

BEST PRACTICE AND MARINE SAFETY CRITERIA BULLETIN 01-2024

Date of issue: 13.08.2024

BPMSCB 01-2024: Mooring safety series - Weighted monkey fists on heaving lines

This bulletin is the second in the Mooring safety series of bulletins that Fremantle Port Authority has issued to the Shipping Industry.

Objective: The objective of the bulletins is to enhance safety of vessels and safety of port operations. The bulletins will provide vessel owners / managers (ISM-Document of Compliance holders) / vessel masters and crew, the necessary guidance and information to enable completion of safe port calls at the Port of Fremantle. Vessels are required to comply with the marine safety criteria expectations set out in these bulletins.

Area of focus for this bulletin - Mooring safety

Fremantle Ports experienced a high potential mooring incident involving the use of unsafe weighted monkey fists on heaving lines during a vessel berthing operation in July 2024.

Incident details

A Fremantle Ports' mooring team member was struck by a weighted monkey fist on a heaving line during a vessel berthing operation. While striking the injured person, the weighted monkey fist also narrowly missed striking another mooring team member's head.

Potential consequence

The incident had the potential to cause serious injury to both team members had it struck them on the head or other critical parts of the body.

Immediate actions by Fremantle Ports

- The Fremantle Ports' mooring team leader also noted that the other heaving line in use also had metal reinforcement in the monkey fists thereby making them both dangerous for use during mooring operations. Both monkey fists were cut off and sent to the Harbour Master's office for investigations.
- The injured person was taken to a medical facility for assessment and was released with light medical treatment. Fortunately, the injury was not of a more serious nature.
- Fremantle Ports conducted a detailed investigation of the incident which included boarding of the vessel to inspect the condition of the vessel's mooring equipment and other heaving lines.
- As a punitive measure, the vessel was returned to anchor until a satisfactory response was received from the vessel regarding rectification measures taken to prevent recurrence of the incident.

- Due to additional issues noted as well, the vessel has been deemed UNACCEPTABLE to return to the Port of Fremantle, unless rectification of the existing conditions are carried out and objective evidence provided to and verified by Fremantle Ports' prior to return.

Findings / Contributory Factors / Root causes

The following was noted during the investigation process

- The weighted monkey fists had metal reinforcements.
- The weights of the two confiscated monkey fists were noted to be 666 grams and 786 grams respectively.



- The heavier of the two monkey fists was detected during the Harbour Master's Office inspection of the vessel conducted at a previous berth a few days prior to this incident. However, the instructions were not complied with by the vessel's crew.
- There was no clear guidance from the vessel operators to the ship's crew regarding the dangers of weighted monkey fists.

Observations noted through mooring operations and feedback from Fremantle Ports

- This was the fifth vessel with weighted monkey fists calling at the Port of Fremantle and reported between mid-April and mid-July 2024.
- Vessel operator instructions to vessel crews did not provide any specific guidance regarding weights and construction of the monkey fists.
- Complacency towards mooring safety by vessel crews.

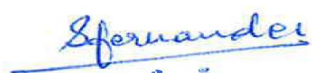
Requirements for all vessels calling at the Port of Fremantle effective immediately

- All vessel owners, masters and crew are required to be fully familiar with the below marine industry guidance publications
 - AMSA Marine Notice 18-2016 - Dangers with the use of weighted heaving lines
 - West of England Safety Alert 012 - Monkey's Fists on Heaving Lines - Use of Inappropriate Weighting Material
 - UK MCA Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers 2024 Edition - Section 26.3.6
- To prevent injury to ship and shore mooring crews 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.



- It is recommended that vessel operators include specific guidance regarding monkey fists in their mooring procedures and the requirement checked during ISM audits.
- Vessels failing to comply with the above Minimum Safety Criteria may have additional restrictions imposed that may include but not be limited to - removal from berth until rectification, delays in berthing or being deemed unacceptable to call at the Port of Fremantle. All costs for removal and delays will be to the vessel's account.

Any queries regarding the above requirements and recommendations must be submitted to the email address: harbourmaster@fremantleports.com.au



Captain Savio Fernandes
Harbour Master