



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

A fatal accident happened on board while discharging fumigated grain cargo

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

Summary

A fatal accident happened on board a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier when she was discharging fumigated soya beans at Karachi, Pakistan. Two stevedores were reported missing in the cargo hold. They were later found in the Australian ladder space during the search and rescue operation and were sent ashore for medical treatment. Unfortunately, they were confirmed dead later. 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. A Hong Kong registered bulk carrier (*the vessel*) berthed at Karachi, Pakistan (*the discharge port*) to discharge fumigated soya beans in bulk (*the cargo*). The fumigation of *the cargo* and the following ventilation of all cargo holds were carried out on board *the vessel* as required by the port authority of *the discharging port*. During the cargo discharge operation, two stevedores were reported missing in the cargo hold. The stevedore rescue team, the police, and the shore first aid team carried out a search and rescue operation. The two disappeared stevedores were finally found in the Australian ladder space and were sent ashore for medical treatment. Unfortunately, they were confirmed dead later.

2. The investigation revealed that the main contributory factors leading to the accident were that the crew failed to follow the requirements of the “Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers” (*the Code*) on entry into dangerous spaces; the crew failed to follow the requirements of the shipboard safety management system (SMS) on entering the cargo hold loaded with fumigated cargo; the crew failed to follow the requirements of *the Code* to carry out gas checks at all appropriate locations onboard when fumigation continued in transit according to the recommendations of MSC.1/Circular 1264; the crew neither took sufficient measures to prevent unauthorised entry to a dangerous space according to *the Code* nor controlled or

monitored the access to *the vessel* according to the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code; the shipboard drills and training for the crew on entry into enclosed spaces and rescue were ineffective; and the shipboard SMS failed to cover the safety procedures of the fumigation of grain cargoes in port and in transit according to recommendations of MSC.1/Circular 1264 as required by *the Code*.

Lessons Learnt

3. In order to avoid recurrence of similar incidents during future operations, the ship management company, all masters, officers, and crew members should note items (a) to (e) while ship management company should also note item (f):

- (a) strictly follow the requirements of *the Code* to mark the ladder space as the entrance to a dangerous space and lock or secure it properly against unauthorised entry;
- (b) strictly follow the requirements of the shipboard SMS to hold toolbox meetings and conduct risk assessments before discharging cargoes, and obtain a gas-free certificate before entering cargo holds loaded with fumigated cargoes;
- (c) strictly follow the requirements of *the Code* to carry out gas checks at all appropriate locations onboard according to the recommendations of *MSC.1/Circular 1264* when fumigation continues in transit;
- (d) enhance measures to prevent unauthorised entry to a dangerous space according to *the Code* and control or monitor the access to vessel according to the ISPS Code;
- (e) enhance shipboard drills and training for the crew on entry into enclosed spaces and rescue; and
- (f) ensure that the shipboard SMS covers the requirements of *the Code* and *MSC.1/Circular 1264*, and ensure that the crew strictly follow the requirements of the ISPS Code at port and the shipboard SMS when carrying fumigated grain cargoes.

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

Marine Department
Multi-lateral Policy Division

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