



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Collision between an oil/chemical tanker and a bulk carrier in the Gulf of Kachchh, India

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

Summary

A Hong Kong registered oil/chemical tanker collided with a bulk carrier in the Deep Water Route through the Traffic Separation Scheme of the Gulf of Kachchh, India. The collision occurred in favourable weather conditions with both vessels in sight of each other. Both vessels sustained hull damage due to the collision. The bulk carrier was declared as constructive total loss after the accident. 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. A collision accident happened between a Hong Kong registered oil/chemical tanker (*the tanker*) and a bulk carrier (*the bulk carrier*) in the Deep Water Route through the Traffic Separation Scheme of the Gulf of Kachchh, India under the local Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) supervision. In the evening of the accident day, the weather was fine with clear sky, good visibility and calm sea conditions. In the Deep Water Route, *the bulk carrier* was inbound southeasterly while *the tanker* was outbound southwesterly. When both vessels were approaching each other and would likely meet in the Deep Water Route, the officers on watch (OOWs) of both vessels discovered the other vessel through radar and ECDIS¹ but without taking positive action in ample time to avoid the potential collision. *The tanker* did not alter course to northwest after passing the waypoint in the Deep Water Route as planned for the reason of avoiding the fishing nets observed off *the tanker's* starboard side, thereby leading to the dangerous situation with a risk of immediate collision between both vessels. Although the master of *the bulk carrier* ordered to put the rudder hard to starboard and the OOW of *the tanker* ordered to put the rudder hard to port, *the tanker's* stem still hit *the bulk carrier's* port side in way of cargo hold No.3, resulting in serious structural damage to *the bulk carrier* which was

¹ Electronic Chart Display and Information System

subsequently declared as constructive total loss, and *the tanker* received significant structural damage in way of the stem and bulbous bow but resumed operation after repair.

2. The investigation had identified the following contributory factors to this accident:
 - (i) *the bulk carrier's* OOW failed to make effective use of all available means, including Automatic Radar Plotting Aid (ARPA) to assess the risk of collision with *the tanker* (Rule 7 of COLREGs² refers); and the Master did not take positive action in ample time to avoid the collision (Rule 8 of COLREGs refers);
 - (ii) *the tanker's* OOW did not maintain a proper look-out by hearing and failed to acknowledge the transmission received from the local VTS (Rule 5 of COLREGs refers); the OOW failed to make effective use of all available means, including ARPA, to assess the risk of collision with *the bulk carrier* (Rule 7 of COLREGs refers); the OOW did not notify the Master until a collision with *the bulk carrier* was imminent; and the OOW did not take positive action in ample time to avoid the collision (Rule 8 of COLREGs refers);
 - (iii) the Masters of both vessels failed to supervise their respective OOWs effectively; and
 - (iv) both *the bulk carrier* and *the tanker* failed to make a sound signal as prescribed by Rule 34(d) of COLREGs when they were approaching each other.

Lessons Learnt

3. All masters and OOWs should strictly comply with the requirements of the COLREGs at all times, especially to maintain a proper look-out as required by Rule 5, properly determine the risk of collision as required by Rule 7, take positive action in ample time to avoid collision as required by Rule 8, and indicate proper signals as required by Rule 34(d), etc.; all masters should effectively supervise their OOWs, especially to those with limited experience in performing navigational watch as an OOW; and OOWs should immediately seek assistance from the master if there is any doubt in view of the prevailing traffic conditions or movements of other vessels.

² COLREGs means the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 as amended.

4. The attention of shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters, officers and crew is drawn to the lessons learnt above.

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