



香港商船資訊

HONG KONG MERCHANT SHIPPING INFORMATION NOTE

Collision between a bulk carrier and a fishing vessel in the Yellow Sea

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

Summary

A Hong Kong registered bulk carrier collided with a fishing vessel in the Yellow Sea. The collision caused the sinking of the fishing vessel and resulted in the death of five fishermen and the missing of six fishermen. 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 Hong Kong registered bulk carrier (*the bulk carrier*) collided with a fishing vessel (*the fishing vessel*) in the Yellow Sea. In the early morning of the accident day, the weather was cloudy with good visibility and northwesterly wind of force 6 to 7. *The bulk carrier* was sailing northeasterly while *the fishing vessel* was sailing westerly in the vicinity waters. When both vessels were approaching each other, the officer on watch (OOW) of *the bulk carrier* altered its own course to port slightly to keep clear of the unknown flashing objects on the sea, and discovered through the radar that *the fishing vessel* was located on its own starboard bow. When both vessels were getting closer, the OOW of *the bulk carrier* found that the *fishing vessel's* heading was initially changed to port widely and then to starboard in short time based on the heading vector shown by the Automatic Identification System. The OOW tried to contact *the fishing vessel* via radio on VHF channel 16 but in vain, and then slightly reduced *the bulk carrier's* speed. Unfortunately, the bow of *the bulk carrier* collided with the port hull of *the fishing vessel*, resulting in the sinking of *the fishing vessel* and minor scratches were found on the bow of *the bulk carrier*. The sinking resulted in the death of five fishermen and the missing of six fishermen.

2. The investigation identified the contributory factors leading to the accident were:
- i. *the bulk carrier* failed to comply with Rule 6 of the COLREGs¹ to proceed at a safe speed;
 - ii. *the bulk carrier* failed to comply with Rule 7 of the COLREGs to determine the risk of collision, including *the bulk carrier's* failure to correctly understand the navigational characteristics of fishing vessels under rough weather conditions, and its over-relying on radar equipment;
 - iii. *the bulk carrier*, as a give-way vessel, failed to comply with Rule 8 and Rule 16 of the COLREGs to take early and substantial action to keep well clear of *the fishing vessel*, particularly in the crossing situation;
 - iv. *the fishing vessel* failed to comply with Rule 5 of the COLREGs to maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means, such as failure to respond to the calling from VHF radio;
 - v. *the fishing vessel*, as a stand-on vessel, failed to comply with Rule 17 of the COLREGs to keep her course and speed; and *the fishing vessel* did not take appropriate action as would best aid to avoid collision;
 - vi. both vessels were unable to communicate and understand each other's intention when the immediate dangerous situation developed; and
 - vii. the management company of *the bulk carrier* failed to supervise the performance of OOWs and their pre-joining training, especially in the understanding of navigational characteristics of fishing vessels and proper collision prevention practices.

Lessons Learnt

3. In order to avoid recurrence of similar accidents in the future, ship management companies, all masters, officers and crew members should note items (a) to (d) while ship management companies should also note item (e) to:

¹ International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 as amended

- (a) strictly comply with the Rules of COLREGs at all times and take early action to avoid collision;
- (b) use light and sound signals to attract the attention of another vessel to avoid collision if necessary as stipulated in Rule 36 of COLREGs, including the ship's whistle, search-light or other available means;
- (c) use all available means to help identify the presence of other vessel in the vicinity and should be aware of the complicated navigation environment in the fishing areas, such as sailing in areas of high traffic density or under rough weather conditions;
- (d) supervise and guide OOWs properly to ensure navigation safety, especially in the traffic conditions or the movements of other ships which might have caused concerns to OOWs; and
- (e) provide sufficient training to OOWs, ensuring their understanding of COLREGs, navigational characteristics of fishing vessels and taking proper action to prevent collision.

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

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