



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

A fitter was crushed to his death by an exhaust valve in engine room

To : Shipowners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, Officers and Crew

Summary

A fitter of a Hong Kong registered container ship was crushed to his death by a weighty spare exhaust valve that toppled from a removable floor plate in engine room and hit the fitter nearby. This Note draws the attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers, and crew to the lessons learnt from this accident.

The Incident

1. When a Hong Kong registered container ship (the vessel) anchored at Western Anchorage No.3 in Hong Kong, some spare main engine exhaust valves on aft deck were transferred to the engine room by a monorail hoist through a skylight hatch, and then further moved to a designated position by an engine room overhead crane. At that time, a fitter worked alone under the skylight hatch. The fitter temporarily lowered an exhaust valve on a removable floor plate (*RFP*) and released it from the hook of the monorail hoist. Soon after the hook was released, the exhaust valve toppled and crushed the fitter at his left side abdomen which resulting in his death.
2. The investigation identified that the main contributory factor to this incident was that the *RFP* was overloaded by the exhaust valve as it was not meant for supporting the 3-tonne weight of the exhaust valve. As a result of the overloading, the *RFP* deformed and the exhaust valve toppled which crushing the fitter to death.
3. The following safety issues were also identified in the investigation:
 - (a) the crew should be assigned to work in group rather than leaving to handle the exhaust valve transfer operation alone; and
 - (b) the toolbox talk made neither any discussion nor risk assessment about the operation of the receipt of heavy machinery parts.

Lessons Learnt

4. Senior ship officers should carry out proper risk assessment and/or toolbox talk to all crew concerned in order to identify any potential safety hazards and implement appropriate safety measures to eliminate the risk of dangers when handling heavy machinery parts.
5. Ship crew should maintain good housekeeping of the engine room in accordance with the “*Code of Safe Working Practice for Merchant Seafarers*”, i.e. floor plates or gratings should be properly secured.
6. The attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crew is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

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