TIP OF THE MONTH – SEA CHEST BLOCKED STRAINER

- **HELMET ELEMENT 8 'Cargo Operations' – Item 3 'Cargo Handling Gear'**
- **ISGOTT 11.3 'Cargo and Ballast System Integrity'**
- **VIQ – Section 8.8 - (Cargo Operations and Related Safety Management)**
- **SIRE 2.0 Questionnaire – 6.3 "Ballast Operations."**

INCIDENT

While a real-time cargo audit on an Oil Tanker and the ballast pumps were in operation, our Auditor noticed sudden fluctuations at the pump's pressure gauge and a rattling metal noise was coming from the vessel's pumproom. After investigation, it was evidenced that the pump improper operation was caused due to blocked inlet filter.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A strainer can induce a severe pressure drop when it gets clogged resulting in restricted flow. This leads to starving of the pump and, in turn, major damage. Furthermore, the restriction caused by a suction strainer increases the likelihood of developing a partial vacuum at the pump inlet. Excessive vacuum at the pump inlet may cause cavitation, corrosion and mechanical damage.

SUGGESTIONS

- Perform periodically a visual examination of the strainers for trash, biological materials or any other undesired components, especially after ballast operation at confined / shallow waters.
- Monitor the pump's control gauges and remain alert for warning signs. Ensure that such equipment is properly calibrated.
- Avoid temporary repairs and inform the Company for the timely replacement of damaged components.
- Run a safety campaign to promote awareness.

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