

## **Fatal accident happened on board bulk carrier “CF Crystal” at Port Authur, Texas USA on 13 December 2014**

### **1. The Incident**

- 1.1 On 13 December 2014, a crew member of the Hong Kong registered bulk carrier “CF CRYSTAL” (the “*vessel*”) fell into the water and disappeared while the *vessel* was at the anchorage in the Port Authur, Texas, the USA.
- 1.2 Crew members were assigned to paint the draught marks of the *vessel* at midship on the starboard side. An able-bodied seaman (the AB) was lowered down over the ship side on a bosun chair which was hung at one end of a lifting rope while the other end of the lifting rope was secured to a structure on deck. He was secured by a lifeline that was not properly secured to the ship side railing. A lifebuoy with lifeline attached to ship side railing was to let afloat on the water surface. However, he did not wear a lifejacket as required by the company’s Safety Management Manual and it was agreed by the bosun who was in charge of the work at the site.
- 1.3 After the painting work was completed at about 0900, the AB was lifted up by crew members on deck, and the lifting rope suddenly parted at about 2 metres above sea level. The AB fell into the water and his lifeline was detached from the ship side railing during his fall.
- 1.4 The AB could not grab the lifebuoy floating on the water. Another lifebuoy was thrown to him but still could not be caught by him. Soon afterwards, the AB was drown and disappeared in the water.
- 1.5 The vessel’s rescue boat was launched into the water for search and rescue operation, but the boat engine failed to run. Coastguard launch and rescue helicopter arrived at the scene at 1005 and commenced the search and rescue operation. It was stopped at 1642 on the same day without any finding.

### **2. Lessons learnt**

- 2.1. It is important that the crew members should strictly follow the shipboard safety procedures and code of safety working practice relevant to the work to be performed. Crew members should ensure their safety equipment are in good condition before using them. A through on-board supervision and monitoring

of the work ongoing is very important. It is also important to confirm that the crew who operate safety equipment on board are familiar with the functioning and operation of such equipment, for example, in each abandon ship drill.