



## 香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

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**Fatal accident of a stevedore working underneath a grapple**

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

***Summary***

When a stevedore was working underneath a partially-opened grapple controlled by a ship crane on board a vessel, the grapple suddenly closed and caught the neck of the stevedore, which resulted in the stevedore's death. This Note draws the attention of the shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crew to the lessons learnt from this accident.

**The Incident**

1. During the cargo discharge operation of a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier (*the vessel*) berthed at the port of Alexandria, Egypt, three stevedores gathered empty oil containers on the port side main deck beside a cargo hold of *the vessel*. The stevedores intended to transfer the empty oil containers ashore by the ship crane with a grapple. When one of the stevedores was still securing the empty oil containers to the tines of the partially-opened grapple, another stevedore who operated the ship crane mistakenly believed that the securing work had been completed and therefore closed the grapple. The tines of the grapple caught the neck of the stevedore underneath the grapple and resulted in the fatal accident.
2. The investigation revealed that the main contributory factors causing the accident were insufficient safety awareness of the stevedores who underestimated the risk of working underneath the grapple, no stevedore signalman was assigned for the crane operation and the stevedore crane operator failed to confirm that there was no person in the hazardous area underneath and around the grapple before operating it, and lastly, the duty crew had not observed the unsafe operation of the stevedores on board.

## **Lessons Learnt**

3. In order to avoid recurrence of similar accidents in the future, the masters, officers and crew of vessels should take appropriate actions against any unsafe operation of stevedores on board, including suspension of unsafe operation if necessary, and enhance safety patrol to monitor the safe working of stevedores on board.

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12 July 2021