



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Fatal Accident during the Recovery of a Lifeboat

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

Summary

A recent accident happened on a Hong Kong registered ship during recovery of a lifeboat. A crewmember was crushed to death between the lifeboat and the side of the ship. This Note draws the attention of the shore management and shipboard staff to ensure that all crewmembers participating in a lifeboat drill should be aware of potential dangers during the drill.

The Incident

1. On 18 July 2005, an accident occurred on a Hong Kong registered ship during the recovery of a lifeboat in a drill. While the crewmembers were connecting the floating blocks onto the hooks of the lifeboat, the lifeboat was drifted under the influence of water current and wind into the curvature area of the aft side shell of the ship. A crew standing in the area was crushed between the canopy of the lifeboat and the side shell. He fell into the water and died in the incident. (See fig. 1)

2. The investigation revealed that there were blind sectors inside the lifeboat for the helmsman to view the outside environment. He was not able to maintain a proper lookout during the recovering process. Neither the top hatch of the canopy was used, nor a designated crew was assigned to keep a proper lookout while the helmsman was manoeuvring the lifeboat. As a result he was not able to assess properly the surrounding situations and react promptly to deal with the emergency.

Lessons Learnt

- The windows of the enclosed type lifeboats are generally small in size and could not provide an unobstructed view to the helmsman (see fig. 2). To ensure a proper lookout, the helmsman could open the top hatch of the lifeboat to obtain a clear view outside the lifeboat. Alternatively, a crew can be assigned to maintain a lookout for any irregularity.
- The attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crews is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

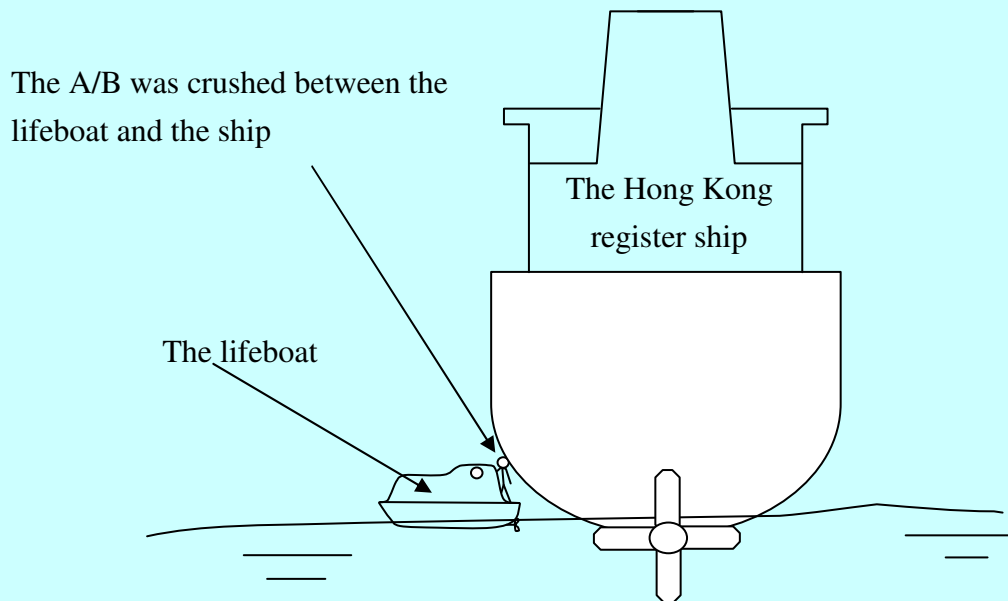


Fig. 1: The scene of the accident

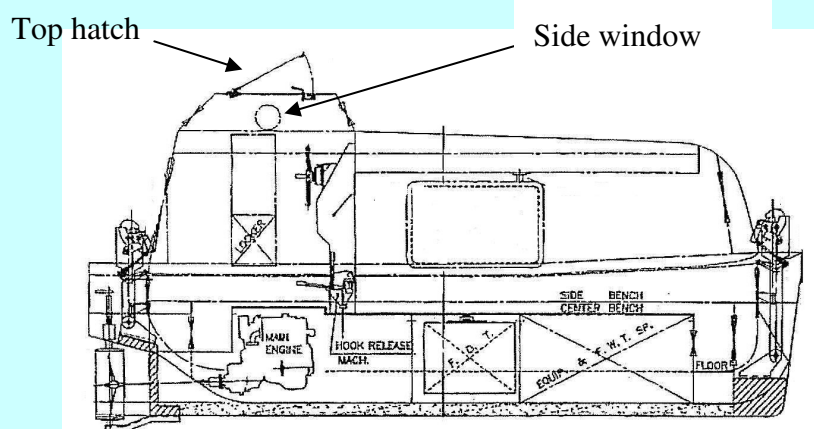


Fig. 2: Drawing of the lifeboat showing the arrangement of the side window and top hatch