

Fishing Vessel Fong Kuo No. 819 Major Marine Occurrence

Executive Summary

At approximately 1000 on 9 March 2021, the Panama-flagged refrigerated fishing vessel Fong Kuo No. 819, owned by F.K. Overseas Co., Ltd., with IMO No. 8913992, a gross tonnage of 5,131, and port of registry in Panama, departed from Berth 48 at the Port of Kaohsiung and was bound for Port of New Britain, Papua New Guinea. On board were one Myanmar master and 26 crew members, totaling 27 persons. At approximately 1053, while crew members were recovering the port-side accommodation ladder on deck, one crew member fell overboard. The occurrence took place in the turning basin northwest of Berth 41.

In accordance with the Transportation Occurrence Investigation Act, Taiwan, and the definition of major transportation occurrences specified therein, the Taiwan Transportation Safety Board was the independent agency in charge of investigating the marine accident. The organizations and agencies invited to participate in the investigation included the Maritime and Port Bureau of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, and Fong Kuo Fishery Co., Ltd.

After comprehensive investigation and analysis of the factual data, a total of 4 findings and 2 safety recommendations were obtained.

The finding related to probable causes is as follows:

1. The occurrence took place during the manual recovery of the port-side accommodation ladder. Following the sudden failure and detachment of the chain block, and the subsequent fall of the accommodation ladder into the sea, the crew member lost balance and fell overboard without wearing personal protective equipment, resulting in a fatality.

The findings related to risk are as follows:

1. The master of Fong Kuo No. 819 did not ensure compliance with onboard procedures for working aloft or over the ship's side. During the accommodation ladder recovery operation, crew members did not wear personal protective equipment in accordance with standard operating procedures.
2. The electric winch for the port-side accommodation ladder on Fong Kuo No. 819 was out of order. No additional risk assessment was conducted, and the crew continued manual recovery of the accommodation ladder, thereby increasing operational risk. Abnormal conditions had also occurred in relation to the malfunctioning electric winch and manual operation of the port-side accommodation ladder. However, when confronted with these abnormal operating conditions, the crew did not conduct additional risk assessment or implement necessary preventive measures, resulting in increased operational risk.

Safety Recommendations

To Fong Kuo Fishery Co., Ltd.

1. Strengthen crew safety education and training, with emphasis on personal safety protection, onboard operational risk identification, and preventive measures, in order to prevent man-overboard occurrences.
2. Implement the Safety Management System effectively and conduct a focused internal safety audit, particularly focusing on shipboard operations on Fong Kuo No. 819, to ensure that crew members properly comply with vessel safety management requirements and operating procedures.

Note: The final report of this occurrence investigation is published in Chinese. To facilitate understanding for non-Chinese readers, the Executive Summary has been translated into English. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, discrepancies may occur. In the event of any inconsistency, the Chinese version shall prevail.