

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 223/2022

(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)

Man overboard fatal accident on a locally licensed ferry

The Incident

A locally licensed ferry (Ferry A) berthed to a flat-top work barge (the barge) near a ferry pier (the pier), waiting for the next working instruction from the ship management company (the company). Later, the company arranged for the crew of Ferry A to proceed to the pier to take over another locally licensed ferry (Ferry B). After the coxswain took over Ferry B, he found that the assistant chief engineer was missing while unmooring Ferry B, and immediately reported to the company for help. After receiving the report, the company arranged its staff to search for the assistant chief engineer in the cabins of Ferry A and around the barge but without success, and called the police for help. The assistant chief engineer was later found in the water near Ferry A and taken to the hospital, but was certified dead eventually.

2. The investigation revealed that the contributory factor leading to the fatal accident was that the assistant chief engineer might have accidentally slipped into the sea due to improper wearing of safety shoes when disembarking from Ferry A.

3. The investigation also revealed that the crew of Ferry A lacked safety awareness of the potential dangers of using the access channel when boarding and alighting from the ferry and did not take appropriate safety measures to avoid falling into the sea; and the assistant chief engineer was unaware that failure to wear safety shoes properly while working or walking on board could result in injury or accident.

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Lessons Learnt

4. To avoid the recurrence of similar accidents in the future, shipowners and companies should enhance the safety awareness of the crew when boarding and alighting from ferries, and take appropriate safety measures in the access channel to prevent people from falling into the sea.

Ms Carol Yuen
Director of Marine

Marine Department

Government of the HKSAR

Date: 1 November 2022

Action file ref.: L/M No. 4/2022 in MAI/P 901/067-2021