

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 37 OF 2019

(Marine Industrial Safety)

A fatal accident to a crew while accessing to another vessel

The Incident

A crew of a river trade vessel (RTV) intended to board an ocean going vessel (OGV) to handle cargo operation documents via a local dumb lighter (DL) by climbing up a rope ladder hung down from the port bow of the OGV. In the course of his boarding, he neither notified the crew of the DL and the OGV, nor wore any personal protective equipment. Unfortunately, he fell from the rope ladder into the water and drowned.

2. An investigation into the incident revealed the following major contributing factors:

- i The deceased of the RTV lacked safety awareness. He failed to follow the practical guide given by the “*Code of Practice - Using Protective Clothing and Equipment for Works on Local Vessels*”¹ by donning a lifejacket and safety helmet when boarding the OGV.
- ii The coxswain and the deceased of the RTV, the person-in charge of the DL and the master of the OGV had inadequate knowledge of the safety arrangement for safe access and specification of rope ladder in accordance with the “*Code of Practice on Provision of Safe Means of Access for Works on Vessels*”².

Lessons learnt

3. To avoid the recurrence of similar incident:
 - i. The owner and coxswain of the RTV and the person-in-charge of the DL should ensure their crew to be familiar with and to follow the practical guide given by the aforementioned codes during embarkation and disembarkation. In particular, they should ensure that the rope ladder used complies with the practical guide specified in the relevant codes.

¹ The Code applies to local vessels, https://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/ocean/pdf/miss_548cop7.pdf

² The Code applies to OGVs in HK, https://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/ocean/pdf/miss_313cop4.pdf

- ii. The ship management company and the master of the OGV should implement the Ship's Security Plan strictly to avoid unauthorized embarkation and disembarkation.

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