

NOTICE TO AGENTS, BERTH AND SHIP OPERATORS



Standing NASBO 09

Use Of Inappropriate or Weighted Heaving Lines

Issued 5th January 2026

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the use of inappropriate or weighted heaving lines by Ships for all mooring and towing operations is strictly prohibited.

This activity places those persons on the deck of a tug, mooring boat or berth at an increased and unacceptable level of risk, which could result in serious injury or death, furthermore navigational implications could also be encountered if a Tug fails to make fast.

The UK Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen Chapter 25 (25.3.2) states: **“Vessels heaving lines should be constructed with a ‘Monkeys Fist’ at one end. To prevent personal injury the ‘Fist’ should be made only with rope and should NOT contain added weighting material”.**

The MCA publication, The Code of Safe Working Practice (COSWP) 2024 Edition, Section 26.3.6 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 12 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.*

Those persons who encounter weighted heaving lines have instructions to remove the hazard or replace with a sand bag or approved equivalent.

All cases of inappropriate or weighted use of heaving lines will be investigated by Peel Ports London Medway. Vessels may be subject to an inspection at a rate published in the Port of Sheerness Ltd Schedule of Charges and **a fine will be imposed as per Chapter 1 - Section 3.11 of the port schedule of charges.** In addition, reports will be submitted to the MCA and MAIB.

**Marine Operations Department
Peel Ports London Medway**

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Notice Expiry:

5th January 2026
N/A