

Casualty Circular No. 20 of 2009 **(Regulatory/Guidance/Information)**

NO:11-NT(17)/2005

Dated: 04.08.2009

Subject: Shipping Casualty on vehicle ferry vessel operating in the vicinity of islands in Indian waters

NARRATIVE

A vehicle ferry, registered under IV Act, age - 11 years, Size - GT - 44 tons was engaged in the transfer of vehicles and passengers between islands in Indian waters. On 17th February, 2005 the vessel was carrying loaded truck and a State Transport Bus on it. The bus was reportedly carrying 18 passengers of which 11 were sitting inside the bus. The driver and the conductor of the bus were standing on deck. At 2020 hrs. on 17.02.2005, the vessel, while berthing along side a jetty hit violently during the mooring operations. With the sudden jerk, the bus without any stopping blocks, slipped backward through the open ramp and landed partially on the slipway with the fore part of the bus still on the ferry. The vessel moved back due to the heavy current as a result of which the bus along with ill-fated passengers fell into the water. The naval divers recovered 7 bodies.

OBSERVATIONS/ANALYSES

- The IV registered vessel was operating beyond IV limits.
- The Regulatory Authorities were aware of this fact.
- The vessel was having steering problems with the wheel getting jammed due to mechanical control transmitting system getting stuck at certain position.
- The manually operated ramps of the vessel was also unusually tight and jam.
- The vessel had twin engines of low power, 64 BHP each, both were not working satisfactorily.
- There was no person on the jetty to assist the ferry for making fast the rope.
- The vessel was inadequately manned at the time of accident.
- Two of the crew members including the quarter master at wheel were reportedly intoxicated.
- The vessel practically did not have any LSA or FFA items for immediate use.
- The vessel did not have the power supply as generator was not operational.

RECOMMENDATIONS/LESSONS LEARNT

- The Regulatory Authorities should not allow such vessels to proceed beyond the IV limits.
- The such authority should carry out periodical inspections to ensure that these vessels are well maintained.
- The authority should also make sure that the Master of the vessel as adequate LSA/FFA for saving lives in accordance with the applicable laws taking into account the passengers on vehicle being transported.
- The authority should make sure that such vessels are adequately and efficiently manned to prevent similar type of accident in future.
- Vehicles should be adequately secured when transported on vehicle ferry.
- Passengers should be disembarked from vehicle when it is being transported.

Sd/-

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