



Marine Notice 18/2016

Danger with the use of weighted heaving lines

Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to bring to the attention of ship owners, ship operators, ship masters, port authorities, and tug operators the dangers of using weighted heaving lines when transferring mooring lines to tugs and shore linespersons.

Concerns with the use of weighted heaving lines

Recently, AMSA has received a number of complaints about the use of monkey fists on heaving lines that contain weights. These incidents resulted in near misses to personnel on tugs and had the potential to damage wheelhouse windows.

Such incidents can cause serious injury or a fatality to crew members and linespersons and/or damage to the vessel.

The incidents

During the berthing of a vessel at Hay Point, metal objects in lieu of a monkey's fist were attached to the messenger line for securing to tug toelines. This metal object landed heavily on the tug's deck, narrowly missing the deck crew.

In another incident, a tug attending the berthing of a ship at Newcastle had a heaving line thrown by the ship's crew which narrowly missed the Engineer and Deckhand. A heavy weight, consisting of a large rusty shackle, was used on this occasion.

A tug attending the berthing of a ship at Dalrymple Bay had a weighted monkey fist land heavily on the deck of the tug narrowly missing the deck crew.

Some weights are dipped in paint to increase the weight. This practice is also dangerous.

Many similar incidents have been reported elsewhere. Safety Alert 12 from the West of England Insurance Service is relevant (<http://www.westpandi.com/globalassets/loss-prevention/loss-prevention-safety-alerts/120612-sa012-monkeys-fists-on-heaving-lines---use-of-inappropriate-weighting-material.pdf>)

Photographs





The above examples are of the weights found added to a monkey's fist.

Best Practice guidance

There are dangers involved in using heaving lines which incorporate weights in the monkey's fist. The risk of injury to tug crews and linesmen is very high and the ensuing injuries potentially extremely serious.

A number of seamanship publications provide instruction on the correct tying of a monkey's fist or heaving-line knot to weight the end of a heaving line. This knot must be made of rope only.

The [Code of Safe Working Practice for Merchant Seafarers section 26.3.5](#) provides more information

AMSA recommends that all ships crews are cautioned about the dangers of inappropriately weighting heaving lines. Owners and Operators are encouraged to ensure proper procedures for heaving lines are included in the Safety Management System. The continued cooperation of all owners, operators and masters is appreciated in order to avoid future incidents of this nature.

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