

Analysis of the Responsibilities of Watchkeeping Officers During Cargo Handling Operations on Mv Titanium

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ABSTRACT

In maritime transportation services, cargo handling processes involve relatively high risks; therefore, officers are required to have adequate knowledge of watchkeeping duties and to carry out their responsibilities in accordance with the regulations of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The objective of this study is to examine the implementation of watchkeeping duties onboard a vessel. This research was conducted onboard MV *Titanium* during the author's Sea Project/Sea Practice (PRALA) from September 2023 to September 2024. The data sources used in this study consisted of primary data obtained through direct observation and interviews, as well as secondary data in the form of documentation and relevant literature. The results of this study indicate that several issues were identified during cargo handling procedures, namely that the watchkeeping officer did not provide proper supervision during loading operations on MV *Titanium*, and that the watchkeeping officer failed to inspect cargo lashing equipment before, during, and after the cargo handling processes.

Keywords: *Cargo Handling, Watchkeeping Duties, Responsibility*

ABSTRAK

Dalam jasa angkutan laut, proses pemindahan barang memiliki resiko cukup tinggi sehingga diperlukan Perwira yang mengetahui tentang tugas jaga dan melaksanakan tanggung jawab sesuai ketentuan IMO (International Maritime Organization). Tujuan yang hendak dicapai dari penelitian ini adalah mengetahui pelaksanaan tugas jaga yang dilakukan di atas kapal. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di kapal MV. Titanium saat penulis melaksanakan Praktek Laut (PRALA) September 2023-September 2024. Sumber data pada penelitian ini adalah data primer yang diperoleh dari observasi dan wawancara langsung kepada serta data sekunder berupa dokumentasi dan literatur yang berhubungan. Hasil yang diperoleh dari penelitian ini adalah ditemukan beberapa masalah saat melaksanakan prosedur bongkar muat yakni Perwira jaga yang tidak melakukan pengawasan pada saat muat di MV. Titanium dan Perwira jaga yang tidak melakukan pengecekan alat lashing muatan sebelum dan sesudah maupun saat berlangsungnya proses bongkar muat.

Kata kunci: Bongkar Muat, Tugas Jaga. Tanggung Jawab

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1. INTRODUCTION

Maritime transportation has evolved from simple sailing vessels into large, modern ships such as container vessels, tankers, and bulk carriers, driven by the demands of international trade for efficient, safe, and high-capacity transportation. Container ships have become the backbone of global logistics due to their ability to transport thousands of containers quickly, efficiently, and in a standardized manner at lower costs compared to other modes of transportation. However, the high risks associated with maritime transportation require watchkeeping officers to have a thorough understanding of the regulations established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in order to ensure the safety of the vessel, cargo, and stevedores, particularly during port operations.

In practice, various problems still frequently occur due to inadequate knowledge and skills of watchkeeping officers and dock workers, such as procedural negligence, damage to lashing equipment, and poor work discipline. These issues may result in cargo shifting or even falling overboard. This situation was experienced by the author during sea practice onboard MV Titanium, where on March 6, 2024, twelve containers fell into the sea as a result of wave-induced vibrations and insufficient cargo securing. Based on this experience, the author is interested in conducting a study entitled “Analysis of the Responsibilities of Watchkeeping Officers During Cargo Handling Operations on MV Titanium”, which emphasizes the importance of proper watchkeeping duties in ensuring navigational safety and cargo security.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research method based on an interpretive paradigm, in which the researcher acted as the primary research instrument. Data were collected through direct observation, interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed inductively with an emphasis on understanding meanings rather than producing statistical generalizations.

The focus of this research was the responsibilities of the Officer of the Watch (OOW) during cargo handling operations onboard MV Titanium, particularly in preventing loading errors and cargo damage. The operational definitions applied in this study include watchkeeping duties as the designated period during which officers or crew maintain a port watch, the Officer of the Watch as the officer responsible for ensuring the continuity and safety of shipboard operations in the absence of the Master, and cargo handling as the process of loading and unloading cargo in accordance with established procedures.

