

## TUGS - SAFETY PROCEDURES

Dear Captain,

URS are the tug operators on the River Scheldt, serving the locks and river terminals at Antwerp (but not inside the Antwerp docks), Gent, Terneuzen, Flushing and Zeebrugge

For the safety and efficiency of the tug operations with your vessel and for the safety of your and our crew, we kindly ask you to consider our safety rules and instruct your crews accordingly.

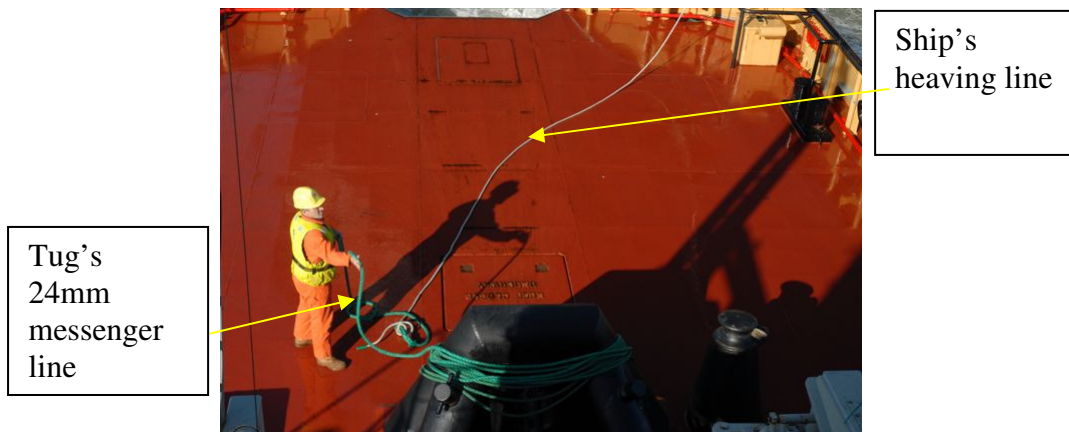
We would like to point out the following items:

### **STAND-BY FOR MANOEUVRING**

The crew should be on stand-by well in time to give the tugs sufficient time to secure: we stress this point because it frequently happens that the crew arrives very late at their mooring stations and the vessel is at that moment already entering the approach channel to the lock.

### **STEEL TOW WIRES – MESSENGER LINES AND HEAVING LINES:**

Our 42-48mm steel tow wires are provided with a 24mm rope messenger line of 30m, therefore the heaving line used by the crew should be made of small diameter rope, ideally 8-10mm. Heavier lines make it difficult and dangerous for our crew to take the line on board; this slows down the operations at the most dangerous moment.



The heaving line should not be weighted by items such as shackles, bolts or nuts, or any other such objects; not attached directly to the heaving line and not inserted in the monkey's fist.

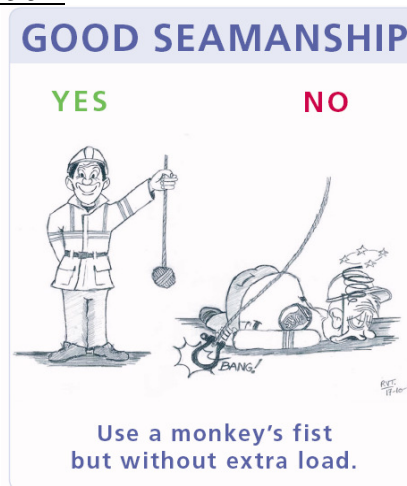
The best options for weighing a heaving line are:

- A simple monkey's fist at the end of the line, (no objects inside the monkey's fist.) As most of the heaving lines are made of floating material, this fist will float as well.
- A soft floating ring, such as used at the end of lifebuoy lines.

*We reserve our crews the right to simply cut off any dangerously weighed heaving lines, as we regularly encounter: please see the picture below.*



**SUCH WEIGHTS ARE MURDER WEAPONS!**



## SAFE SPEED FOR SECURING

Following extensive investigation into the matter, URS has established a policy of securing the vessel at a safe speed only. This speed has been established at **maximum 6 KNOTS THROUGH THE WATER**". Especially for the forward tug, this is the critical speed with regard to safety.

We reserve our Masters the right to refuse to secure the vessel if the speed is above this limit.

## DECK LIGHTS ON THE FORECASTLE DECK AND POOP DECK

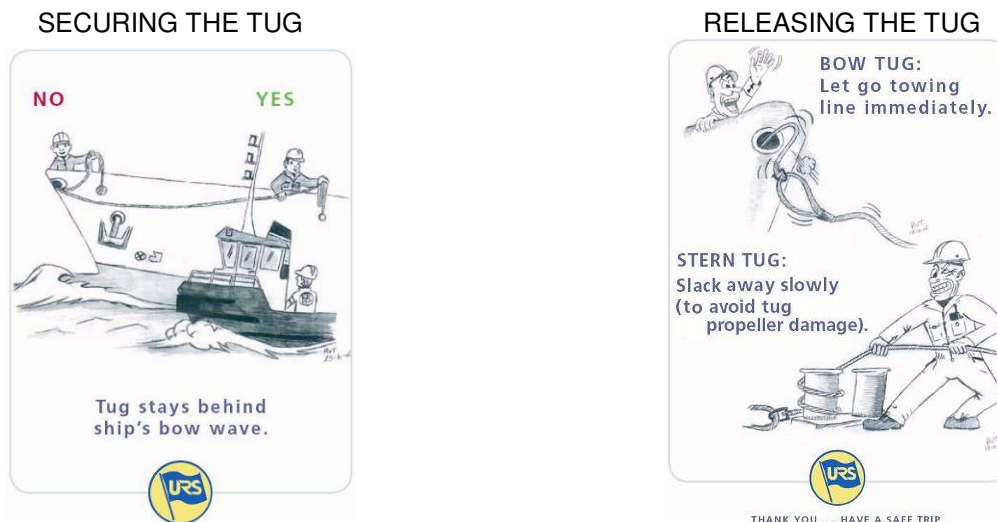
The floodlights on the forecastle deck often blind the tug master, who is forced to look right into them while approaching the vessel. This is the worst at the bow; the floodlight will often be positioned high up in the mast and shine over the forward bulwark. As there is no other deck lighting on the forecastle deck, this is very problematic for the tug master's night vision.

Aft, the effect of the superstructure lighting somewhat reduces the brightness of the floodlights that illuminate the mooring deck.

## PASSING OVER THE HEAVING LINE – RELEASING THE TOW WIRE:

The heaving line should be thrown over to the tug in the shoulder of the vessel as far as possible, not from the position of the Suez fairlead.

The position in front of the vessel's (bulbous) bow is the most dangerous one for a tug; therefore simply lowering a heaving line from the bow is not acceptable to us.



## RELEASING THE TOW WIRE:

Following a recent incident we wish to stress that our rope messenger line should never be disconnected from the steel tow wire!

- At the bow, the wire should be released in one motion.
- At the stern, the wire should be slacked gently by means of the messenger line, so that the wire can be wound by the tug's winch, and will not end up in the water. In this way, the line cannot get caught by the tug's propellers.

We trust that you will fully instruct your crew accordingly, for the safety of everyone, and thank you very much for your cooperation.

We wish you a safe and pleasant port call at Antwerp and "All the Best!"

Best regards

Cpt. Y. Beeckman

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