Death of Bosun on board the Hong Kong registered bulk carrier Magsenger 3 at sea in position 48°35.1’N / 014°08.2’W on 13 March 2012

1. The incident

1.1 At about 1430 on 13 March 2012 at position 48°35.1’N / 014°08.2’W, when the Hong Kong registered bulk carrier vessel Magsenger 3 was en route from Dunkrik, France to Newport News, the United States, the Bosun fell into the No.7 cargo hold during cargo hold cleaning operation.

1.2 At the time of the accident, a portable derrick was being used to lift a bucket of cargo residue of iron ore from the No.7 cargo hold. The bucket had been lifted to a level above the hatch coaming and was ready to be slewed away from the cargo hatch opening. Suddenly, the derrick failed and collapsed into the cargo hold. The Bosun immediately used his hand to hold the derrick but lost his balance and fell into the cargo hold. He was certified dead on board.

1.3 The investigation into the accident revealed the following main contributing factors to the accident:

a) not only did the crew ignore the misalignment of the derrick’s mountings, but they also operated the derrick without following the manufacturer’s instructions. As a result, the derrick broke; and

b) the Bosun did not realize the risk of working aloft, nor did he follow the relevant company procedures.

1.4 The other safety factors revealed are as follows:

a) poor workmanship in the fabrication of the derrick and its mounting;

b) misalignment of the derrick mountings was not detected upon acceptance of the new vessel;

c) the crew did not report the defect in the mounting of the derrick to the ship management; and

d) the assessment before commencement of work did not fully take into account all possible steps in the work and the associated risks.
2. Lessons learnt

2.1 The correctness of fittings for derricks should be checked during acceptance of new vessels and during routine maintenance thereafter; and

2.2 The masters of vessels should ensure that crewmembers will follow the manufacturer’s instructions regarding the use of derricks of a similar design.