



East Anglia

*Ipswich  
King's Lynn  
Lowestoft*

Associated British Ports  
Port Office  
Commercial Road  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk NR32 2TE

Telephone +44 (0)1502 516804  
Facsimile +44 (0)1502 500032

[www.abports.co.uk](http://www.abports.co.uk)

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018

Dangerously Weighted Heaving Lines

Dear valued stakeholders and customers,

ABP have a significant focus upon our safety responsibilities and continual improvement, you may be aware of the Beyond Zero program which is focussed upon an environment where our staff and port users feel empowered to make the right safety choices and speak up when they observe unsafe practices.

One such practice that is becoming an increasing concern is that of the use of dangerously weighted heaving lines. ABP have replaced our own staff and licenced linesmen's heaving lines with safer alternatives such as quoits and bean bags, but we are faced with increasing reports of dangerously weighted heaving lines thrown to shore from ships.

Some UK ports have experienced some very serious injuries to port marine personnel as a result of these items being used during mooring operations. At the end of September 2017 in an effort to deter ships from conducting these dangerous practices, the ABP Harbour Authority board decided to take a strong line whenever a ship was found to be using a dangerously weighted heaving line in an ABP port:

1. Upon identification of an unsuitable / dangerous weight it will be immediately removed and confiscated;
2. The weight will be replaced with a suitable replacement ("bean bag");
3. The Master will be re-issued with a notice explaining why the action has been taken, and where appropriate, may be issued with a charge for the replacement bag;
4. A charge of £1,000 may be made to the ship. The proceeds from these charges will be donated to a suitable marine / seafarers charity, as ABP does not wish to profit from a safety initiative.



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The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers advises mariners that the weighted end of a heaving line should not weigh any more than 500 grams and should not contain added weighting material such as shackles, bolts or nuts, twist locks or other materials.

ABP continues to lobby the MCA in an effort to highlight this dangerous practice to the wider shipping industry. ABP provides information and guidance to vessels that enter our ports.

ABP will commence charging £1,000 where ships are found to use a dangerously weighted heaving line/s from 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

ABP hope that you will support this initiative in a similar spirit and update your own information to vessels so as to help eliminate the use of dangerously weighted heaving lines.

Yours Faithfully

**Gary Horton | Harbour Master/Pilot | Associated British Ports**

**Tel: 01502 572286 | Mob: 07771 605520 |**

[ghorton@abports.co.uk](mailto:ghorton@abports.co.uk)



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