

Fender Damage Claims – Alexandria and El Dekheila Ports, Egypt-
Precautionary Measures to minimize Fender damage claims at Egyptian ports.



We wish to draw attention to the continuing importance of exercising particular care when berthing and unberthing vessels at Alexandria and El Dekheila Ports, Egypt, where allegations of damage to quay fender systems may occasionally arise following vessel operations.

The purpose of this circular is to remind vessel interests of the importance of documenting berth conditions and implementing appropriate preventive measures in order to minimize the likelihood of disputes and to preserve evidence should a claim subsequently be presented.

The berths at Alexandria and El Dekheila are equipped with various marine fender systems, the exact type depending upon the berth, terminal and the period during which the berth was constructed or upgraded, but mostly are cylindrical rubber fenders.

Many of the fenders in Alexandria and El Dekheila have been reported as old, cracked, or inadequately maintained. This can make it difficult to determine whether damage was caused by the calling vessel or was pre-existing.

El Dekheila port has characteristics that increase the risk of fender damage allegations. The port entrance faces north with the western breakwater is relatively short and during rough weather, swell can reach the quays, causing vessels alongside to surge against the fenders despite proper mooring. Some of port supervisors may allege to Master that the vessel under his command has caused damage to fenders or any port property.

Masters/local agents are sometimes informed of alleged fender damage only when the vessel is ready to sail, rather than immediately after berthing. This makes defending the claim more difficult.

Defending a claim often depends on proving that the fender had already been damaged before the vessel arrived, usually by locating prior records or photographs.

The Alexandria Port Authority requires security before permitting the vessel to depart. P&I Club Letters of Undertaking are not accepted, with the Authority instead requiring a bank guarantee, certified cheque, or other acceptable security (payment guarantees issued by official local agent).

To minimize exposure to potential claims, members are recommended to appoint an independent surveyor to carry out a visual inspection of the berth and accessible fenders before berthing whenever practicable. Take comprehensive date- and time-stamped photographs and/or video recordings of the berth and all visible fenders before the vessel comes alongside and also to maintain complete bridge records, including pilot exchange information, engine movements, tug assistance, weather conditions and, where available, VDR recordings.

It is also recommended to keep monitoring the vessel's moorings while alongside, particularly during periods of swell, strong winds or passing vessel interaction.

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