

Cement Carrier Ta Ho Major Marine Occurrence

Executive Summary

On December 30, 2021, the Cement Carrier Ta Ho, IMO No. 9279824, made contact with Berth 6 while berthed in Port of Anping at about 0600, which caused damage to the port quarter of Ta Ho, flooding in the engine room, damage to the quay wall, and damage to two fenders. No injuries or environmental pollution were reported.

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, Port of Kaohsiung, Taiwan International Ports Corporation, Ltd., Anping Harbor Pilot Office, and Ta-Ho Maritime Corporation.

After comprehensive investigation and analysis of the factual data, a total of 5 findings and 3 safety recommendations were obtained.

The finding related to probable causes is as follows:

1. During the berthing operation under pilotage, the bridge team of Ta Ho demonstrated insufficient situational awareness. Prior to berthing, the rudder was put hard to starboard to initiate a turning maneuver. Immediately after completing the turn, the engine was ordered astern and increased to full astern. Ultimately, due to improper control of astern speed, the ship contacted the berth at a speed of approximately 2 knots

while moving astern.

The findings related to risk are as follows:

1. Port of Anping is an international commercial port where compulsory pilotage is enforced. In this occurrence, the pilot failed to apply professional shiphandling techniques to ensure the ship's safe entry and berthing.
2. Over time, repeated berthing operations of a similar nature at Port of Anping have fostered a tacit understanding and operational culture between masters and pilots. This has resulted in pilotage requirements and berthing safety practices becoming largely perfunctory. Relying on the ship's maneuvering capabilities, the master neglected the appropriate use of harbor tugs within the port.

The other findings are as follows:

1. To date, this Board has investigated multiple ship occurrences in domestic ports. In many cases, a contributing factor has been that, after boarding, the pilot did not perform pilotage in accordance with applicable procedures, allowing the master to maneuver the ship independently. As a result, risks were not identified in a timely manner, leading to accidents—similar to previously published cases such as the Godspeed at Taipei Port and the COSCO Star at Taichung Port.
2. Following assignment by Port of Anping VTS, tug No. 12605 proceeded to the turning basin to await the arrival of Ta Ho. As the pilot did not issue any instructions to the tug, from the ship's entry into port until the contact with the berth, the tug remained on standby approximately 50 meters off the ship's bow and did not make fast or conduct any towing operations.

Safety Recommendations

To Ta-Ho Maritime Corporation.

1. Enhance berthing risk awareness across the company's fleet. At ports with compulsory pilotage, ships should not conduct berthing or unberthing operations independently within the port area; instead, they should comply with regulations by utilizing a qualified pilot to conduct pilotage and ensure the intended use of harbor tugs as applied for.

To Anping Harbor Pilot Office

1. Ensure strict compliance with the responsibilities conferred by the Pilotage Act regarding compulsory pilotage in ports. Strengthen pilots' professional competence to meet the standards of Bridge Resource Management and Pilotage (BRM-P) training, and ensure the effective utilization of harbor tugs as intended.

To Maritime and Port Bureau of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications

1. Strengthen supervision over the effectiveness of pilotage operations to ensure the quality of pilotage services. Require pilots at compulsory pilotage ports to duly fulfill their responsibilities in conducting pilotage operations, and prevent recurrence of similar types of accidents, thereby safeguarding the safety of port waterways and navigation.

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.