

## Dangerous heaving line caused injury



**It was early morning, still dark outside and the vessel was approaching the berth. The sky was clear with light winds. Both mooring teams had prepared all the mooring ropes. The Bosun and two AB's were on the forecastle and the 2nd Officer and two AB's were on the poop deck. The Master, Pilot and Chief Officer were on the bridge.**

The vessel approached the berth slowly with two tug boats, one forward and one aft. One of the AB's threw a heaving line ashore and then let out the spring lines. The two line handlers put the two springs on the bollard. The AB called to the line handler that he was throwing the heaving line for the head lines. The line handler shouted back that he was ready. The AB threw the heaving line but unfortunately the monkey fist hit the line handler on the head. The line handler had a helmet on, but it was knocked off and he fell on the ground. The pilot could see this from the bridge and called for an ambulance. The mooring operation stopped as the injured line handler received first aid from the other line handlers. About 20 minutes later he was taken to hospital after an ambulance arrived and the vessel was berthed.

A couple of hours later the police boarded the vessel and took statements from the crew. It was also found that the monkey fist had extra weight added.

The vessel was not arrested. The line handler recovered after two weeks. The line handler's helmet probably saved him from serious injury.

It is a serious matter to have extra weight in the monkey's fist such as bolts or shackles and in a worst case scenario people can be killed. The crew need to follow the instructions from their flag state, port state and ideally what is stated in the COSWP (Code Of Safe Working Practices);

"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."

# Discussion

Go to the "File" menu and select "Save as..." to save the pdf-file on your computer.

You can place the marker below each question to write the answer directly into the file.



When discussing this case please consider that the actions taken at the time made sense for all involved. Do not only judge but also ask why you think these actions were taken and could this happen on your vessel?

**1. What were the immediate causes of this accident?**

**2. Is there a risk that this kind of accident could happen on our vessel?**

**3. How could this accident have been prevented?**

4. Do we have a risk assessment for mooring operations?

5. If we do, could this risk assessment be improved?

6. Do we have a pre-departure and pre-arrival meeting where we discuss the mooring operation and how the vessel should manouver?

7. How often do we inspect the heaving lines?

8. Are our heaving lines compliant and no extra weight added?

9. What sections of our SMS would have been breached if any?

10. Does our SMS address these risks?

11. How could we improve our SMS to address these issues?

12. What do you think was the root cause of this accident?

13. Is there any kind of training that we should do that addresses these issues?