



## 香港商船資訊

## HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

**Fatal accident involving enclosed space rescue**

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

***Summary***

A Chief Officer on board a Hong Kong registered chemical/product carrier rashly entered a cargo oil tank for rescue, but fainted instantly and fell onto the second landing platform in the tank, resulting in his death. This Note draws the attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crew to the lessons learnt from this accident.

**The Incident**

1. When a Hong Kong registered chemical/product carrier was en route along the coast to the port in Durban, South Africa for loading, the Chief Officer (C/O) instructed an ordinary seaman (OS) to enter a cargo oil tank with the assistance of two cadets for final tank inspection. The OS entered the tank without wearing breathing apparatus (BA) and fainted on the first landing platform. Once the C/O received the emergency report from one of the cadets, he rashly entered the tank also without wearing BA. He fainted instantly and fell onto the second landing platform in the tank. The Third Officer (3/O), who wore a set of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), went inside the tank attempting to rescue the two crew members. However, he also fainted on the first landing platform when he took off the face mask of the SCBA to communicate with the persons outside the tank. The OS, 3/O and C/O were rescued from the tank later. However, the C/O was declared dead afterwards.
2. The investigation revealed the main contributory factors of the accident were the non-compliance with the permit-to-work system for enclosed space entry and the absence of risk assessment for tank entry. The lack of supervision of the rescue operation according to the standing procedures had resulted in the death of the C/O.
3. The investigation also identified that the cargo oil tank tagging mechanism was not strictly followed and the crew was not trained sufficiently for the rescue.

## **Lessons Learnt**

4. In order to avoid recurrence of similar accidents in the future, masters, officers and crew of vessels should:

- (a) strictly comply with the permit-to-work system for entering any enclosed spaces in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers and the shipboard safety management system;
- (b) seal the tank access hatch with a tag showing the hazardous condition to avoid inadvertent entry; and
- (c) enhance their skills in emergency rescue especially from enclosed spaces.

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

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