

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY No. 05-24

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Nautical Inspectors, Recognized Organizations

Subject: DETENTIONS IN CHINA DUE TO MANEUVERABILITY ISSUES

Date: 13 March 2024

This Marine Safety Advisory supersedes Marine Safety Advisory No. 06-23.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) continues to receive reports of ships unable to maneuver in high-density traffic or narrow waters in China. The incidents occur for various reasons as highlighted below.

1. Loss of propulsion

Incidents have occurred immediately after a ship leaves the shipyard following repairs. Frequently, the berth-trial or sea-trial have not been carried out for a sufficient period. While underway to the next port, issues arise that lead to a loss of propulsion. When this occurs in China’s narrow waters, it often leads to emergency anchoring, and subsequent investigation by the China Maritime Safety Administration (MSA), including an expanded port State control inspection that results in a detention.

Reasons for the loss of propulsion have been problems with the main engine, including:

- exhaust valves not operating properly;
- fuel system or air/vapor locks leakages;
- remote control failures; and
- governor failures.

2. Fuel-oil changeover

Incidents have occurred where there has been insufficient or incorrect fuel preparation before the changeover. This has caused the diesel generator engines to trip, consequently causing the vessel to lose electric power.

This MSA is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

These incidents show the importance of good maintenance for all main and auxiliary machinery with robust testing prior to entering any area of high-density traffic or narrow waters in China. It is in this light that the Administrator reminds shipowners, operators, and Masters that:

- Proper main engine and steering gear testing is required when repairs have been completed. This should be done prior to entering any area of high-density traffic or narrow waters.
- Crew should be familiar with the fuel oil changeover procedures when entering or exiting Sulphur Emission Control Areas, and in dealing with any emergency situations.
- When equipment or machinery is found faulty, in addition to reporting to Class or the Administrator (as required by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974), the coastal State and local MSA should be promptly notified.
- China MSA has made an [Announcement](#) on strengthening the safety management of ships with machinery failure. It is available on their website in Chinese only. An unofficial English translation can be found on Lloyd's Register's website [here](#).
- Any inability to maneuver or loss of propulsion incident in China must be reported by the Master directly to the local authorities and to the Administrator (inspections-hk@register-iri.com).