



## 香港商船資訊

## HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

**A serious injury accident happened on board during cleaning of cargo hold hatch coaming**

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

**Summary**

A serious injury accident happened on board a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier when she was en route from Fangcheng, China to Quy Nhon, Vietnam. At the time of the accident, the Able Seaman 1 (*ABI*) fell onto the main deck from the top of a hatch coaming while carrying out cleaning there and was injured seriously. The *ABI* was sent ashore to a hospital for medical treatment and was discharged from the hospital after a period of over two months. 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. A Hong Kong registered bulk carrier (*the vessel*) departed from Fangcheng, China (*the discharge port*) en route to Quy Nhon, Vietnam. After *the vessel* sailed off from *the discharge port*, the crew of *the vessel* carried out cargo hold cleaning. The *ABI*, Able Seaman 2 and the Deck Cadet (*D/C*) were assigned to clean the No.5 cargo hold, including its hatch coaming (*the hatch coaming*). When the *ABI* was cleaning *the hatch coaming* with the assistance of the *D/C*, he suddenly fell from the top of *the hatch coaming* to the main deck at a height of over 2 meters. During the fall, his crotch hit against the fire main followed by his head banging on the main deck causing him unconscious with bloodshot eyes. After the accident, *the vessel* was steered back to *the discharge port* and the injured *ABI* was sent ashore to a local hospital for medical treatment. He was discharged from the hospital after a period of over two months.

2. The investigation revealed that the main contributory factors to the accident were as follows: the crew failed to follow the requirements of the shipboard Safety Management System (SMS) to wear proper safety equipment when cleaning *the hatch coaming* on board; the crew failed to follow the requirements of the “Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers” (*the Code*) to obtain a permit to work at height before cleaning *the hatch coaming*; the

shipboard safety supervisor failed to follow the requirements of shipboard SMS to provide onsite supervision when the crew was working at height for cleaning *the hatch coaming*; the shipboard training of the crew for working at height was ineffective; the shipboard toolbox meeting was ineffective, including failure to identify the risk of cleaning hatch coamings and carry out relevant risk assessment; and the shipboard SMS failed to follow the requirements of *the Code* to cover risk assessment and issuing a permit for working at height.

## **Lessons Learnt**

3. In order to avoid recurrence of similar accidents during operation in the future, the ship management company, all masters, officers, and crew should note items (a) to (e) while ship management company should also note item (f):

- (a) to strictly follow the requirements of shipboard SMS to wear proper safety equipment when cleaning hatch coamings on board;
- (b) to strictly follow the requirements of *the Code* to obtain a permit to work in a location where there is a risk of falling, such as at the top of a hatch coaming, before conducting the cleaning work there;
- (c) to strictly follow the requirements of shipboard SMS to provide onsite supervision when crew are working at height for cleaning the tops of hatch coamings;
- (d) to enhance the shipboard training of the crew for working at height;
- (e) to ensure that the shipboard toolbox meeting is effectively conducted, including identifying the risk of cleaning hatch coamings and carrying out relevant risk assessment; and
- (f) to ensure that the shipboard SMS covers the requirements of *the Code* on working at height and that the crew strictly follow the requirements of *the Code* and the shipboard SMS when carrying out cargo hold cleaning operations.

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

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