

Fatal accident happened on board a Singapore registered MV “Equator Peace” at Tap Shek Kok, Hong Kong on 24 May 2013

1. The Incident

1.1 On 24 May 2013, a fatal accident happened on board the Singapore registered bulk carrier “*Equator Peace*” at a coal terminal in Tap Shek Kok, Hong Kong.

1.2 At about 1800 hours, when the vessel was mooring alongside the terminal, the crewmembers on board found the vessel had drifted about one metre away from the jetty due to change in draft after some cargo discharged. The third officer with the ordinary seaman went to the forecastle to tighten up the mooring ropes. In the process, the breast rope connected to the starboard winch parted and snapped on the head of the ordinary seaman. The ordinary seaman was seriously injured and sent to the hospital. He was certified dead at about 2000 hours in the hospital on the same day.

1.3 The investigation into the accident revealed that the main contributing factors to this accident were:

- The number of mooring ropes used in the mooring arrangement was less than that as recommended. As a result, the tension in the mooring ropes was too high;
- Mooring ropes on board this vessel were generally in poor condition and lacked of maintenance;
- The crewmembers kept on tightening up the starboard forward breast rope which had a shorter lead (and hence with a higher share of loading) to pull the bow of the vessel to the berth. Such practice would increase the tension in that mooring rope which was finally parted; and
- The mooring arrangement on deck failed to keep the winch operating positions clear from the snap back zone.

2. Lessons

To avoid recurrence of similar accident, it is important that:

- to ensure the deck mooring arrangement be planned in such a way to prevent crew members staying within snap back zones while controlling winch;

- to ensure the crewmembers to observe company safety procedures to avoid persons from staying within the snap back zones of mooring ropes at all times;
- to provide instructions and procedures in the Safety Management System for the inspection and maintenance of mooring ropes and the criteria for their replacement; and
- to provide prompt support to the shipboard management upon requisitions of essential stores and provisions.