

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 45/2023

(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)

Man overboard fatal accident on a locally-licensed ferry at berth

The Incident

In the morning of the accident day, a locally-licensed ferry (*the ferry*) berthed at another locally-licensed ferry (*Ferry A*) for onboard replenishment of lubricating oil (*the bunkering operation*) by *the ferry's* Chief Engineer (*C/E*) alone. Just after noon, a seaman of *the ferry* found the *C/E* floating on the sea surface between *the ferry* and *Ferry A* near the stern. He immediately called other crew members for assistance and jumped into the sea for rescue. The Master of *the ferry* reported the accident to the management company (*the company*), and *the company* immediately called the Police for help. *The ferry* crew and *the company* personnel worked together to rescue the *C/E* from sea and provided first aid until the arrival of shore-based paramedics. The Fire Services Department personnel arrived and continued applying first aid to the *C/E* on-site and sent him to hospital for medical treatment. Unfortunately, he was declared dead on the same day.

2. The investigation concluded that the accident was probably caused by the sudden collapse of the *C/E* due to ischaemic heart disease while crossing ferries, which caused him to fall into the sea and drown.

3. The investigation also revealed that *the ferry* crew did not comply with the "Marine Lubricating Oil Management Measures" stipulated by *the company* to have the shipboard *bunkering operation* handled and monitored by at least two persons; and that during his ferry-to-ferry transfer, the *C/E* lacked safety awareness to follow the "Safety Guidelines for Embarking, Disembarking and Transferring Between Vessels", including crossing the ferries alone, failing to use the shipboard gangway or bulwark door, and not wearing appropriate protective clothing and safety shoes.

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Lessons Learnt

4. In order to avoid the recurrence of similar accidents in future, *the company* should enhance the safety awareness of the crew during *the bunkering operation* and transfer between ferries.

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Marine Department

Government of the HKSAR

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