

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 151/2023

(Marine Industrial Safety)

Fatal marine industrial accident during cargo operations

The Incident

A fatal marine industrial accident happened during the unloading operation of brick cargo (*the cargo*) carried out by a multi-purpose river trade cargo vessel (*the vessel*), which was moored alongside a locally licensed dumb lighter (*the lighter*) at a quayside berth (*the berth*) of the New Yau Ma Tei Public Cargo Working Area in Hong Kong.

2. During the unloading operation, *the lighter* used its onboard derrick (*the derrick*) to lift *the cargo* from *the vessel* to *the berth*, and two stevedores were responsible for unhooking *the cargo* at *the berth*. After an unhooking process was completed, one of the stevedores suspected that the canvas slings connected with lifting rings had become entangled with each other when being pulled out from the space near the bottom of *the cargo* by the rising hook of *the derrick* and attempted to go to untangle them. Consequently, he was overwhelmed by the sudden partial collapse of *the cargo*, resulting in his injury. After receiving the report, the ambulance personnel arrived at the scene, treated the injured stevedore and sent him to a hospital for medical treatment. Unfortunately, the stevedore was pronounced dead eventually.

3. The investigation identified that the contributory factor leading to the accident was that the injured stevedore lacked safety awareness, i.e. he did not wear protective equipment, including a safety helmet and safety shoes, during the unloading operation, nor did he take any action to keep away from *the derrick* in operation.

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4. The investigation also found that the lifting appliances of *the lighter* had not been tested and examined according to the statutory requirements of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Works) Regulation (Cap. 548I) (*the Works Regulation*).

Lessons Learnt

5. To avoid the recurrence of similar incidents in future, the owners of *the vessel* and *the lighter* and *the cargo* owner should enhance safety training for cargo handling practitioners and raise their safety awareness. *The lighter* owner shall comply with the requirement of *the Works Regulation* to conduct periodic tests and examinations of lifting appliances.

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Director of Marine (Ag.)

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