

**HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
OFFSHORE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
HELICOPTER LIAISON GROUP (OIAC HLG)**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2010 at the offices of HSE,
Rose Court, London SE1**

Present

Representing

Chair:	Tom McLaren	HSE
Members:	Jessica Burton	Oil & Gas UK*
	Ronan Ferguson	Oil & Gas UK*
	Mike Crabb	HCA
	Kevin Payne	CAA
	Peter Norton	BHA
	Ian Evans	IADC/BROA
	Tony Ridley	BALPA/IFALPA
	Mark Robinson	Unite, Amicus Section
	John Taylor	Unite, TGWU Section
	Pat Naylor	HSE
Secretary:	Phil Sumner	HSE

* By Spiderphone link

Item 1 – Introduction/Apologies

1. The Chairman welcomed Pat Naylor as a new member of HLG.
2. Apologies had been tendered by Robert Paterson (Oil & Gas UK), Dave Howson (CAA) and Willie Gibson (OCA).

Item 2 – Status of actions arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

Action 1: Vince Reed (CAA) to prepare a specification identifying the characteristics of an effective NUI firefighting system in consultation with HCA and taking account of HLG members' comments. (Covered as Item 3 on the agenda)

Chairman's opening remarks

3. Tom McLaren reported that he had presented HLG's report on its 2009 activities at OIAC's meeting on 23 March 2010. There was support from OIAC for HLG continuing its present format.

Item 3 – NUI firefighting provisions

4. Tom McLaren outlined the consultation process on the proposed specification for a self-contained NUI firefighting system prepared by CAA, noting that BALPA had been the sole written resposdee by the closing date of 28 May. Kevin Payne reported that CAA was due to hold an exploratory meeting with Oil & Gas UK shortly to consider what progress had been achieved so far and the issues to be taken account of in any new system. Jessica Burton advised that Oil & Gas UK had held two industry meetings, the main purpose of which was to categorise the various types of NUIs into a number of broad groupings and identify a list of equipment and systems which could offer some degree of firefighting protection for each type in addition to CAA's specification. The intention then would be to work with CAA and the other stakeholders (HCA, HSE) to understand the costs, benefits and maintainability etc for the various systems options and their practicability for installation.

POST MEETING NOTE: An informal meeting was held at CAA offices, Gatwick on 11th August between CAA and Oil and Gas UK representatives intended to bring CAA up to date with a series of meetings held between industry stakeholders to review and address the CAA document "The provision and oversight of safety equipment and measures regarding rescue and fire fighting on Normally Unattended Installations offshore." The industry had agreed that to "Do Nothing" (option 2) was not a viable outcome and so support for the development of an appropriate RFF "retrofit" solution for NUIs was indicated (option 3). CAA responded by agreeing to contact one or more prominent CAFS manufacturers/test houses in Europe and the US to try to facilitate a programme of testing appropriate to the application/environment and also to discuss with representatives from other North Sea sectors (e.g. IVW, CAA Netherlands) how similar systems had been successfully introduced to NUIs outwith the UKCS. Oil and Gas UK presented a list of concerns and issues raised by the industry working group in a brainstorming exercise set up in response to the CAA specification document for a CAF system. It was agreed a further meeting would be convened between all interested parties (including also HCA and HSE) as soon as practical, once feedback from manufacturers had been properly assessed.

Item 4 – Energy Institute Guidelines for Not Permanently Attended Installations

5. With EI's agreement, members had been provided with an electronic copy of the Guidelines. Pat Naylor reported that they primarily addressed non-aviation issues and reflected CAP 437 where appropriate. He stressed that the document was intended for use by industry and had been issued within the existing regulatory framework. Whilst acknowledging that HSE had been fully involved in the development of the Guidelines, he advised that HSE would advise Energy Institute in due course of any issues which it considered needed to be addressed in future amendments. Kevin Payne considered that the new definition reflected the reality of a shift towards planned occupancy,

which had occurred within the industry, rather than unplanned as was the original implicit understanding of a NUI.

Item 5 - Update on the work of the Oil & Gas UK Helicopter Task Group

6. Jessica Burton advised that the final meeting of HTG had now taken place and a Summary of Work would be placed on the Oil & Gas UK website. The first meeting of the broader based Step Change Helicopter Safety Steering Group would take place in August with a further meeting called after publication of AAIB's Report into Flight 85N in order to take account of the Report's recommendations and lessons learned.

Item 6 - Amendment 01/10 to CAP 437 6th Edition

7. Kevin Payne briefly summarised an interim update to CAP437 published on CAA's website in April 2010 providing operators with additional guidance relating to the provision of meteorological information from offshore installations and also making some editorial and minor technical amendments. The next major update to CAP 437 was targeted for Quarter 1 of 2011 and would include the new helideck stage 2 "H" and "circle" lighting requirements.

