



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Lifeboat Accident

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

Summary

During recovery of a lifeboat from the water after a drill, the wire rope pennants on the lifting sling of the lifeboat parted and resulted in the lifeboat falling back into the water. This information note draws the attention of Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Classification Societies, Masters, Officers and Crew to the lessons learnt from this accident.

The Accident

1. A lifeboat accident happened when the crew on board a Hong Kong registered general cargo vessel was conducting a drill for the freefall lifeboat using the launch and retrieval davit.
2. The lifeboat was launched, without crew on board, into the water by davit and a lifting sling made up of four wire rope pennants each of them connected to the lifeboat. After that, four crewmembers embarked the lifeboat and maneuvered her in the water for testing. After finish, they connected the wire rope pennants to the lifeboat and seated inside ready for recovery of the lifeboat. When the lifeboat was hoisted to the deck level, one of the wire rope pennants parted and consequently the other three parted almost immediately. As a result, the lifeboat fell into the water. One of the crewmembers sustained head injury after being thrown out of his seat as he had released his restrains prior to the accident.
3. Investigation into the accident revealed that the wire rope pennants parted under tensile overload because they were significantly weakened by severe corrosion. The corrosion was mainly caused by salt water penetrating and accumulating around the steel wire under a plastic sheathing. The sheathing prevented the crew and surveyors to carry out inspection and maintenance of the wire rope lifting sling properly.

Lessons learnt

4. It is important that all lifting slings or other steel wire ropes used on board ships should be properly inspected and maintained at all times. When such lifting slings or steel wire ropes are having protective sheathing, manufacturer's instructions on their inspections and maintenance must be strictly adhered to.

5. The attention of Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Classification Societies, Masters, Officers and Crew is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

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