



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

A total loss of a bulk carrier due to anchor dragging under rough seas and swells

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

Summary

A total loss of a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier occurred as a result of grounding on a beach of San Antonio, Chile due to heavy seas and swells during anchoring. This information note draws the attention of Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters and Officers to the lessons learnt from this accident.

The Accident

1. A fully loaded Hong Kong registered bulk carrier having a draft of 10 metres anchored in the bay of San Antonio, Chile where the water depth was about 25 metres.
2. The next day after arrival, bad weather warning of high seas and swells of 3 to 5 metres in San Antonio bay area was broadcast. In the evening, the port Authority announced port closed through VHF broadcasting and all vessels were to leave the port. The bulk carrier dragged her anchor and was slowly moving towards shore under the effect of rough seas and swell in that evening. However, the bridge team did not notice the ship's movement.
3. In the early morning on the third day of arrival, the Officer of the Watch (OOW) found the ship had dragged anchor and drifted about 9 cables closer to the shore. He did not take immediate action but spent the next two hours to verify the situation by himself prior to informing it to the Master and requesting for standing by of main engine. Unfortunately, the turning gear was found deformed and jammed with the engine flywheel. It took one and a half hours to prepare before the main engine was ready to use. At that time, the ship had come closer to the shallow water area.

4. As the ship was in shallow water, the Master attempted to take her safely away from the shoal with slow engine speed, but it was in vain. The ship was grounded about 20 minutes later. Finally, she was abandoned with all the crew rescued.

5. The investigation into the accident was carried out by the Chilean Administration. It was concluded that:

- a) The delayed start of the propulsion engine when the ship dragged anchor in the port area under heavy swells and winds resulted in the grounding of the ship; and
- b) The accident was predictable and was the result of human, material and natural factors but the crew failed to adopt the safety measures recommended for bad weather conditions.

Lessons Learnt

6. The Master and the OOWs should:

- a) take due consideration at all times of the characteristics of the anchorage in ports where their vessels are anchored;
- b) under adverse weather conditions, closely monitor the development of weather system and any safety instructions by the port authorities; and
- c) closely monitor for any possible dragging of ship's anchor, especially when adverse weather is anticipated.

7. The attention of Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters and Officers is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

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