



香 港 商 船 資 訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Fatal accident happened while inspecting cargo holds

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

Summary

A fatal accident occurred on board a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier at Port Dickson, Malaysia during cargo hold inspection. The Bosun entered a cargo hold to check the extent of coal stain as instructed by the Master. Unfortunately, the Bosun was found missing the next day. Eventually, the Bosun was found lying on the first landing platform inside the deck entry access to the cargo hold and died. 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 (the vessel) arrived at Port Dickson, Malaysia, for discharging the coal transported from Newcastle, Australia. As the next cargo might be grains, the Master instructed the Bosun, through the Chief Officer (C/O), to check the extent of coal stain in cargo holds for replying to the charterer about the cleanliness of the cargo holds. The Bosun was last seen on the deck near the accommodation, he neither reported the result of the cargo hold inspection nor took dinner that day. The Bosun was found missing the next day when the C/O called him for some routine work. All deck crew members were mustered to search for the Bosun after his failure to respond to the public address announcement. Eventually, the Bosun was found lying on the landing platform about 2.5 metres under the access hatch of a cargo hold and was found dead when he was rescued.

2. The investigation revealed that the main contributory factors to the accident were non-compliance with the permit-to-work system when entering enclosed spaces; ineffective training on entering enclosed spaces; and insufficient communication during the execution of work orders on the vessel.

Lessons Learnt

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

- (a) enhance the control over enclosed space entry and strengthen monitoring to ensure that all crew strictly follow the enclosed space entry procedures of the shipboard Safety Management System and the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers;
- (b) enhance the training on enclosed space entry to improve crew's safety awareness, understanding of the definition of enclosed space, and the ability to identify all enclosed spaces on board;
- (c) enhance effective communication between the person in charge of work and the working crew;
- (d) review the shipboard safety procedures on enclosed space entry;
- (e) review the contents of the shipboard training on enclosed space entry; and
- (f) conduct an internal audit on the vessel to confirm the conformance of the shipboard safety procedures on enclosed space entry.

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

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