

Ref : DMA/AIFI/98/C 1041

Date: 04/08/2019

Dear Captain  
Good Day,

The potential dangers face by pilots when embarking and disembarking vessels once again came under the spotlight after Sohar Pilot Umar Habib had to be rescued from the water after a pilot ladder parted while he was boarding bulk carrier **Opal Fortune** (IMO 9131034) on July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019.

The pilot was in the Sea of Oman for 15 minutes before the vessel that had been taking him to the bulk carrier was able to rescue him from the water.

The pilot was stepping on the ladder when he felt the ladder slowly descending. After a matter of seconds the whole ladder broke and the pilot fell into the water.

The Captain of the Opal Fortune immediately stopped the engine of his vessel and his crew threw a life buoy into the water. The pilot managed to swim away from the propeller with his inflated life vest, and the crew of the pilot boat started the search for the pilot. As it was pitch dark, it took Svitzer pilot boat Al Kharara 15 minutes to find and rescue him.

There was little wind, only a slight swell and a water temperature of 34 degrees C, enabling the pilot's survival. The Opal Fortune was ordered to return to anchorage for an investigation into the causes of the accident.

On July 25th representatives of Port of Sohar, Royal Omani Police and Port State Control paid a visit to the vessel. Certificates showed that the ladder was exactly two years old. The middle section, about four metres in length, was missing. The upper part remained on deck and the lower part was connected to the vessel by the retriever line. According to the Captain the ladder was always properly stowed under a canvas tarpaulin. The Opal Fortune was allowed to berth at Steinweg Oman under the order that sailing out would only be permitted when she was once again equipped with two new certified pilot ladders.

1997-built, Panama-flagged, 26,341 gt Opal Fortune is owned and managed by FMK Maritime & Trade SA of Panama City, Panama.

You are requested to confirm receipt, discuss the contents in the next consolidated meeting on board & keep a copy in the file DA-11.

Best Regards,

Ali Mohtasham  
Accident Investigations & Fleet Inspections  
ROD Ship Management Co.