



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

A fatal man-overboard accident caused by climbing up an accommodation ladder from the quayside

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

Summary

A fatal man-overboard accident happened on board a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier whilst at berth. The electrical engineer, perhaps under the influence of alcohol after shore leave, took an improper route to board the vessel by climbing directly from the quayside to the accommodation ladder platform. He fell into the sea and drowned. 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. Some crew of a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier went back onboard in turn after shore leave at night. The two crew on security watch at the shipboard access point on main deck assisted those crew in need in boarding the vessel and returning to their cabins. The access point was therefore left unattended.
2. The electrical engineer intended to board the vessel by taking a shortcut in an attempt to climb to the upper platform of the accommodation ladder at main deck level from the quayside. However, he failed to land on the upper platform and fell into the sea unnoticed. His body was found at sea two days later.
3. The investigation revealed that the main contributory factor to the accident was that the electrical engineer, perhaps under the influence of alcohol, took an improper route to board the vessel by climbing directly from the quayside to the accommodation ladder upper platform.

4. The investigation observed the following safety issues regarding the implementation of the shipboard Safety Management System and the Ship Security Plan: -

- (a) the safety net was not rigged to cover the entire length of the accommodation ladder; and
- (b) the accommodation ladder had not been manned at all times in accordance with the Ship Security Plan. As a result, the attempted climb and the fall of the electrical engineer were unnoticed.

Lessons Learnt

5. It is important that all crew members should strictly follow the requirements and procedures of the Safety Management System and the Ship Security Plan, in particular the following: -

- (a) the safety net should always be rigged properly to cover the entire length of the accommodation ladder between the ship and the quay to minimize the risk of injury from falling;
- (b) the consequences of alcohol consumption during shore leave as stated in the policy/guidelines of the Safety Management System should be reiterated; and
- (c) the manning of access control points during port stay period must be maintained at all times.

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

Marine Department
Multi-lateral Policy Division

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