



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

A fatal fall accident happened on a cargo hold tween deck

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

Summary

While a charterer's representative of a Hong Kong registered multi-purpose dry cargo ship was accompanied by the third officer to check the lashing equipment placed on the tween deck of a cargo hold, he suddenly fell from the edge of the tween deck opening onto to the bottom of the hold, which led to his death. 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. When a Hong Kong registered multi-purpose dry cargo ship (*the vessel*) was discharging cargo at the Port of Onsan, Republic of Korea, a charterer's representative (*the representative*) boarded *the vessel* to check the lashing equipment (*the equipment*) placed inside a cargo hold with its hatch covers closed. At the request of *the representative* to immediately check *the equipment* and take pictures of *the equipment*, and as ordered by the Chief Officer (C/O), the Third Officer (3/O) accompanied *the representative* to enter the cargo hold in complete darkness except for a torchlight. *The representative* was warned many times not to go near the edge of the tween deck because of the potential danger of falling but was ignored. Shortly afterwards, *the representative* suddenly fell from the edge of the tween deck opening to the bottom of the cargo hold. The 3/O reported the accident to the C/O immediately and performed Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation on *the representative* at the spot. Afterwards, *the representative* was transferred to a local hospital for emergency medical treatment. Unfortunately, *the representative* was later declared dead on the same day.

2. The investigation revealed that the contributory factors leading to this accident were that the crew members failed to follow the safety procedures of the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers to carry out a risk assessment and the completion of a permit to work before entering the cargo hold; to fit at the tween deck opening with secure guards or fencing of adequate design and construction to prevent the falling from there; and to provide adequate illumination inside the cargo hold.

3. The investigation also identified that the emergency training and drill on the enclosed space entry and rescue, which carried out every two months were ineffective.

Lessons Learnt

4. In order to avoid recurrence of similar accidents in the future, the management company, all masters, officers, and crew members should:

- (a) ensure the necessary precautions, including a risk assessment and the completion of a permit to work, to be followed before entering enclosed spaces or any spaces suspected as dangerous;
- (b) ensure the secure guards or fencing of adequate design and construction to be fixed on the tween deck opening for preventing the fall;
- (c) ensure adequate illumination to be provided inside the cargo holds before entering; and
- (d) enhance the training and drill on enclosed space entry.

5. The management company should ensure that the crew members follow the safety requirements strictly when entering the enclosed spaces through internal audit on the vessel.

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

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