

Loss of life while connecting towing wire at sea

Casualty Circular No. 3 of 2005

F.No.11- NT(37)/2004

Dated 8th April 2005

Sub: Loss of life while connecting towing wire at sea

1. NARRATION :

1.1 A barge of GT 3629 was under tow by a tug of GT 345 on passage from Singapore to Persian Gulf. On the morning of 14th June, while the vessels were about 90 miles away from the coast of Mangalore Port, the tow wire parted due to high tension on wire caused by very high swell and bad weather condition. On 15th morning, the master of the tug jumped into the sea for reconnecting the tow wire. He was wearing a life jacket and carrying a life buoy and heaving lines.

1.2 The master soon realized that due to bad weather and high swell, it was not possible for him to reach close to the tow (unmanned barge). He therefore, decided to return to the tug.

1.3 While attempting to board the tug, it appears that the master suffered serious head injury due to the movement of the tug. The master apparently died thereafter.

1.4 The master was pulled up on board the tug by the crew. The crew tried to revive the master by administering CPR but in vain.

1.5 The unmanned barge subsequently, landed on the shore. The barge was eventually refloated on 23rd June.

2. PROBABLE CAUSES :

2.1 Master of the tug was wrong in deciding to jump into the sea to reconnect the tow line, especially, since the sea was very rough and one of the engine of the tug was not operational.

2.2 It is possible that the master of the vessel was under stress from the owner, to ensure successfully towage operation.

3. LESSON LEARNT

3.1 Jumping over board to reconnect the tow line in adverse weather conditions can be suicidal.

3.2 While undertaking a towage operation, it is advisable to consider an alternative towing arrangement which can be used safely if the main tow wire parts due to any reason.

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

Sd/-

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