

Shipping casualties due to Tsunami waves in Indian ports

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(REGULATORY/GUIDANCE/INFORMATION) SHIPPING CASUALTIES DUE TO TSUNAMI WAVES IN INDIAN PORTS

OBJECTIVE :

To enforce the provisions of International Conventions and National Regulations governing the Indian / Foreign Flag Ships in Indian major/minor and private ports with the aim of achieving safety of ships, ports and marine environment.

SCOPE :

To guide Flag State / Class Surveyors, Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Ship Agents, Training Institutes, Workshops, Masters and Seafarers.

CASE HISTORY :

On 26th December 2004, a powerful earthquake measuring 8.9 on Richter scale hit Asia, unleashing Tsunami waves (a series of large waves of extremely long wave length & period usually generated by a violent, impulsive under sea disturbance near the coast or in the ocean) on the coastal areas of India, Sri- Lanka, Indonesia & Thailand. This Directorate received reports of major and minor casualties that occurred on the coast of India. These reports were thoroughly examined in accordance with prevailing rules and regulations applicable to the ships and the ports. The Directorate has endeavored to determine the root cause of the casualty and prescribe preventive and corrective measures to avert this kind of casualties in future.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Crisis and disaster management plan of the ports were not implemented in systematic and timely manner during such situations.
2. Emergency preparedness plan under ISM code of SOLAS Chapter IX, for the ships anchored or berthed in the harbour did not achieve the desired results due to delayed action by the ships.
3. Improper coordination between ships, ports and shore agencies resulted in excessive material damage to the ships and harbors.
4. Ports were found to be ill equipped with regard to providing services of towing, pilotage & Emergencies repairs.
5. Ports failed to provide specific guidelines to the ships in the harbour to combat emergency situations created by Tsunami waves.

6. Ports failed to issue early warnings to the ships in its harbour for taking proactive steps to reduce damage to property and loss of lives.
7. Masters of the vessels in the harbour failed to utilize their overriding authority given to him under the ISM code in situations like this.
8. Under utilization of fendering between the ships & wharves/berths etc. during the assault of Tsunami waves in the harbour caused excessive damage to the ships and port infrastructure.

Based on these findings the comments of the Nautical Adviser to the Govt. of India are enumerated below for strict compliance of all concerned in the safe operation of ships in Indian ports:

1. Crisis & Disaster management plan of the ports needs to be made more effective by conducting periodical drills with ships in realistic manner & results of such drills be brought to the notice of board of trustees or top managements for necessary action if deem necessary.
2. The authorities such as Ports, Port State Control, Flag State Control and Safety Audit Verification Authorized Bodies, shall closely monitor emergency preparedness of the ships in the ports during their visit to the vessel.
3. Port Officials shall undergo safety related training conducted by the approved Maritime training Institutes of the Directorate General of Shipping.
4. Pilot & Master exchange of Information Form may be modified to include the provisions of additional emergency equipments available in ports & on board ships & action required on Tsunami alert.
5. Ports are required to update their International Port Traffic/Storm Signals for warning the shipping in the proximity of ports.
6. After the establishment of Tsunami warning center by the Government of India, ports shall issue early warning to all concern to prevent casualties in future.
7. All post and light structures in the vicinity of ports should be made Tsunami and Earthquake proof.
8. Communication network needs to be augmented during the failure of shore communication network in disasters such as Tsunami, Earthquake etc.
9. **Knowledge and understanding of Tsunami** should form an integral part of pre-sea, preparatory and revalidation courses for Indian sea farers manning vessels

Safe Ships, Safe Ports and Safety of Seafarers is the motto of the Directorate General of Shipping.

**Sd/-
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Map of India showing the epicenter of the earthquake.

[Attachment- 1](#) [Attachment- 2](#)

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