

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 122/2023

(Marine Industrial Safety)

Fatal marine industrial accident during cargo operations

The Incident

A fatal marine industrial accident happened on board a China licensed river-trade dry cargo vessel (*the vessel*) during cargo operations in the New Yau Ma Tei Public Cargo Working Area (*the cargo working area*). *The vessel* was discharging natural sands (*cargo*) in bags at the wharf of *the cargo working area* (*the discharge operation*) using crawler crane (*the crane*) ashore. During *the discharge operation*, the lifted *cargo* moved laterally towards the chief engineer (C/E), who stood nearby the portside bulkhead of the cargo hold (*the bulkhead*), resulting in the C/E being caught between the lifted *cargo* and *the bulkhead*. The C/E was lifted from where he was standing and fell on the cargo inside the hold. After the accident, *the vessel's* crew immediately called the police for help and stopped *the discharge operation*. Afterwards, officers from the Police and the Fire Services Department arrived at the accident scene and sent the C/E to a hospital for medical treatment. Unfortunately, the C/E was certificated dead on the same day.

2. The investigation revealed that the C/E lacked safety awareness and failed to keep a safe distance from the travelling path of the lifted cargo in accordance with the requirements of the safety operation procedures (*the operation procedures*) as stipulated in the shipboard operation management documents, and was not conscious of being in an unsafe space; the Master and a crew member responsible for cargo handling were also unaware that the C/E was in an unsafe space during *the discharge operation*, so they could not alert the C/E and stop the operation accordingly; and the Master, who acted as the signaller, did not communicate with *the crane* operator before *the discharge operation* to ensure that the operation was carried out under effective communication and command.

3. The investigation also revealed that the Master, who acted as the works supervisor, failed to follow the requirements of the “Code of Practice - Using Protective Clothing and Equipment for Works on Local Vessels” (*Code of Practice*) to ensure that crew members wore appropriate protective helmets during cargo operations; and the crew also failed to wear appropriate protective helmets as required by the *Code of Practice* during the discharge operation.

Lessons Learnt

4. To avoid similar incidents in future, ship management companies should ensure that:

- (a) works supervisors follow the requirements of the *Code of Practice* to ensure that appropriate protective helmets and other appropriate protective clothing and equipment are provided and worn by the crew during cargo operations;
- (b) crew members follow the requirements of the *Code of Practice* and should not wear modified protective helmets that could obstruct their vision during cargo operations;
- (c) crew members follow the shipboard operation procedures and be alert at all times during cargo operations to keep a safe distance from the travelling path of lifted cargoes and avoid being in unsafe spaces. Meanwhile, crew members should take care of and remind each other and stop operations immediately when safety hazards are found; and

- (d) crew members follow the requirements of the shipboard operation procedures to communicate effectively with the unloading operators, signallers, works supervisors and crane operators on the loading and unloading sequence and operating signals prior to the cargo operations.

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