

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 27 OF 2015

(Marine Industrial Safety)

Unsafe Cargo Loading of a Wooden Fishing Vessel **resulted in the losing of three lives**

The Incident

1. A fatal accident happened on a locally licensed wooden fishing vessel (*the vessel*) when loading of scrap metals from a floating dock (*the dock*) in Tsing Yi. *The vessel* capsized and subsequently sank during the loading operation.

2. A crane of *the dock* was used to lift three cages of scrap metals from *the dock* onto the deck of *the vessel*. Eight persons including a consignee, a foreman, four workmen, a coxswain, and his wife were onboard *the vessel*. The workmen acted as slingers to facilitate the operation. After the third lift of the scrap metals landed on *the vessel*, it listed to one side and started to take in water. *The vessel* capsized and sank in few minutes.

3. The foreman and workmen were able to swim back to *the dock*, but the consignee, the coxswain and his wife were missing. Later, the missing persons were recovered from the water and certified dead.

4. The investigation revealed that the main contributory factors to the accident were:

- The foreman did not assess the risk of cargo overloading which would adversely affect the stability of *the vessel*; and
- The primitive wooden fishing vessel was used for the carriage of heavy cargo.

Lesson learnt

5. The attention of the owners, coxswains and persons in charge of locally licensed vessels is drawn to the important lesson learnt from the above accident as follows:

- (i) According to section 5 of “Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Certification and Licensing) Regulation” Chapter 548D, a fishing vessel shall be used exclusively for fishing and related purposes; and
- (ii) The carriage of heavy cargo on the primitive wooden fishing vessel will affect both vessel stability and seaworthiness.

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