



# 香 港 商 船 資 訊

## HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

### **Two similar fatal accidents happened to the log carriers while encountered heavy weather at sea**

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

#### *Summary*

Two similar accidents happened to two Hong Kong registered log carriers within short interval and caused seven crewmembers missing. In the accidents, the two log carriers were underway from Papua New Guinea to Jingjiang, China with fully laden logs. The first log carrier capsized under gusty wind, 6 crewmembers were missing. The second log carrier listed heavily under heavy weather caused by typhoon and the master fell into sea and disappeared during the abandon ship operation. This information note draws the attention of Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, Officers and Crew to the lessons learnt from these accidents.

#### **The Incident**

1. In the first accident, a log carrier sailed from Papua New Guinea to Jingjiang, China with fully laden logs in holds and on deck. The vessel encountered gusty wind of over 60 knots and boisterous seas. She heeled heavily to port side and capsized within 20 minutes. Subsequently, the vessel sank. 11 crew members were able to board a lifeboat and a liferaft. They were rescued two days later, whereas the other 6 crew members were missing in the accident.

2. In the second incident, another log carrier also sailed from Papua New Guinea to Jingjiang, China with fully laden logs in holds and on deck. The vessel encountered heavy weather caused by typhoon. Sea water entered into No.1 cargo hold of the vessel through broken tarpaulins on hatch covers. The vessel heeled to starboard side heavily and the master ordered abandon ship. However, he fell into sea and was missing during the abandon ship operation.

3. The investigation into these incidents revealed that the main contributing factors were:
- a) The log carriers encountered strong wind and boisterous seas;
  - b) The masters of both log carriers did not ensure the vessels' stability in the deck cargo loading condition were safe prior to and during the voyages;
  - c) Sea water accumulated in cargo hold through damaged tarpaulin on hatch covers, free surface effect was created and weakened the stability under heavy weather;
  - d) The masters of the vessels did not ensure all lifesaving appliances on board were in working order and/or ready for immediate use at all time during the voyage; and
  - e) The shore management company could not be contacted by the master in emergency and the safety alertness of the shore management was low (there was no immediate effective actions taken to ensure safety and the whereabouts of the vessel after losing regular contact with the ship).

### **Lessons Learnt**

4. The management company of log carrier should ensure that procedures for safe operation of log carrier are complied with. Particular attentions should be drawn to the following area:

- a) stability of vessel meeting the statutory requirements at all times;
- b) voyage planning taking into account all relevant requirements stipulated in SOLAS Chapter V Regulation 34 - Safe navigation and avoidance of dangerous situations;
- c) operational readiness of all lifesaving appliances on board before leaving the port and at all time during the voyage as stipulated in SOLAS Chapter III Regulation 20.2 – Operational readiness;
- d) emergency preparedness in dealing with emergency situations of all responsible officers on board and management staff ashore meeting the relevant requirements stipulated at Section 8 in Part A of the ISM Code; and
- e) the vessel which carries logs on deck with sufficient additional buoyancy so as to avoid overloading and loss of stability at sea due to the increased weight of the timber deck cargo due to water absorption.

5. The attention of Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, Officers and Crew is drawn to the lessons learnt from these accidents.