Course of events

Immensity was enroute to Limassol, Cyprus from Antwerp, Belgium with 8,062 metric tonnes of general cargo, including logs on deck.

During the voyage, especially after clearing the Gibraltar Straits, it was noticed that the weather conditions were gradually deteriorating.

On 21 January 2017, the vessel encountered particular adverse weather conditions. The swell was from the Northwest, with wave heights of about 5.5 m. Visibility was moderate to good. Immensity was also experiencing gale force wind from the North Northwest. The vessel was rolling heavily and pitching, and experiencing significant accelerations.

At one point in time, the vessel was hit by an unexpected wave, which was powerful enough to knock the chief mate from his feet. The chief mate lost his
balance and fell to the deck. It was not excluded that he also hit against the hatch coaming (Figure 1).

![Figure 1: The accident site on the main deck](image)

The chief mate was assisted by the master and the bosun to the accommodation.

**Reported injuries**
Following the accident, the chief mate immediately started complaining of pain in the chest area. Later during the evening, the chief mate reported that he was having difficulty to breath and the Company was immediately informed. The nearest SAR centre was also informed. On 22 January, at about 1130, a helicopter arrived on the vessel and the chief mate was lifted after the fourth attempt because of the adverse weather conditions close to the Spanish coast.

A CT scan revealed a collapsed right lung and emphysema at the level of the anterior right thoracic wall in connection with fractures to the anterolateral ribs nos. 5 and 6. Swelling in the area was also observed. The chief mate had three surgical interventions before he was discharged from hospital about a month later.

**Cause of the accident**
The direct cause of the accident was a high energy trauma caused by exposure to green seas on deck.

It may be submitted that the risk of working on deck in adverse weather conditions had been appreciated by the crew members, even because the vessel’s course was altered to minimise the ship’s movements (and to minimise possible cargo damage).

It was also understandable that there was significant concern of slack lashing as a result of the adverse weather conditions. This may also be suggestive that the crew members were not expecting such weather; otherwise the lashings and deck cargo would have been inspected and tightened (were necessary) before the bad weather had been encountered.

Notwithstanding the above, and irrespective of the fact that the vessel’s course had been altered, accessing the deck in adverse weather conditions was indicative of risk acceptance. This was, however, out of necessity. The associated risk of working on an open deck during dark hours had been accepted because of the associated outcome,

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1 The purpose of a marine safety investigation is to determine the circumstances and safety factors of the accident as a basis for making recommendations, and to prevent further marine casualties and incidents from occurring in the future.
i.e. verification that the vessel’s cargo and its lashing were safe.
SHIP PARTICULARS

Vessel Name: Immensity
Flag: Malta
Classification Society: Bureau Veritas
IMO Number: 9171395
Type: General cargo
Registered Owner: Whitefin Maritime Ltd.
Managers: Trim Ship Management Co. Ltd.
Construction: Steel
Length Overall: 108.5 m
Registered Length: 99.6 m
Gross Tonnage: 6354
Minimum Safe Manning: 
Authorised Cargo: Dry cargo

VOYAGE PARTICULARS

Port of Departure: Antwerp, Belgium
Port of Arrival: Limassol, Cyprus
Type of Voyage: International
Cargo Information: 80632 mt of general cargo
Manning: 14

MARINE OCCURRENCE INFORMATION

Date and Time: 21 January 2017 at 1929 (LT)
Classification of Occurrence: Serious Marine Casualty
Location of Occurrence: 36° 47.3’ N 000° 01.2 E
Place on Board: Freeboard deck
Injuries / Fatalities: One serious injury
Damage / Environmental Impact: None
Ship Operation: In passage
Voyage Segment: Transit
External & Internal Environment: The swell was from the Northwest, with wave heights of about 5.5 m. Visibility was moderate to good. Gale force wind from the North Northwest.
Persons on board: 14