Data collection was conducted through direct onboard observation, documentation in the form of photographs and video recordings, and interviews with deck officers and crew members during sea practice conducted from 1 September 2023 to 9 September 2024. Data analysis involved data reduction, data presentation, and continuous conclusion drawing to produce accurate findings regarding the responsibilities of the Officer of the Watch during cargo handling operations.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Results

During the sea practice conducted onboard MV Titanium, a container vessel operated by PT Salam Pacific Indonesia Lines, the author observed cargo handling operations over the period from September 2023 to September 2024. MV Titanium has an overall length of 118.10 m, a breadth of 18.20 m, and a gross tonnage of 5,569 GT.



Figure 1. MV. Titanium

The vessel operates in Indonesian waters, and all cargo handling activities are formally conducted in accordance with established procedures and planning,

including the preparation of the bay plan, lashing plan, completion of customs documentation, and final approval by the Master prior to the commencement of operations.



Figure 2. Loading errors

The Chief Officer is responsible for preparing cargo planning and distributing copies of the bay plan and lashing plan to deck officers. The Officers of the Watch (OOW) are assigned to supervise cargo handling and cargo securing operations in accordance with the designated watch schedule, assisted by an able seaman and a cadet, with all activities recorded in the port logbook as official documentation. However, observations revealed instances of negligence during watchkeeping duties, particularly a lack of discipline among Officers of the Watch in supervising cargo handling operations at Ambon Port. This resulted in improper cargo arrangements, such as containers not being properly secured with twistlocks, making them susceptible to shifting, damage, and in some cases falling overboard, thereby causing financial losses to the company and cargo owners.



Gambar 3. Container lost overboard

In addition, the Officers of the Watch did not conduct inspections of cargo securing equipment before, during, or after cargo handling operations. Such

inspections are essential to ensure the safety and security of cargo throughout the voyage.

Therefore, the Officer of the Watch holds a critical responsibility in ensuring that cargo handling operations are carried out in accordance with the approved bay plan, maintaining effective coordination with the foreman, Chief Officer, and stevedores, and conducting comprehensive supervision and inspection of lashing arrangements to prevent errors that may compromise vessel stability and overall safety.

3.2 Discussion

Based on the identified issues, the analysis indicates that the primary cause of disruptions during cargo handling operations onboard MV Titanium was non-compliance by the Officers of the Watch with their assigned duties and responsibilities. This was evident in the insufficient inspection of cargo operations, the absence of effective dissemination of container lashing procedures discussed during safety meetings, and weak supervision of loading and unloading activities.

To address these deficiencies, several corrective measures are required. The Chief Officer should enhance periodic supervision of Officers of the Watch and helmsmen on duty, as well as conduct direct inspections to ensure that watchkeeping duties are performed in compliance with the requirements of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended.



Gambar 4. *Twislock*



Gambar 5. *Lashing Rod*



Gambar 6. *Turnbuckle (bottle screw)*

Furthermore, Officers of the Watch must conduct systematic inspections of cargo securing equipment before, during, and after cargo handling operations to ensure the safety of the cargo, the vessel, and the crew. Monthly safety meetings should be optimized as a platform for familiarization with cargo handling and lashing procedures, thereby enhancing crew awareness of the critical importance of lashing inspections. Effective supervision can prevent errors in cargo securing, such as improper installation of twistlocks, lashing rods, and bridge fittings.



Gambar 7. *Bridge fitting*

Technical knowledge of cargo securing equipment should also be enhanced, particularly for newly assigned officers, by considering navigational conditions, sea states, vessel design, and cargo characteristics. The primary cargo securing

equipment utilized onboard MV Titanium includes twistlocks, lashing rods, turnbuckles, and bridge fittings.

Based on the analysis, alternative solutions that may be implemented include conducting routine safety meetings prior to cargo handling operations, increasing the direct involvement of the Chief Officer in supervision, strengthening training and familiarization programs for crew members, and fostering awareness and competence regarding the importance of lashing inspections. Additionally, adequate supporting facilities and equipment should be provided by the shipping company to ensure safe and efficient cargo handling operations.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings onboard MV Titanium, it can be concluded that cargo handling operations still face significant issues, particularly the lack of discipline among Officers of the Watch in supervising loading and unloading activities, as well as the absence of systematic inspections of cargo securing equipment before, during, and after cargo operations.

Therefore, it is recommended that Officers of the Watch consistently maintain discipline in performing port watchkeeping duties and conduct thorough and routine inspections of cargo lashing equipment. These measures are essential to ensure that cargo is securely fastened, maintain vessel stability, prevent cargo damage and accidents, and support the safe and efficient operation of the vessel.

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