



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

A fatal accident in hawse pipe

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

Summary

A fatal accident happened on board a bulk carrier while lowering anchor. In the accident, a fitter was crushed to death by anchor chain while he was inside a hawse pipe to carry out inspection of the anchor which was getting stuck. This Information Note draws the attention of the shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crew on the lessons learnt in the accident.

The Incident

1. This accident happened on board a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier, when she was preparing to anchor at a pilot station. During the anchoring, the starboard anchor was stuck in a hawse pipe. After several attempts to operate the windlass to tighten and release the anchor chain alternately and repeatedly, the starboard anchor was still stuck inside.
2. Before the fitter went to check the conditions of the anchor, the chain stopper and brake of the windlass had been engaged. However, the section between the chain stopper and the anchor was hanging loosely. When the fitter went into the hawse pipe, the anchor was jerk suddenly and pulled the anchor chain. Unfortunately, the fitter crushed between the anchor chain and the wall of the hawse pipe, he was picked up by his colleague and sent to hospital for rescue, he was later certified dead in the hospital.
3. Following are the contributory factors of the accident:
 - i. The fitter was allowed to went into the hawse pipe to free the anchor and the anchor chain without carrying out a risk assessment; and
 - ii. The sudden movement of the chain cables crushed the fitter when he was working inside the hawse pipe.

Important lessons to be learnt

4. The following are lessons learnt from the incident:
 - i. It was unsafe to let a person went into the hawse pipe at sea;
 - ii. No work to be carried out until a risk assessment was conducted and all identifiable hazards had been eliminated; and
 - iii. Appropriate guidelines for high risk operations should be contained in the safety management system for prevention of personal injury at work.

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