



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Stevedore fatality resulting from entry of fumigated cargo hold

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

Summary

A stevedore mistakenly entered a fumigated cargo hold of a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier and was later found lying on the spiral ladder of the cargo hold. A stevedore supervisor entered the cargo hold to rescue him and collapsed as well. They were taken out by the vessel's crew and declared dead by the shore medical team. This Note draws the attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crew to the lessons learnt from this accident.

The Incident

1. Logs inside cargo holds of a Hong Kong registered bulker carrier were fumigated during the passage and discharged at port of Humen, China. A stevedore was called to repair an excavator in No. 3 cargo hold. However, he was later found lying on the spiral ladder in No. 2 cargo hold. After knowing the incident, a stevedore supervisor entered No. 2 cargo hold with clothes covering his nose and mouth to rescue the stevedore. However, the stevedore supervisor collapsed inside the cargo hold. Some other stevedores also tried to enter the cargo hold with masks, but retreated due to strong odours. After receiving the report of accident from the duty officer of the vessel, the master organized a team for a rescue operation. The casualties were taken out from No. 2 cargo hold and declared dead by the shore medical team.

2. The investigation revealed that the contributing factors to the accident are as follows:
- (a) the stevedores were not familiar with the working environment on board the vessel. The deceased stevedore made a mistaken entry into the No. 2 cargo hold which was in oxygen-deficient atmosphere and contained high contents of toxic gases;
 - (b) the stevedores were lack of safety awareness of confined space entry. Even recognizing the stevedore had collapsed inside the access trunk of the cargo hold, they still entered the unventilated cargo hold without proper breathing apparatus; and

- (c) the vessel's crew failed to follow the shipboard Safety Management System to lock all accesses to cargo holds which had not been sufficiently ventilated for safety entry.

Lessons Learnt

- 3. The management company's procedures and instructions on handling of fumigated logs and entry into enclosed spaces should be strictly followed.
- 4. The stevedore company should provide effective supervision and adequate training to stevedores, in particular:
 - (a) vessels' confined space entry; and
 - (b) communication with vessels' crew about cargo handling procedures and precautions including risks of particular cargoes and the dangers involving the cargo operations and environment on board.
- 5. The attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crew is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

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