

Incident of the Hong Kong registered cargo vessel “Eastern Amber” hit a wreck in the position west coast of Korea on 4 March 2015 (All time were Local Time UTC +9)

1. The incident

1.1 On 3 March 2015, the Hong Kong registered cargo vessel “*Eastern Amber*” (*the vessel*) departed from Inchon for Busan.

1.2 At about 2255 on 4 March 2015, *the vessel* hit a wreck in the position 36°04.68’N 125°47.91’E. The hull of *the vessel* sustained serious damages and sea water ingressed into No.1 cargo hold. Subsequently, *the vessel* listed to the port side and was trimmed by ship’s bow.

1.3 The master abandoned *the vessel* with all the crewmembers a few minutes after the accident. A salvage operation commenced on 6 March 2015. However, *the vessel* capsized on 10 March 0215 and sank on 13 April 2015. No personal injury and oil pollution was reported.

1.4 The investigation into the accident revealed that the contributory causes were as follows:

- The master of *the vessel* did not ensure that all the latest navigational information and warnings had been considered in the voyage planning before sailing;
- The exchange of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) by means of VHF between ship and shore was not effectively carried out; the navigation officers of *the vessel* did not endeavor to clarify and heed the warning messages from shore;
- The bridge team members of *the vessel* did not properly follow the bridge procedures as they failed to communicate with their fellow members the navigation warnings and instructions received from shore; and
- The navigation officers of *the vessel* did not maintain a proper look-out as they did not spot the wreck marked by a red light and having a ship mast protruding seven metres above the sea surface.

2. Lessons learnt

2.1 All masters and officers shall ensure that the shipboard safety management system is properly implemented, in particular:

- (a) effective communication of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) among bridge team members and between ship and shore is carried out;
- (b) all navigational information and warnings are considered in the voyage planning before ship sailing;
- (c) navigation officers of the watch perform proper look-out at all times;
- (d) all life-saving appliances on board are well maintained and are ready for use in case of emergency; and
- (e) all officers and crewmembers are well trained and conversant with all emergency procedures including abandoning of ship.