

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

HEYSHAM HARBOUR

PARTED MOORING LINES

A significant number of recent marine incidents within the Harbour have involved mooring lines parting during berthing and unberthing operations, and while vessels have been moored alongside.

While many of the incidents have occurred under differing circumstances, their frequency within a short period highlights a Harbour-wide concern regarding the management of mooring operations, line loads, and the safety of personnel in the vicinity of tensioned lines.

Thankfully, the incidents at Heysham have not resulted in injuries; however, a similar incident at the Port of Liverpool resulted in a crew member suffering a broken leg when a mooring line parted while a vessel was mooring in a lock. **Such incidents present a high risk for serious injury.**

Investigations (ongoing)

Investigations into the incidents at Heysham remain ongoing, but at this stage:

- No single common root cause has been identified
- Early indications suggest a combination of operational, environmental, and equipment-related influences
- Further analysis is being undertaken to identify any recurring trends or systemic issues

Findings will be shared in due course, where appropriate.

Immediate recommendations

Pending completion of the investigations, it is recommended that all Harbour users should:

- Review mooring operations risk assessments and procedures
- Maintain strict exclusion zones around all tensioned mooring lines
- Avoid positioning personnel within potential snapback zones

- Ensure clear and effective communication between the vessel and personnel ashore
- Stop operations where conditions are unclear or become unsafe and conduct a dynamic risk assessment before continuing operations
- Visually check the condition of mooring lines and equipment before mooring operations commence and while the vessel is moored
- Remain vigilant to changing line loads caused by vessel movement, passing traffic, and environmental conditions