सत्यमेव जयते
भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

F. No.25-19011/6/2020-NT-DGS

Date:17.11.2023

Casualty Circular – 03 of 2017

Sub.: Sinking of vessel due to uncontrolled ingress of water from the engine room sea chest filter housing during its routine.

Summary of Incident:

On 21.11.2017 vessel OSV with towing and Anchor Handling capabilities was operating at oil field, and was proceeding to a rig for picking up cargo. Around 1600 hrs, port side high sea chest filter cleaning job was commenced, and was being done by 2E, 4E and Oiler. The sea side valve was shut, vent valve was opened to confirm no ingress of water, and thereafter filter was opened and cleaned. 2E then decided to flush the filter casing using the pressure from the sea side (i.e crack opening the ship side valve with filter cover removed), and went on the deck above to crack open the valve. It is reported that the valve was stuck and 2E used force to open, upon which the water started flowing through the open filter housing, and then when 2E tried to close the valve he found the valve wheel was free and water started gushing through the open filter housing. Bridge was informed, vessel was stopped, officer and crew tried to close the filter housing but due to the water pressure same could not be achieved and water level in the engine room kept rising. Master upon seeing that water level was increasing uncontrollably, he raised distress alert. Finally, the vessel was abandoned, and thereafter it sunk due to flooding of engine room.

There was no oil pollution at site, and another tug was kept standby at time for monitoring the area.

Causal Factors:

1. Job carried out without adequate risk assessment.
2. 2E did not follow procedure for sea chest filter, cleaning and followed improper procedure of flushing using sea chest valve.
3. In adequate supervision by Chief Engineer, as the job was being carried out his knowledge and supervision.
4. Crew failed to use the seawater pump from the affected sea chest, as it would have reduced water pressure at the filter housing, and crew would have been successful in closing the filter housing.

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Action Taken:

1. Upon ascertaining uncontrolled water ingress, Master raised distress alert.
2. Due to engine room flooding, Master ordered abandon ship, using liferafts and rescue boat.
3. All crew were rescued by another vessel which was nearby in the field.
4. Another tug was kept standby at site to monitor the area for any oil pollution.

Lessons Learnt:

1. Proper risk assessment needs to be carried out for all jobs especially the high risk jobs.
2. Adequate supervision should be maintained by the Chief Engineer for all high risk jobs on board vessel.
3. Emergency procedures should be followed, especially when required to isolate watertight compartments.

(Capt. Vikram Singh Manhas)
Dy. Nautical Adviser cum Sr. DDG (Tech.)

To,
All stakeholders through DGS website.