



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

An explosion happened when a hydraulic pump motor of the windlass system was switched on

To : *Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, Officers and Crew*

Summary

An explosion happened on board a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier when a crew member switched on a hydraulic pump motor of the windlass system to prepare for anchoring at the Gibraltar anchorage. The chief officer (C/O) and deck cadet (D/C) suffered severe burn injuries in the accident. This Note draws the attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers, and crew to the lessons learnt from this accident.

The Incident

1. A Hong Kong registered bulk carrier fully loaded with coal cargoes proceeded to Gibraltar anchorage for anchoring. After picking up the pilot, the C/O and D/C entered the windlass control room to start the hydraulic pump motors of the windlass system to prepare for anchoring. When the D/C pressed the power switch of one of the hydraulic pump motors located in the windlass control room, an explosion happened, followed by smoke rising. Eventually, the C/O and D/C suffered severe burn injuries in the accident and were evacuated to a local hospital for medical treatment.

2. The investigation revealed that the main contributory factors were that: the crew members failed to follow the General Requirements of all types of these cargoes and Special Precautions of the coal cargo in Appendix 1 of the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes Code (IMSBC Code); the shipboard Safety Management System (SMS) failed to identify the windlass control room, in which a cargo hold access was located, as an enclosed/dangerous space, causing the crew members to underestimate the inherent risks of explosion or the fatality hazards of the windlass control room when coal cargoes were carried on board; and the crew members lacked safety awareness of the carriage of coal cargoes and were not familiar with the shipboard SMS.

Lessons Learnt

3. In order to avoid the recurrence of similar accidents during operation in the future, the ship management company, all masters, officers, and crew members should note the requirements in items (a) and (b) while the ship management company should also note that in item (c):

- (a) strictly follow the General Requirements and Special Precautions in Appendix 1 of the IMSBC Code when loading coal cargoes;
- (b) enhance safety awareness and training on board, and promote alertness of the crew members to the risks of explosion and fatality hazards when on board a vessel carrying “materials hazardous only in bulk”, in particular coal cargoes; and
- (c) consider revising the shipboard SMS to identify additional dangerous spaces on board and ensure that the crew members strictly follow the safety requirements when on board a vessel carrying coal cargoes.

4. The attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers, and crew is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

Marine Department
Multi-lateral Policy Division

29 March 2022