



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Collision of a Bulk Carrier and an Oil Tanker in the East China Sea

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

Summary

A collision between a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier and a Panama registered oil tanker happened in the East China Sea. The oil tanker caught fire, exploded and finally sank in the sea taking the lives of all her 32 crew members. This Note draws the attention of Ship owners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, Officers and Ratings to the lessons learnt from this accident.

The Incident

1. A Panama registered oil tanker (the tanker) collided with a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier (the bulk carrier) in the East China Sea. At the time of the accident, the sea state was slight and the weather was cloudy with a good visibility. There was a northeast wind of force 4 to 5.
2. With fully loaded condensate oil, the tanker caught fire and exploded immediately after the collision. After eight days of burning in her cargo holds, it finally sank in the sea. Three of her 32 crew members died and the remaining were missing.
3. The fire spread to the bulk carrier. All crew members abandoned ship via the free-fall lifeboat quickly and were rescued without injury by a nearby fishing vessel.
4. Investigation into the accident revealed the following contributory factors :
 - a) both vessels failed to comply with the requirements of:-
 - (i) Rule 5 of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (COLREGS) to maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing;
 - (ii) Rule 7 of the COLREGS to use all available means appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions to determine if risk of collision exists.

- b) Being a give-way vessel, the tanker failed to take action to keep out of the way of the bulk carrier in a crossing situation. Being a stand-on vessel, the bulk carrier failed to take action to avoid collision when the give-way vessel did not take any appropriate action to keep out of the way.

Lessons learnt

5. The master and the officers in charge of the navigation watch shall strictly comply with the requirements of the COLREGS at all times. Furthermore, the watchkeeping officers and ratings should not rely only on the AIS information to determine the risk of collision. All the navigational aids available on board as well as the sight look-out should be used to determine the risk of collision.

6. Shipmanagement companies should review their Safety Management Systems to ensure that there are procedures:

- a) to verify the effectiveness of training, drills and exercises through reviewing the ISM system for further enhancement in particular of the areas of bridge watch handover procedures; and
- b) for backing up VDR information at the time of near miss or accident.

7. A copy of the marine accident investigation report on this accident is attached to this Note as Annex 1. It could also be found in the following website of Marine Department: <https://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/msnote/msin.html>.

8. The attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and ratings is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

Marine Department
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