

JTSB Safety Recommendation to the authorities of the Kingdom of Cambodia

June 27, 2014

Marine Accident of Cargo ship "TAIGAN" (Fire)
Occurred at the west pier of Tenpoku No.2 Wharf
in the port of Wakkanai, Wakkanai City, Hokkaido
Around 170° true bearing, 910 m
from Wakkanai Ko East Breakwater West Lighthouse, Japan
May 16, 2013.

It is somewhat likely that this accident occurred as follows. While TIGAN (hereinafter referred to as "the Vessel") moored at the west pier of Tenpoku No.2 Wharf in the port of Wakkanai at night, a crew member smoked on his bed in a cabin though the vessel prohibited smoking onboard except in the indoor work space, and then his bedclothes caught fire; hence, the fire spread to surrounding flammable materials, and smoke and flame climbed the opening of an upward stairway nearby and spread to the above accommodation spaces.

Four out of the six who died in the accident just joined the Vessel on the previous night of the accident. It is somewhat likely that the four, who had not been provided with training and instruction on how to act in the event of a fire, which included information about the escape routes and the location of fire extinguishers, did not know the escape routes and were late in escaping when the fire occurred.

In addition, when constructed, the Vessel was installed with an escape hatch, which led to the quarter deck on the port in the steering gear room. Later, the escape hatch was welded and it was impossible to escape from the stern. It is probable that when this accident occurred, the four were late in escaping and lost an option to go out through the stairway on the fore side of the accommodation spaces.

In view of the result of this accident investigation, the Japan Transport Safety Board recommends that the MEGANOM SHIPPING LTD. as the management company of the vessel (hereinafter referred to as "Company A") and the MEGANOM SHIPPING LTD. as the owner of the vessel (hereinafter referred to as "Company B") should take the following measures. At the same time, it is recommended that the authorities of the Kingdom of Cambodia should provide adequate instructions to the management companies and owners that are operating similar ships to the vessel.

Company A is recommended to ensure the onboard smoking policy in observed and to instruct the vessel to provide new crew members with training, just after they joined the vessel, on how to act in the event of a fire, which includes information about the escape routes and the location of fire extinguishers.

Company B is recommended to try to secure escape routes regardless where a fire breaks out, for example, by having one on the fore side and another on the aft side.