

A fatal accident happened when working aloft during the cargo hold cleansing on board Hong Kong registered woodchip carrier “*Surabaya Express*” on 16 February 2015

1. The Incident

- 1.1 The Hong Kong registered woodchip carrier “*Surabaya Express*” (the *vessel*) was en-route to a loading port in Chile after departure of the discharge port in Korea on 15 February 2015. On the morning of 16 February 2015, when the *vessel* was in the approximate position of 31° 27.1N 128°33.2E, crew members on board started to cleanse the No.1 cargo hold.
- 1.2 An able-bodied seaman and an ordinary seaman were assigned to cleanse the forward part of the cargo hold on deck. To this ordinary seaman, the *vessel* was his first ship and he had only about one month of seagoing experience at that time. After completion of the cleansing work for this part, the able-bodied seaman entered into the cargo hold by climbing down the vertical steel ladder until he arrived at the first landing platform. At there, he cleansed the top area of the cargo hold, while the ordinary seaman was staying on deck adjacent to the forward access hatch to provide assistance to him if necessary.
- 1.3 At about 0950 hours, the ordinary seaman went down to the cargo hold. He fell down to the third landing platform of about 7 metres in height when climbing down the vertical ladder of the cargo hold.
- 1.4 The ordinary seaman sustained serious injury and was rescued to a hospital by a helicopter in Kagoshima, Japan at about 1430 hours on 16 February 2015. He was certified dead later on the same day.

2. Lessons learnt

- 2.1 It is important that the work of inexperienced crew members on board must be closely supervised and the supervisor should not leave them alone. On the other hand, crew members should not underestimate the risk of climbing vertical ladder and should maintain three of four points of contact with the ladder – two hands and one foot, or both feet and one hand throughout the climbing.