

JTSB Safety Recommendation to the HK SAFE BLESSING SHIPPING Ltd. (as the management company)

August 25, 2016

Marine Accident of Cargo ship " MING GUANG " (Foundering)
Occurred at the Northwest off Ajigasawa Port,
Ajigasawa Town, Aomori Prefecture, Japan
December 26, 2014.

It is probable that this accident occurred because MING GUANG was flooded through “holes in the hatch covers, ventilation fans, and air vent pipes of the upper deck and gaps in the manhole covers and access openings, etc.” (hereinafter referred to as the “holes, etc., on the upper deck”) while she sailed through waves coming from her starboard bow.

It is probable that MING GUANG’s flooding through holes, etc., on the upper deck occurred because the vessel’s weathertightness was not being maintained, as crewmembers did not periodically check holes, etc., on the upper deck to maintain her weathertightness.

It is probable that HK SAFE BLESSING SHIPPING Ltd. did not appropriately engage in safety management of MING GUANG, such as by properly manning the Vessel and providing education for her crewmembers, and that MING GUANG sailed in a condition that exceeded her load line that was set based on the International Convention on Load Lines of 1966.

It is somewhat likely that if the Chief Officer had put on an immersion suit before abandoning the Vessel and if the Second Officer and the surviving Able Seaman had been able to prevent the inflow of seawater into the immersion suits they were wearing, the Chief Officer and the Second Officer would have survived and the surviving Able Seaman would not have suffered hypothermia.

In view of the result of this accident investigation, the Japan Transport Safety Board recommends that HK SAFE BLESSING SHIPPING Ltd., as the management company, and the Kingdom of Cambodia, as the flag state of the MING GUANG, should take the following measures to prevent recurrence of similar accidents and reducing damage.

HK SAFE BLESSING SHIPPING Ltd. should engage in thoroughgoing vessel safety management that includes manning the vessels it manages with crewmembers who possess legally valid certificates of competence and appropriately providing education to crewmembers, and should instruct crewmembers to engage in the following practices:

- (1) Crewmembers shall maintain weathertightness by periodically checking the integrity and closed condition of weathertight closing devices, etc., on the upper deck.

- (2) Masters shall maintain sufficient freeboard in compliance with the International Convention on Load Lines of 1966.
- (3) Crewmembers shall understand that seawater can enter immersion suits that are being worn, and shall wear immersion suits appropriately by periodically inspecting their storage conditions and practice putting them on.

Authorities of the Kingdom of Cambodia should direct management companies and recognized organizations to ensure that vessels in its registry are manned with personnel who possess the legally valid certificates of competence that are specified in Minimum Safe Manning Certificates and that safety management such as above items (1) to (3) are thoroughly practiced aboard them.