

High potential near-miss: Mooring rope parted

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Mooring buoy rope parted while a vessel was moored.

What happened?

The potential severity of the incident was categorised as “high” owing to the potential injuries that could have arisen had someone been in the snap back zone.

No injuries or damage to the vessel occurred apart from the parted mooring rope.

What was the cause?

Equipment failure following from wear & tear, in turn following from inadequate or insufficient routine inspection.

It was evident from inspection after the fact that the condition of the mooring rope was bad.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Line of fire





What lessons were learned? And what were the actions?

- Planned and regular inspection of mooring ropes.
- If mooring ropes are found in poor condition, they should be taken out of use.
- All crew associated with mooring operations should be properly informed and fully briefed with regard to:
 - the mooring operation in general
 - checking for defects with the ropes
 - proper precautions relating to keeping out of the snap back zone.

Members may wish to review a list of mooring-related incidents – this can be done by visiting the IMCA website safety flash page and entering the appropriate search text (e.g. parted mooring) in the Search box.

We will highlight two similar incidents here, although in both cases, injury resulted from parted mooring lines:

- Lost time injury (LTI) during mooring operations
- Mooring line failure resulting in serious injury

Members should be aware of existing IMCA documentation as follows:

- Mooring practice safety guidance for offshore vessels when alongside in ports and harbours

- Mooring incidents (video).

IMCA Safety Flashes summarise key safety matters and incidents, allowing lessons to be more easily learnt for the benefit of the entire offshore industry.

The effectiveness of the IMCA Safety Flash system depends on the industry sharing information and so avoiding repeat incidents. Incidents are classified according to IOGP's Life Saving Rules.

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