

Grounding of Bulk Carrier in ballast condition in Indian water during monsoon months

Casualty Circular No. 1 of 2009

(Regulatory/Guidance/Information)

NO: 11-NT(40)/2006

Dated: 2nd Feb, 2009

Subject: Grounding of Bulk Carrier in ballast condition in Indian water during monsoon months

Objectives:

- To share and disseminate valuable information with ship-owners, ship managers, Masters and crew of ship regarding the importance of observing practice of good seamanship during the operation of vessel in port especially when vessel expected to encounter squally weather in monsoon season.
- To guide the Master and the crew to exercise reasonable care, and skill during the maneuvering of ship in the approaches of Indian ports, in the seasonal South West monsoon months.

NARRATIVE:

A young Bulk Carrier of five years age, flag foreign, in ballast condition arrived at an Indian port (Karwar) in the month of May for part loading of iron ore. The vessel anchored off the port and awaiting its turn for berthing. After 3 days of arrival at about 1300 hours and latter 1800 hours on the same day, the vessel was reported to have dragged her anchor. The Master of the vessel re-anchored the ship about 2.6 NM south west of the Oyster Rock. On the following day, the vessel dragged her anchor again and drifted near to the Oyster Rock due to heavy squally weather, strong wind, delay in heaving up an anchor. The vessel after weighing anchor in the early hours failed to control the drift and eventually drifted towards the Oyster Rock and grounded. After couple of days the vessel broke into two. Second Officer lost his life and. approximately 450 tons bunker oil spilled in to the port.

OBSERVATIONS/ANALYSES:

- Vessel grounding was attributed to rough weather conditions and delay by the ship Master in heaving up of anchor and proceeding to sea or other suitable location away from the danger.
- The vessel failed to make adequate headway with engine running at maximum speed due to inadequate submergence at propeller and excessive trim. The maximum profile offered to the strong wind led to heavy rolling and drifting towards the shore.

- The ship complement including Master failed to act with proper skill and care. The Master of vessel failed to exercise his lawful command during the situation which resulted in death of 2nd. Officer, spillage of 450 tons of bunker oil and wreckage of the ship.
- Ship Log book was not produced by the Master initially.
- The Master and Mate failed to take heavy weather precautions when the weather condition deteriorated on the 3rd day of vessels stay in the port.
- All officers and crew panicked after the grounding and, therefore, crew failed to take preventive measures during the emergency situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS/LESSONS LEARNT:

- Masters should prepare comprehensive anchorage plan in accordance with SOLAS/STCW code provision.
- Stability criteria in ballast condition should be calculated with due caution to maintain minimum trim adequate submergence of propeller and windage area.
- All officers and crew must understand the Contingency Plan and be trained to respond with minimum delay in the interest of ship safety, crew and protection of Marine Environment.
- The Port Authorities should augment the facility and infrastructure to handle the ships calling their port in safe manner.
- The input of drift when maneuvering in the restricted water due to strong wind, tides, currents should be anticipated in advance when approaching and leaving Indian ports.
- Master during the vessel stay in Indian ports specially in South West monsoon months should observe tenet of good seamanship to avert such incident.

The Directorate being committed to safety of ships during the navigation in the approaches of Indian ports draw the attention of shipowners, shipmanagers, charters and agents to casualty Circular No.6 of 2006 (available on DGS web site www.dgshipping.com) which provides the guidelines to the ship master while making approach to Indian ports and Monsoon Advisory [M.S. Notice No.12 of 2008](#).

In the light of above, the shipowners, ship managers are once again advised to provide necessary guidance to their Masters in a documented form impressing upon them the significance of exercising extreme caution during the maneuvering of a ship in congested waters.

Sd/-

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