

The fatal accident of two stevedores on board Hong Kong registered bulk carrier “PEKIN” at the port of Humen, China on 31 May 2016.

1. Incident

- 1.1 On 31 May 2016 at about 0050 hours (UTC +8), a fatal accident happened on board the Hong Kong registered bulk carrier “PEKIN” (*the vessel*) while unloading fumigated logs at the port of Humen (Dongguan), Guangdong, China.
- 1.2 A stevedore was found lying down unconsciously on the spiral ladder inside the after access trunk of No.2 cargo hold (the access trunk). Without appropriate protection against confined space hazards, his supervisor and coworker entered the access trunk with the intention of rescuing the stevedore. Subsequently, the supervisor collapsed and lost his consciousness, the coworker managed to exit from the access trunk.
- 1.3 By the rescue operation conducted by the crew of *the vessel*, the stevedore and the supervisor were able to be retrieved from the access trunk. They were immediately provided resuscitation on the spot by a shore medical team but in vain and were declared dead at 0145 hours.
- 1.4 The investigation identified the following contributory factors to this accident:
 - a) The stevedores were not familiar with working environment on board *the vessel* and made a mistaken entry to the confined space without aware of the hazardous condition of the atmosphere.
 - b) The stevedores were lack of safety awareness about confined space hazards and underestimated risks to which they were exposed. Their unsafe behaviour of having inappropriate protection to enter the access trunk for search and rescue resulted in two casualties.
 - c) The crew of *the vessel* failed to follow the safety guidance on shipboard operation for carriage of logs to restrict all entries into the cargo holds by using padlocks and warning placards while the cargo holds were not ventilated sufficiently for the safe entry.

2. Lessons learnt

- 2.1 Stevedores’ training for confined space entry must be improved, in particular, the dangers involving the cargo hold with its adjacent connected spaces and the risks to the safety of stevedores affected by their activities;

2.2 When handling of the fumigated logs, the shipboard safety procedures and instructions (i.e. entry into confined space when carrying logs inside cargo holds) have to be strictly followed. Safe barriers and or padlock should be utilized for the entrance of those unsafe confined spaces to prevent accidental entry.