

**Casualty Circular No. 29 of 2009**  
**(Regulatory/Guidance/Information)**

NO:9-NT(12)/2008

Dated: 07.09.2009

**Subject: Sinking of Mechanized Fishing Vessel in Bay of Bengal on 12.8.2008**

**NARRATIVE**

An Indian registered Mechanized Fishing Vessel approximately length 28 mtrs. with 17 crew on board sailed out from an Indian port on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 at 1330 hrs. The vessel was proceeding from one coast to other coast of India for bottom hull survey/inspection at destination port during monsoon months . Couple of hours after sailing, the skipper of the vessel informed its owner that the vessel is encountering rough seas with high swell. On 09.8.2008 at about 0530 hrs, the vessel's main engine No.1 cylinder developed crack and the fresh water started entering in the crankcase. Thereafter the main engine stopped. The vessel was unable to carry out any repairs to the damaged engines. This resulted in vessel drifting in rough seas. The owner requested the nearest Coast Guard to render assistance to the vessel and to tow her back to the port of departure. On 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 at about 1115 hrs, it was noticed that couple of ships in it's vicinity indicated their intention to render assistance. One of the vessels in the vicinity agreed to come forward to render assistance. Later in the evening at 1615 hrs on 09.8.2008, the Chief engineer reported a hole in the hull near the bilge/fire pump suction. The engine room started taking in water. The Coast Guard vessel reached the site at about 0800 hrs on 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2008. The Coast Guard vessel managed to connect with the fishing vessel at about 1205 hrs.on 10.8.2008. The sea and weather conditions were rough. The fishing vessel was being towed by Coast Guard vessel in a Northerly direction at a speed of about 5 knots. Meanwhile, chief engineer on fishing vessel reported more holes underneath the engine. He was unable to control the rapid ingress of water. Recognizing the danger of life to crew, the skipper abandoned the vessel in about 3050 meters of depth at sea and approximately 95 miles from the coast. All 17 crew members were rescued by the Coast Guard and brought safely ashore. On 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 at about 0620 hrs., the Coast Guard made second attempt to save the vessel. They reported that the forward section of the vessel was flooded and after compartment was also flooded up to about 2 feet of water. The prevailing rough weather conditions together with flooding made it impossible to conduct any pumping out operations. At 1700 hrs. on 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 the Coast Guard vessel disconnected the tow and the fishing vessel sank approximately 100 miles from the coast in about 2807 mtrs. of depth. No trace of oil was found.

## OBSERVATIONS/ANALYSES

- This fishing vessel was approx. 29 years old.
- The skipper of the vessel did not obtain weather forecast warning prior to leaving the harbor.
- The vessel was not maintained as per the requirement of the class and flag, keeping in mind its present age.
- The vessel had number of conditions of class on hull and machinery.
- The owner was given the dry-docking survey extension by the class and the flag state.
- It appears that the skipper and the chief engineer were aware of the poor condition of hull and machinery which were leading to frequent mechanical and other failure.
- The skipper, it appears, took un-necessary risk by taking unseaworthy vessel to sea.

## RECOMMENDATIONS/LESSONS LEARNT

- Vessels with serious deficiencies should not be taken to sea for the purpose of effecting repairs in adverse weather conditions
- The owner and the skipper should ensure to maintain the hull, machinery and the equipments in good working condition in all times
- The skipper shall obtain advance weather forecast warning prior to leaving harbor
- The skipper shall prepare the passage plan in accordance with the provisions of M.S. (Safety of Navigation) rules 1997 for the intended voyage
- The skipper shall participate in the prevailing ship reporting system for the purpose of SAR operations
- The owner of the vessel shall ensure that skipper/crew is given effective training to deal with emergency situation
- The owner/skipper shall ensure the LSA, FFA Radio equipments, navigational equipments are adequate and in state of functioning at all times as required by the M.S. Act 1958The owner/skipper shall ensure that any condition of class imposed on the vessel is taken seriously and permanent repairs should be carried out in time
- The owner/skipper shall ensure that the vessel statutory dry-docking repairs are carried out as per the class/flag state requirements
- Vessels of 20 years and above are encouraged to put up the vessel for Flag State Control Inspection at periodical interval at least 6 months
- All concerned are used to carry out a thorough inspection of vessels above 20 years old.

**Sd/-**

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