



सत्यमेव जयते

भारत सरकार

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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Casualty Circular No. 04/2015

Subject: Engine Crew missing at sea.

Preamble: The Fundamental purpose of Marine Accident Investigation is to determine the circumstances and the causes of the accidents that have been reported, with the aim to improve the safety of life at sea and the avoidance of accident in future. Towards this objective, shipping casualties, occurring on Indian ships are investigated, in pursuance with the mandated requirement of Part XII of the MS Act. Similar reports are received from foreign flag administrations for accidents occurring on ships where Indians have been involved. These reports are collated and disseminated to all concerned for information and learning.

1. What happened ?

1.1 An engine crew was found missing on board a tanker while the vessel was in the South China Sea, Enroute from Mumbai to Zhoushan (China). Vessel carried out SAR, assisted by Hong Kong MRCC, but were unable to find the missing crew.

2. How it happened ?

2.1 The engine crew undertook his watch keeping jobs sincerely, from the day he had joined the vessel. However, after 18 days on board the vessel, he refused to go on watch, saying that he wants to go home immediately. The crew member was escorted and taken to the Master, in the presence of chief

engineer and others, where he repeated his demand for going home. Master contacted the Fleet personnel department and requested that the crew member be relieved as he is very upset and depressed over some domestic issues. The company agreed to relieve him on compassionate grounds, on arrival next port. Thereafter, the Senior Officers decided to take him off the watch keeping schedule, till next port.

2.2 The engine crew was last seen at around 1400 hrs., on the next day, resting in his cabin, by the Engine Serang. The Chief Cook noticed absence of the engine crew, during the Dinner time and informed crew members present in the mess room. On getting no reply from inside the cabin of the engine crew, the matter was brought up to the Master's notice. Thorough ONBOARD search, including his cabin, was conducted, which revealed no sign of the missing crew member. Vessel, then, sent out MAN OVER BOARD distress alert and initiated search and rescue from last 'sighting on board position'. During the SAR operation, MRCC, Hong Kong deployed an aircraft for search and rescue but could not trace the missing crew. Subsequently, the SAR operations were called off, in consultation with the MRCC, Hong Kong and vessel resumed her voyage, on the next day during evening hours.

3. Why it happened ?

3.1 Most proximate cause

The available information on board and the statements of the on board crew members, are consistent and do not indicate any foul play and accidental fall was also ruled out, as there was no job assigned to him.

3.2 Lessons learnt:

3.1 It is important that senior officers on board the vessel are suitably trained to provide at least the "First Aid" counseling and the matter is duly reported to the DPA, in cases where more professional help is considered necessary.

3.2 Ship owners / managers / operators should evolve psychometric testing methods which would identify traits that would lead to suicidal tendencies in the marine environment. A brief of the findings of the psychometric test, along with the possible ways in handling difficult cases, should be made available to the Master and Chief Engineer Officer of the vessel.


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Dy. Nautical Advisor to GoI *(h/c)*

To,
Ship-owners/Ship operators/Ship Managers / Ship Masters