



UNITED KINGDOM
MARITIME PILOTS'
ASSOCIATION

5 July 2019

To ship-owners, ships' masters, ship's agents and their principles,

Joint Notice on the illegal use of Dangerously Weighted Heaving Lines (DWHLs) in UK ports & harbours

The British Ports Association, British Tugowners Association, Port Skills and Safety, UK Chamber of Shipping, UK Major Ports Group, and UK Marine Pilots Association hereby jointly issue a notice against the continued use of DWHLs in UK ports and harbours.

The use of DWHLs is a significant concern to the maritime community. The use of DWHLs when thrown by ship's crew passing mooring ropes or retrieving a messenger line is dangerous and has caused serious injury. DWHLs are a significant safety hazard and have the potential to cause serious or fatal injury and cannot be an accepted activity in UK ports and harbours. Indeed, instances could lead to a fine or criminal prosecution of a ship's master.

International and domestic codes are clear and unambiguous on the construction and weight of heaving lines.

The [Code of Safe Working Practice \(CoSWP\) 2018 Amendment](#), Section 26.3.5 states:

"To prevent personal injury to those receiving heaving lines, the 'monkey's fist' should be made with rope only and must not contain added weighting material. Safe alternatives include a small high-visibility soft pouch, filled with fast-draining pea shingle or similar, with a weight of not more than 0.5 kg. Under no circumstances is a line to be weighted by items such as shackles, bolts or nuts, or twist locks."

The [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\) Code of Practice – Safety and Health in Ports](#), Section 6.13, Mooring Operations, Para 357 states:

“A “monkey’s fist” at the end of a heaving line should only be made of rope. Additional weights should never be added to it.”

The signatories call for ship-owners, ship-managers, ship’s agents, port operators and pilots to assist in eradicating the use of DWHLs by the following:

- 1) Informing all incoming vessels of their duty to follow the Code of Safe Working Practices (COSWP)
- 2) Issuing them with MCA Safety Bulletin No. 2 – Annex A
- 3) Stressing that fines, Port State Control Inspections and criminal prosecution are likely, especially should a vessel persist in their use.

All stakeholders can play an important role in preventing the use of anything other than a rope monkey’s fist or alternative soft safety pouch. By promoting and raising the issue with all parties with a vested interest bad practice can be eliminated.

The agreed procedure for reporting incidents involving DWHLs to the MCA for enforcement action for both UK flagged, and non-UK flagged vessels is at Annex B.

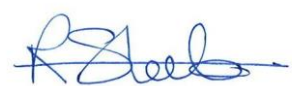
Yours faithfully,



Richard Ballantyne
Chief Executive
British Ports Association



Nick Dorman
Chairman
British Tugowners Association




Richard Steele
Chief Executive
Ports Skills & Safety



Bob Sanguinetti
Chief Executive Officer
UK Chamber of Shipping



Tim Morris
Chief Executive
UK Major Ports Group



Mike Morris
Chairman
UK Marine Pilots Association



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency

SAFETY BULLETIN

No. 2

DANGEROUSLY WEIGHTED SHIPS HEAVING LINES

There have been several instances where dangerously weighted heaving lines, including the use of monkey's fists with additional weights inserted into them, have been used resulting in serious injury. Further guidance is contained in Ch 26 section 26.3.5 in the 2015 edition of the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers.



Vessels using dangerously weighted heaving lines in the UK may be subject to prosecution

Annex B:

Actions on Receipt of a Report: non-UK Flagged Ships

1. Operator/Port Harbour Authority to report the incident to the nearest Marine Office (MO) and MCA Navigational Safety via: navigationsafety@mcga.gov.uk
2. Resulting in injuries to personnel - the ship should be considered for inspection in the normal manner.
3. No injuries reported – a stepped approach is considered by the Marine Office
4. A letter to be sent to the ship owner/operator via the agent (preferably by email) highlighting the incident.
5. Marine Office to send copies of email/correspondence to the MCA Enforcement Branch and Port Liaison Policy Manager (PLPM) as soon as practicable, for their records and to consider any additional enforcement action that may be appropriate.
6. Marine Office to maintain a simple recording system of the reports and the response from the MO; to recognise repeat offenders.
7. Second Offence by the same ship – MO to consult the issue with Inspection Operations Branch and enter an unexpected factor message in THETIS [THETIS is the information system that supports the new Port State Control inspection regime (NIR)]. Ship considered for inspection.
8. MO to notify PLPM and Enforcement Branch
9. Third and subsequent incident reports of the same ship – MO to refer the matter to Enforcement Branch to consider appropriate enforcement action. PLPM and Inspection Operations Branch to be kept in the copy.

Actions on Receipt of a Report: UK Flagged Ships

1. Operator/Port Harbour Authority to report the incident to the nearest Marine Office (MO) and MCA Navigational Safety via: navigationsafety@mcga.gov.uk
2. Resulting in injuries to personnel - the ship should be considered for inspection in the normal manner.
3. No injuries reported – a stepped approach is considered by the Marine Office
4. A letter to be sent to the ship owner/operator via the agent (preferably by email) highlighting the incident.
5. Marine Office to send copies of email/correspondence to the MCA Enforcement Branch and Port Liaison Policy Manager (PLPM) as soon as practicable, for their records and to consider any additional enforcement action that may be appropriate.
6. Marine Office to maintain a simple recording system of the reports and the response from the MO; to recognise repeat offenders.
7. MO to follow this up or by referral to the MCA Customer Service Manager (CSM) on case by case basis

8. Second Offence by the same ship - Marine Office to consult Inspection Operations Branch and consider inspection and notify PLPM and Enforcement Branch.
9. Second Offence for UK Flagged Company - MO or CSM to notify the company (DP). Discuss the issue and establish a corrective action plan.
10. Third or subsequent Offence by the same ship – MO to refer the matter to the Enforcement Branch to consider appropriate enforcement action and to notify PLPM.