

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 200/2022

(Marine Industrial Safety)

A fatal man overboard accident during ship repair and maintenance

The Incident

A fatal marine industrial accident happened on board a locally licensed pleasure vessel “*the vessel*” in the Tuen Mun Gold Coast Yacht and Country Club (*the club*) when *the vessel* was under repair and maintenance. A worker (*the worker*) fell into the sea while he was repairing the hull of *the vessel* alone on a floating pontoon platform moored to *the vessel* and was later found by a passing witness. *The club* staff approached the scene after receiving a report from the eyewitness and found *the worker* was afloat on the sea with no response. The staff then called the Police for assistance. Afterwards, the rescuers from the Fire Services Department arrived at the scene. *The worker* was rescued ashore for first aid and was later transferred to a hospital for medical treatment but was declared dead at 1720 hours on the same day.

2. The investigation revealed that the contributory factors leading to this accident were that the owner of *the vessel* failed to take measures as far as reasonably practicable to ensure the safety of *the worker* during the maintenance of the hull of *the vessel*, and to provide such information, instruction, training or supervision as may be necessary to ensure work safety; the owner also failed to ensure *the worker* wore a life jacket to prevent the risk of drowning when falling into the sea; and *the worker* lacked personal safety awareness to follow the requirement of the “Code of Practice-Using Protection Clothing and Equipment for Works on Local Vessels” (Code of Practice) issued under the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance, Cap. 548 to wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid and put on a safety harness to minimise the risk of drowning in the sea when carrying out the maintenance in an exposed position beside the vessel where there were no fencing stanchions or handrails installed.

3. The investigation also revealed that *the worker* carried out the maintenance alone without the supervision of a works supervisor.

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Lessons Learnt

4. In order to avoid the recurrence of similar accidents in the future, the persons in charge of works should follow the requirements of the “Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Works) Regulation” and Code of Practice for carrying out vessel repairs and maintenance.

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Marine Department

Government of the HKSAR

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