

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 30/2023

(Marine Industrial Safety)

Fatal marine industrial accident during container loading operation

The Incident

A fatal marine industrial accident happened on board a Chinese Mainland-registered river-trade container vessel (*the vessel*) during a container loading operation in the nearshore waters off the Ngong Wan Road, Stonecutter Island. After container discharge operation, *the vessel* proceeded to berth alongside a dumb steel lighter (*the lighter*) for container loading. The crane operator on *the lighter* used the crane to lift and load the onshore containers into the cargo hold of *the vessel*. During loading of the third-tier containers, the master of *the vessel* accidentally fell into the bottom of the cargo hold when trying to unfasten the hook near the direction of the accommodation. The foreman and a sailor went for his rescue immediately after hearing the call for help from the third engineer. Officers from the Marine Police, Fire Services Department, and Marine Department arrived at the accident scene for rescue after receiving the report from shore staff. Afterwards, the master was sent to hospital for medical treatment. Unfortunately, he was pronounced dead in hospital that day.

2. The investigation revealed that *the vessel* failed to follow the requirements and recommendations of the Codes of Practice on Shipboard Container Handling on Local Vessels (*the Code of Practice*) to establish a safe system of work and safe working procedures for container loading operation whereby a risk assessment is to be conducted for early identification of the risk of falling; and failed to follow the requirements of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Works) Regulation (*the Regulation*) as some crew members of *the vessel* did not hold a valid cargo handling basic safety training certificate when engaged in the container loading operation.

3. The investigation also revealed that the shipping company and crew members of *the vessel* had insufficient safety awareness of working aloft, and the

We are One in Promoting Excellence in Marine Services

crew members failed to follow the requirements of the Safe Loading Manual of *the vessel* to carry out container loading operation.

Lessons Learnt

4. In order to avoid the recurrence of similar accidents in future, the shipowner and master of *the vessel*, as well as person in charge of works on *the lighter* should follow the requirement of *the Regulation* when carrying out container loading operation to ensure that operators should hold valid cargo handling basic safety training certificates; follow the requirements and recommendations of *the Code of Practice* to establish a safe system of work and safe working procedures for container loading operation whereby a risk assessment is to be conducted for early identification of the risk of falling; enhance the safety awareness of the shipping company and crew members on working aloft; and carry out container loading operation in accordance with the requirements of the shipboard Safe Loading Manual.

Ms Carol Yuen
Director of Marine

Marine Department
Government of the HKSAR

Date: 13 February 2023

Action file ref.: L/M No. 2/2023 in MAI/P 903/002-2022