertical ladder while he was entering the cargo tank in the afternoon under a high ambient temperature; and
 - b) No guard ring was installed onto the vertical ladder and this design failed to prevent the superintendent from falling sideways after he had lost his grabbing on the ladder.
5. The report of investigation into the accident can be found in the Marine Department website at http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/publication/pdf/mai140418_f.pdf

Lessons Learnt

6. The following are lessons learnt from the incident:
 - a) High ambient temperature and humidity can cause heat exhaustion, which may make one lose his grabbing while climbing a vertical ladder, hence, working for a prolonged period in a hot climate should be avoided; and
 - b) Personnel should take extra precautions to avoid falling when climbing a vertical ladder without fitting guard rings, and use fall arrestors as far as practicable.
7. The attention of Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, Officers and Crew is drawn to the lessons learnt from this accident.

Marine Department
Multi-lateral Policy Division

16 September 2015