

# **Fatal Accident onboard the Hong Kong registered bulk carrier *Tian Bai Feng* in Montreal, Canada on 2 July 2014**

## **1. The incident**

1.1 On 2 July 2014, the Hong Kong registered bulk carrier *Tian Bai Feng* anchored at the Lanoraie anchorage, Montreal, Canada. The crewmembers were assigned to carry out cargo holds cleaning work prior to loading grain. An ordinary seaman (OS) and a fitter were tasked to clean the cargo hold No.6.

1.2 At about 1915 on the same day, the OS came out from the cargo hold No. 6 after having finished work, followed by the fitter. The OS proceeded to check whether anybody was still working inside the cargo hold No.7. He stepped on the hatch covers closing chains to view the interior of the cargo hold. At that time, the chief engineer was operating the hydraulic motor to pull the chains in order to close the hatch covers of the cargo hold No.7. The sagged chains were tightened and swung up and down. As a result, the OS was bounced up, lost his balance and fell into the cargo hold. He was declared dead on board.

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

1.3.1 The safety awareness of the OS was poor, he stepped on the chains while the cargo hold was opened. The OS lost his balance and fell into the cargo hold through the hatchway;

1.3.2 The chief engineer who operated the chains driving system for closing the hatch cover, did not ensure that all personnels had been cleared from the hatch before closing the hatch covers; and

1.3.3 The chief engineer failed to organize the operation according to the company procedure.

## **2. Lessons learnt**

2.1 The lessons learnt from this incident are:

2.1.1 The procedure of the opening and closing operation of hatch covers should be strictly followed, in particular, all persons must stay away from chains and the area that the hatch covers may reach;

2.1.2 Visual and audible warning signals to alert personnel aware of the pending operation of hatch should be fitted; and

2.1.3 Protective guards should be fitted or other arrangement should be made to prevent crew from being hurt by the running chains.