

# **Fatal Accident onboard Hong Kong registered bulk carrier “Liberty Prrudencia” at Taiwan Strait on 20 February 2014**

## **1. The incident**

1.1 The accident happened at about 1945 on 20 February 2014 on board the Hong Kong registered bulk carrier “Liberty Prrudencia” when it was sailing from the port of Paradip, India to Huanghua, China through Taiwan Strait after loading iron ore fines.

1.2 The No.1 grab for the No.1 crane was moved from its original stowing pedestal and secured at a temporary stowage position near the No.5 cargo hold as the wires of the No.1 crane were required to be renewed. When the vessel was transiting Taiwan Strait on the evening of 20 February 2014, the wind was northeasterly with force 8 to 9 on the Beaufort scale and wave height was about 4.5 metres, the lashing of the No.1 grab was found loosened and the grab shifted away from its temporary stowage position. Crew members including the chief engineer and the engine fitter were called to add additional lashing onto the grab in order to avoid its further movement that might cause damage to both the vessel and the grab.

1.3 At about 1945 when the crew members were carrying out their lashing work, sea waves suddenly washed on deck to push the grab backward causing the fitter to be caught in between the grab and the ship’s structure. He was certificated dead later. The chief engineer had also been pushed by the waves to crash into the aft gangway, he suffered injuries on his face and leg.

1.4 The investigation revealed the following contributory factors to the accident:

- Before sailing the grab had neither been stowed at the designed pedestal nor secured properly on deck with appropriate arrangement; and
- Comprehensive risk assessment was not carried out in association with the emergency operation, i.e. to secure the loosen heavy grab on deck in darkness and under heavy weather condition.

## **2. Lessons learnt**

The lessons learnt from this incident are:

- The cargo grabs on board should be stowed in the designated stowage position at all time before sailing. If the grabs or other heavy objects are to be

secured on deck or on board, they must be properly secured with appropriate arrangement; and

- In dealing with unexpected emergency situations, the master must carry out comprehensive risk assessment and take all possible measures to minimize the risks to crew and the vessel.