

Investigation Report No. 364/14

Date: 20 November 2015

Very Serious Marine Casualty

Fatal accident due to a rescue boat on the MTM WESTPORT falling from height during a boat manoeuvre on the Outer Elbe roadstead on 21 November 2014

1 Summary

At about 0830 on 21 November 2014, the Hong Kong-flagged tanker MTM WESTPORT was laid up at anchor in the Outer Elbe roadstead waiting for a berth in the port of Hamburg. It was intended that the time spent waiting be used for boat manoeuvres. Situated on the starboard side of the superstructure, the rescue boat was lowered into the water and hoisted again several times with three crew members. On the last occasion that the davit was retracted, at about 0912, the wire rope parted and the boat fell back into the water. Two of the three crew members were recovered with serious injuries and taken to a hospital. The third crew member succumbed to his injuries at the scene of the accident.

This investigation has revealed that an undersized wire rope was used, which over the course of time had already corroded. Furthermore, the damaged limit switches had been bypassed, enabling additional forces to act on the entire system.

2 SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

The following safety recommendations do not constitute a presumption of blame or liability.

2.1 The owner, MT Maritime Private LTD.

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that MT Maritime Private LTD. only provide wire ropes that conform to the manufacturer's specifications. Furthermore, the crew should be trained in corrosion protection and the replacement of wire ropes regularly.

2.2 Ship's command (wire ropes)

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the ship's command of the MTM WESTPORT verify that every wire rope is fit for purpose prior to use. Furthermore, the crew should be instructed in corrosion protection and the replacement of running rigging regularly.

2.3 Ship's command (limit switches)

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the ship's command of the MTM WESTPORT permit the bypassing of limit switches under no circumstances whatsoever. They constitute an indispensable safeguard.