

Bollards, Cleats and Rings

- Mooring lines should be attached appropriately to a bollard, cleat or ring and not to the pile or the pier structure
- Mooring points should be sufficient for the size of vessel, frequently spaced, accessible and be inspected on a regular basis



Fenders

- Fenders should be positioned between the vessel and pontoon. Adequate fenders should be used to dampen any movement or contact against a pontoon or structure
- It is recommended that pneumatic fenders are used as they provide the most effective dampening of vessel movement
- Tyres, if used, should be replaced periodically as they will lose their effective dampening ability over time
- Tyre beds beneath houseboats will not be permitted in new River Work Licence applications unless agreed by the PLA
- Timber is not an adequate substitute for effective fendering



Access

Any houseboat owner should ensure that safe access is provided to the vessel at all states of tide. Where a gangway is used it should be secured to the vessel and allow for adequate movement in the mooring system. Further guidance can be sought from a local surveyor or found at HSE online: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/ports/access-to-vessels.htm>

Houseboat Mooring

First edition, 2016

The tidal Thames

The tidal Thames is a busy river with movement of freight, recreational boats and passenger vessels.

The river between Denton and Teddington is defined as Category C waters by the Maritime Coastguard Agency. This means any vessel can expect a wave height up to 1.2 metres.

Facilities and vessels should be able to withstand the prevailing conditions. This guidance does not remove the master's responsibility for reducing wash when passing a moored boat or structure.

Reporting Wash

Serious wash should be reported via the PLA's on-line reporting form:

www.pla.co.uk/Safety/Houseboat-Wash-Report

New facilities or moorings

Any person wishing to develop a new houseboat mooring or facility on the tidal Thames will be required to apply for a River Works Licence (RWL) from the PLA.

As part of their application for a RWL, applicants should ensure they have fully demonstrated how they intend to meet the requirements of this guidance.

Mooring checks

If you would like a check on your individual vessel or mooring by the Harbour Master team then please contact hmu@pla.co.uk stating your location, name of vessel and contact details.

The PLA will, on invitation and free of charge, attend a mooring to undertake a check or provide advice to houseboaters on effective mooring arrangements.

Boats

Due to the category and nature of the tidal Thames, houseboats should be:

- Dutch barges or newly constructed vessels equivalent in size and displacement
- Large vessels similar to a Thames Lighterage barge
- Ballasted to reduce the impact of wash

Small un-ballasted vessels will be much more susceptible to the affects of wash. If you need advice on ballast, this should be sought from a local surveyor.

Pontoon Facilities

Any structure, pier or pontoon should be well maintained in compliance with the conditions of the River Works Licence (RWL) and inspected on a regular basis by the licence holder or representative.

- Pontoons should be attached to **piled structures**
- Pile keeps / gates should be well maintained and free from obstruction
- **Rollers or low-friction rubbing pads** should provide a close fit around the pile reducing movement of pontoons, but move freely up and down
- Rollers should be regularly greased and maintained to avoid excess noise
- Shore service connections should be slack so as to allow movement with the vessel and not be tight so that they risk being detached from a utility point.



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Mooring Lines

An important part of any mooring arrangement is mooring lines which should conform to the following:

- Be made of Polypropylene. Kevlar lined ropes, ropes used for climbing and metal chains should not be used as they provide insufficient give and contribute to 'snatching' of mooring lines

- **40mm minimum diameter** is the recommended size.

However, if you have concerns over the appropriate size of mooring lines, seek advice from a local supplier or surveyor.

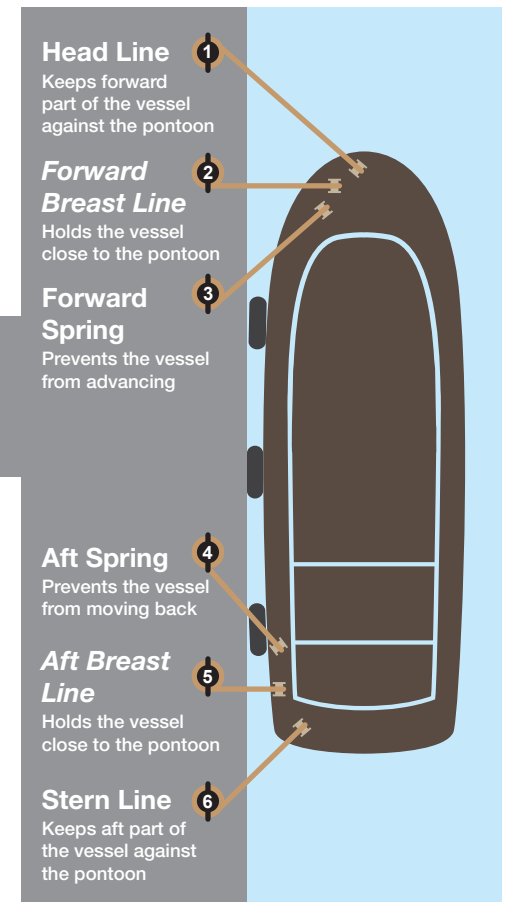
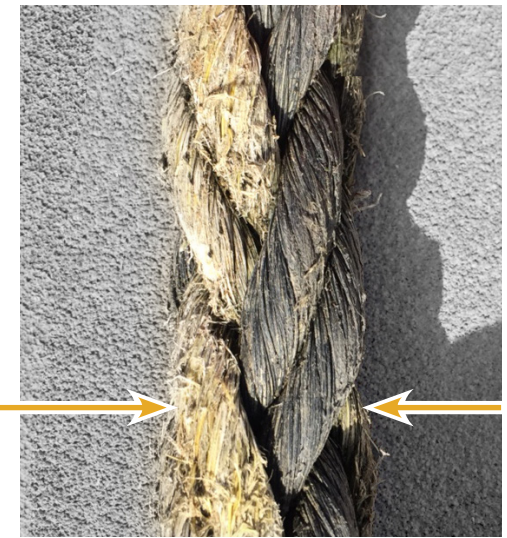
- Be regularly inspected for abrasion, damage and deterioration as a result of UV rays – to check a line, pull the strands apart and check for a white powder substance. This indicates a deteriorating line and it should be replaced immediately

- Be moored with fore and aft springs, head and stern ropes and where possible *breast lines* as per this diagram

- Be slack enough to allow movement of the vessel, but tight enough to prevent the vessel moving away from the pier face

- Be the weakest point of the mooring system and be the first point of failure if a mooring is over stressed

Best practice is to double-up mooring lines for secure, long term mooring.



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