

Fishing Vessel Guo Tong No. 3 Major Marine Occurrence

Executive Summary

At approximately 0120 hours on October 3, 2023, the Taiwan-flagged fishing vessel Guo Tong No. 3 (hereinafter referred to as “the vessel”), vessel registration No CT7-0642 and gross tonnage 1094, was conducting saury fishing operations on the high seas approximately 630 nautical miles northeast of Kushiro Port, Japan, with 52 crew members on board. During the operation, a Filipino crew member became entangled in the roller of the starboard winch, resulting in severe injuries to his left shoulder. Despite emergency treatment on board, the injured crew member later succumbed to his injuries. The occurrence resulted in one fatality; all other crew members were unharmed.

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, the Fisheries Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the Ministry of Labor, and Guo Tong Fishery Co., Ltd.

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

The finding related to probable causes is as follows:

1. On the day of the occurrence, while the vessel was conducting fishing operations on the high seas approximately 630 nautical miles northeast of Kushiro Port, Japan, a crew member’s left shoulder became entangled in a winch roller, causing severe injuries. Due to the inability to obtain immediate and professional medical treatment at sea, the injured crew member

unfortunately succumbed to his injuries while being transported for medical assistance.

The findings related to risk are as follows:

1. There remains considerable scope for improvement in matters relating to the navigational safety of Taiwanese fishing vessels and the occupational safety of fishing-vessel personnel. Deficiencies identified include the absence of guidance materials addressing hazards and risk assessments specific to fishing-vessel operations, insufficient implementation of onboard occupational safety and health self-inspection procedures, and the lack of mandatory mechanisms requiring shipowners to prevent occupational accidents, work-related injuries, and occupational diseases.
2. Relevant authorities and organizations should take into consideration the operational characteristics of distant-water fisheries, coastal fisheries, and onboard fishing operations, and systematically collect occurrence data relating to distant-water fishing vessels in order to develop safety operational guidelines for crews of fishing vessels. In addition, greater emphasis should be placed on the promotion and implementation of onboard occupational accident prevention measures and the enhancement of safety awareness among crews of fishing vessels, with the objective of improving navigational safety and safeguarding the lives of crews of fishing vessels.

Safety Recommendations

To Guo Tong Fishery Co., Ltd.

1. Strengthen safety promotion and education regarding onboard occupational safety and health equipment on vessels under their management in order to prevent hazards to crew members arising from machinery, equipment, or fishing gear.

To the Fisheries Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture

1. Continue to conduct research into the types of occurrences involving Taiwanese fishing vessels and the patterns of crew fatalities and injuries, and formulate “Safety Operational Guidelines for Distant-Water Fishing-Vessel Crews” to enhance the safety awareness of fishing-vessel crews and promote the navigational safety of fishing vessels.

To the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the Ministry of Labor

1. Provide guidance to distant-water fishery operators to ensure compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act, strengthen the contents of the “Occupational Safety and Health Manual for Fishing Vessels,” and implement onboard occupational safety and health self-inspection checklists in order to prevent hazards arising from crew operations involving onboard machinery, equipment, or fishing gear.

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.