Item 7 – Status report on the update of Oil & Gas UK Guidelines for the Management of Offshore Helicopter Operations, Issue 6

8. Jessica Burton advised that work to update the Guidelines was now progressing well and it was aimed to present a final draft to ASTG's Aviation Seminar taking place on 15 September 2010. Beyond then, Oil & Gas UK was looking to have the document ready for publication early in 2011.

Item 8 – Update on the use of passenger personal locator beacons on offshore helicopter flights

9. Jessica Burton reported that both types of PLB currently in use had now been fully reintroduced across the UKCS and a DVD on their deployment had been produced. Approval had been given by OPITO to incorporate use of PLBs within the BOSIET training course, including an amendment to incorporate the use of LAP jackets.

Item 9 - Overview of compliance with HCA inspection regime

10. Mike Crabb spoke about HCA's experience during the ten years of its existence on the trends of compliance with CAP 437 on the part of duty holders with its helideck inspection regime. During the early years of the regime numerous 'hardware' issues arose, ie helideck netting, status lights and signage. More recently 'housekeeping' issues, such as the condition of crash equipment and NUI helideck gutters, tended to arise most frequently: standards were generally improving, including the physical condition of helidecks. Mike Crabb confirmed, in response to a question from John Taylor, that adherence to the joint industry guidance on helideck netting testing was improving. He noted that some lapses in training, principally out of date

certificates for HLO/HDAs were occurring. Mark Robinson considered the onus should be on operators to identify when qualifications were out of date; the Vantage system might provide a means to achieve this.

ACTION 1: Tom McLaren to check whether HSE's Contractor Competence Project addressed the issue of the currency of helideck personnel training certificates. POST MEETING NOTE: It has been confirmed that this issue was outwith the scope of the Contractor Competence Project

Item 10 – SINTEF Helicopter Safety Study (HSS-3)

11. Pat Naylor provided an overview of SINTEF's third helicopter safety study, the aim of which was to analyse incidents reports covering both the UKCS and Norwegian Continental Shelf over >30 year period to allow analysis of risk factors. Trends between the UKCS and NCS were consistent until the final decade up to 2010 when a number of major helicopter accidents occurring on the UKCS had distorted the overall position. However, members agreed that these accidents were rare (isolated) events, which could have occurred in either province; it was therefore not reasonable, and too simplistic, to conclude that the UKCS operation was "less safe" than Norway. Members expressed concern that in a subsequent press release and an article appearing in 'Upstream', the Norwegian Petroleum Safety Agency (PSA) had termed NCS performance 'excellent' whilst UKCS performance was said to have 'stagnated'.

12. Jessica Burton reported that Oil & Gas UK had written to PSA drawing attention to the wide range of measures to improve helicopter safety overseen by the Helicopter Task Group (copy circulated to members). John Taylor was concerned about the effect of negative publicity on the workforce resulting from PSA's actions. Members agreed that the report should not be afforded further publicity. Pat Naylor advised that he would be considering the report further in conjunction with the 2006 Oil & Gas UK report which compared UKCS helicopter safety performance both with operations conducted in the North Sea and on a world-wide basis, in order to establish a level playing field for statistical comparison.

Item 11 – Letters to industry regarding the fitment of meteorological equipment and upgraded helideck motion monitoring system requirements (HMS) and weather data

13. Mike Crabb summarised the advice given by HCA to duty holders in two letters issued in March 2010 – copies have been provided to members.

Item 12 – Research update

14. In the absence of Dave Howson, Kevin Payne drew attention to the key highlights in the update circulated to members. John Taylor commented that the Trade Unions were particularly impressed with the degree of helicopter safety research being undertaken within the HSRMC programme; he asked that thanks be conveyed to Dave Howson.

Item 13 – Any other business

15. Ian Evans queried the requirements regarding the storage of helifuel (Avgas) within the latest draft of OE6 COSHH Essentials. Pat Naylor agreed to follow-up the issue with OSD's Occupational Health Team.

ACTION 2: Pat Naylor to follow-up with OSD's Occupational Health Team

16. Jessica Burton reminded members of the next Oil & Gas UK Aviation Seminar which would be taking place on 15 September 2010 at AECC.

Item 14 – Date and venue of next meeting

17. It was agreed to hold the meeting at HSE's Norwich office in November 2010; the Secretary would consult members on possible dates.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

ACTION 1: Tom McLaren to check whether HSE's Contractor Competence Project addressed the issue of the currency of helideck personnel training certificates

ACTION 2: Pat Naylor to investigate the requirements for the storage of helifuel as covered in the latest draft of COSHH Essentials with OSD's Occupational Health Team