

Casualty Circular No. 17 of 2009 **(Regulatory/Guidance/Information)**

NO:11-NT(87)/2008

Dated: 04.08.2009

Subject: Safe access to persons during ship to ship Transfer operations

NARRATIVE

A tanker, flag - foreign, age - 20 yeas, GRT - 27736 sailed out from an Indian port to outer anchorage to receive bunker on 07.9.2008. She dropped her anchor for the said purpose. The bunker barge came along side of the vessel at 1434 hrs. on port side on 07.9.2008. At the same time a supply boat with stores also came on starboard side of the vessel. The sea and weather conditions prevailing at that time were reported to be calm and stable. Chief engineer and 4th engineer along with the bunker surveyor were on the barge. The 4th engineer was 31 years old After completion of the survey while climbing up on the coolly ladder from the bunker barge to the ship 4th Engineer slipped and fell into the sea. The tanker was drawing a free board of 11.5 meters. After falling from the ladder his right hand and right side of the body hit the railing of the barge. Thereafter, he bounced and hit hard on the ship side and fell into the water between the ship side and fenders of the barge. The Chief engineer along with the fitter, motor man, bunker surveyor were standing on deck about 1.5 mtrs. from the ladder at that point of time.

The crew of the barge on seeing that the 4th engineer had fallen into the water threw a life buoy & jumped into the water to save him. Eventually, the crew rescued the 4th Engineer. Necessary first aid was given to him on the barge. At around 1620 hrs, the Chief officer and Electrical officer attended the 4th engineer. A shore medical advise was also sought by the Master. At 1650 hrs. the supply boat took the 4th engineer away to the hospital. Upon reaching the hospital at around 1945 hrs, on 07.9.2008 the 4th engineer was declared dead.

OBSERVATIONS/ANALYSISES

- The vessel used coolly ladder or monkey ladder which is inconvenient to hold the side ropes and grip of the foot during ascending and descending process.
- The vessel having a free board of over 11 mtrs, the user has a tendency to get tired during ascending and descending process.

- The necessary precautions such as use of Personal Protective Equipments (PPE) during such operations were not taken.
- In accordance with SOLAS 74 Chapter V Regulation 23 (Pilot transfer arrangement) when a free board of the ship exceed 9 mtrs., a combination ladder or other equally safe and convenient means in conjunction with Pilot ladder should be used.
- Reportedly the mental state of 4th engineer was not stable due to his personal problems at home.
- Response on obtaining shore assistance was not quick enough as 4th engineer was lying on board for more that 1hr. 15 mints. without any assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS/LESSONS LEARNT

- The Master of the vessel should make sure that the applicable rules and regulations under SOLAS 1974/ Dock Labour convention etc with respect to safe access to persons between two ships be strictly followed during ship to ship transfer operations (STS).
- The Master of the vessel has duty to care for the persons working on the loft spaces by making sure that personal protecting Equipments are used by the crew.
- The duty officer/ safety officer should make sure that such operation take place in safe manner conforming to IMO / ILO instruments and applicable National Laws.
- The usage of coolly ladder should be discouraged by the Master either and instead a approved safety net or other ladder or combination ladder or other equally safe and convient means of access to the ship, properly installed, secured and maintained shall be used during ship to ship transfer operations as prescribed by relevant Maritime safety/labour conventions.

Sd/-

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