

Casualty Circular No. 6 of 2004

F.No.11- NT(33)/2004

Dated 24th August 2004

Sub: Death due to falling over board

1) NARRATION

1.1) A tanker of 16940 GT sailed from the port of Mangalore to the port of JNPT during the month of June at 0900 hrs. The tanker was fully loaded.

1.2) The weather was rough and the vessel was shipping seas due to heavy pitching. The crew had been instructed not to go on deck. However, the Chief Engineer alongwith trainee Fitter, went on deck around 1500hrs to open the drain plugs of oil drip trays without informing anyone. Both the persons were not wearing life jackets and also not using lifelines. The oil drip trays were located on the main deck. On reaching the drip trays, the Chief Engineer instructed the trainee Fitter to open the drain plugs while he stood supervising the work. The chief engineer had a spanner in one hand and torch light in another hand and was standing without taking any support. Suddenly, the vessel was hit by a big wave of about 8 m high on the port side where the work was in progress. Both the chief engineer and trainee Fitter were swept by this wave. The incident took place around 1505 hrs. However, the trainee Fitter managed to save himself by holding on to the ships railings. Once the water receded, it was noticed that the chief engineer had been swept over board.

1.3) Alarm was raised, Man-over-board (MOB) marker was released and the vessel executed the Williamson Turn. The urgency message was transmitted and the vessel continued on reciprocal course.

1.4) Around 1605 hrs, an orange boiler suit, worn by the chief engineer, was sighted in the water, on the port side. Vessel was maneuvered close to the chief engineer and gangway nets and pilot ladders were rigged. However, it was observed that the chief engineer was floating with face down and that he did not make any efforts to come on board. Efforts to retrieve the chief engineer using the life boat hook could not be successful. A seamen in this process also got swept alongwith the chief engineer. However, he could be brought back on the ship with the help of life-line which was attached to him.

1.5) Thereafter, life boat was lowered and attempts were made to recover the chief engineer. However, before life boat crew could rescue chief engineer, he fully drowned in the water and could not be sighted again. Search was continued using expanded search patterns till 2330 hrs on the next day. However, in vain. Later the body of chief engineer was found washed ashore. The

cause of death is reported to be asphyxia as a result of drowning

2. PROBABLE CAUSES :

2.1) The Chief Engineer and Fitter had gone on deck during rough weather and without taking any precautions such as donning of personnel protective equipment (life jacket), using life-line or informing the bridge to adjust the course so as to reduce violent movement of the vessel.

2.2) The chief engineer was standing on deck without any support.

3. LESSONS TO BE LEARNT :

3.1) Personnel are reminded to take care as they move about the ship, in particular, the possibility of sudden or heavy roll of the ship should always be borne in mind.

3.2) Life-lines should be rigidly secured across open decks in rough weather. Appropriate personal protective equipment must be borne at all times.

3.3) It should be noted that the use of personnel protective equipment may itself cause an hazard e.g through reduced field of vision, loss of dexterity or agility. In this regard, duly approved WORK VEST may be provided on board the ship which may be utilized while working on deck during rough weather.

3.4) The drip tray may be provided with a Drain Tap in place of drain plug commonly found on board this will be easy to operate and less time consuming when required to open / close. Drain plugs , where fitted, should be kept free for opening.

3.5) It is most important that the officer on navigation watch is informed before any work is undertaken on deck, while the vessel is encountering heavy weather. This will ensure that pre-warning can be given in case the vessel is likely to be hit by a sudden heavy wave.

4. This issues with the approval of the Nautical Adviser to the Govt. of India.

Sd/-

(Capt.H.Khatri)

Nautical Surveyor -cum- Dy. Director General of Shipping [Tech]