

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 52/2020

(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)

Grounding of a general cargo ship in Hong Kong

The incident

A general cargo ship (*the vessel*) anchored at Western Anchorage No.1 dragged her anchor due to adverse weather condition caused by the super typhoon “Hato”. The master of *the vessel* was unable to manoeuvre the ship to a safe haven. *The vessel* consequently ran aground near the entrance of the yacht basin of Discovery Bay Marina Club and listed to the port side due to water ingress through the breached bottom. All crew abandoned *the vessel* without personnel injury. *The vessel* was subsequently further damaged by the severe tropical storm “Pakhar”. *The vessel* was finally salvaged and towed away from Hong Kong two months later.

2. Although it appeared that the typhoon had led to the grounding of *the vessel*, the following were the root causes of the incident:

- (i) unseaworthiness of *the vessel*;
- (ii) failure of effective implementation of the Safety Management System (SMS) on board; and
- (iii) incompetence of the crew, especially the master and senior officers.

3. The investigation also revealed that the management company failed to manage *the vessel* properly.

Lessons Learnt

4. All vessels in Hong Kong waters should be properly manned with competent crew and be maintained in good condition for the sake of safety and pollution prevention.

5. All vessels in Hong Kong waters should continuously pay attention to the safety messages broadcasted by the Vessel Traffic Centre of Hong Kong Marine Department and take preventive measures according to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.
6. Management companies of vessels should ensure that the applicable SMS is effectively implemented on board, and the crew perform their duties in accordance with relevant procedures and requirements.

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