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OIACHLG/08/M2

**HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
OFFSHORE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
HELICOPTER LIAISON GROUP**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2008 at the offices of the
International Marine Contractors Association, London SW1**

Present

Representing

Chair:	Tom McLaren	HSE
Members:	Robert Paterson Mike Crabb Kevin Payne Dave Howson Mark Robinson Ian Evans Ian Giddings Steve Haddock Mike Lunt	Oil & Gas UK HCA CAA CAA Unite, Amicus Section BROA IMCA HSE HSE
Secretary:	Phil Sumner	HSE
Guest Presenter:	Colin Hord, UK Meteorological Authority, CAA	

Item 1 – Introduction/Apologies

1. Tom McLaren advised that he had replaced Steve Walker as Chairman of HLG as a consequence of senior management changes within OSD.
2. Apologies had been tendered by Peter Norton (BHA), John Monks (IADC), John Taylor (Unite, TGWU Section), John Monaghan (HCA) and Phil Wiggs (IMCA, for whom Ian Giddings was standing in). BALPA and OCA had advised that it was not possible to provide a representative on this occasion. The Chairman welcomed Mark Robinson as a member of HLG, replacing Rab Wilson who had retired and recorded his thanks to Ian Giddings for making IMCA's facilities available to the Group.

Item 2 – Status of matters arising from minutes of previous meeting

ACTION 1: HSE to organise discussions with CAA and Oil & Gas UK to identify those elements within the Offshore Helideck Design Guide to be incorporated in CAP 437 or the Management of Offshore Helidecks, as appropriate, keeping HLG informed of progress.

The Chairman drew members' attention to the agreed notes of the previous meeting placed on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/oia/hlg.htm> and to the Post Meeting Note. As there had not been any progress to report regarding the review of Chapters 6 – 11 of the Guide due to priority being placed by CAA on publication of the reissue of CAP 437 it was agreed to regard the action as closed.

Item 3 HSE letter to duty holders re helideck perimeter safety nets and foam production systems

3. Mike Lunt summarised the responses provided by duty holders to HSE's letter seeking confirmation that the actions required by (i) the joint industry Guidance issued by Oil & Gas UK regarding the testing of helideck perimeter safety nets and (ii) HSE Safety Notice 2/2004 in respect of the annual testing of helideck fire-fighting foam production systems, were being complied with. With only around 25% of responses still awaited a positive picture of compliance was evident in respect of helideck netting and replacement where necessary. With respect to foam testing, duty holders had reported some problems in the quality of produced foam identified during annual testing. A formal report covering both issues would be provided to members when all responses had been received and analysed.

ACTION 1: Mike Lunt to provide a report to HLG in the first quarter of 2009 on the extent of duty holder compliance in response to HSE's generic letter on helideck perimeter safety nets and foam production systems.

Item 4 Helicopter/helideck issues at normally unattended installations

4. Robert Paterson reported on the industry meeting he had chaired following HLG's last meeting at which the need for an improved rescue and firefighting provision on NUIs was prominent amongst the matters discussed. Progress on this aspect had been slow. He noted that some duty holders were adopting a 'walk to work' approach with NUI access provided from a support vessel. This had the benefit of increasing available work time as well as reducing the number of helicopter flights, due to the presence of the vessel. The Vantage system showed that some NUIs were receiving up to 200 flights per year.

5. Progress towards developing guidance which would contribute to revision of Chapter 10 of the existing Oil & Gas UK guidance covering Management of Offshore Helicopter Operations was slower than hoped. This was partly due to a lack of a fire-fighting system acceptable to the HCA capable of delivering sufficient quantities of principal agent (e.g. AFFF) at the required minimum discharge rate and duration which could be retrofitted to NUIs, as an alternative to a deck integrated fire-fighting system (DIFFS). Provision for a DIFFS is specified in CAP 437, which is usually incorporated at

the design stage. However, one particular system which might be suitable was being developed that utilizes a 4,000 litre foam premix with 4 high pressure nitrogen cylinders; discharge is via a single 30 metres x 38mm hose.

6. Mike Lunt reported that he had attended three meetings of the Working Group led by Energy Institute to produce wide ranging guidance on the design and operation of NUIs. BP had kindly made available to the Work Group its own guidance that it was developing for its worldwide operations. The BP document will form the basis of the design aspects of the guidelines. A contractor is currently being sought to carry out the work on behalf of the Group. HLG agreed that the results of a 1995 Industry led Task Force study on NUI risk assessment should be fed into the EI Group.

ACTION 2: Mike Lunt to ensure that the outcome of the work of the 1995 NUI Task Force study on risk assessment is fed into the Energy Institute NUI project.

Item 5 – Feedback from Oil & Gas UK Aviation Safety Technical Group

7. Mike Lunt provided a brief report on the main issues raised at ASTG's last meeting held in September 2008. He suggested that the minutes of this and future ASTG meetings be circulated to HLG providing this was acceptable to ASTG.

ACTION 3: Robert Paterson to seek approval to the circulation of ASTG minutes to HLG members at next ASTG meeting. POST MEETING NOTE: The matter was discussed at ASTG's meeting held on 9 December 2008. It was noted that HLG had a much narrower remit than ASTG; the former is largely focussed on helideck operations, whereas the latter has a much wider technical and operational remit. Hence it was appropriate for those attending ASTG to continue to make a judgement as to what material and which topics are relevant to OIAC HLG members.

Item 6 – BALPA perspectives on offshore helicopter safety issues

DEFERRED TO NEXT MEETING

Item 7 – CAP 437 (6th Edition) amendment - update

8. Kevin Payne reported that the 6th Edition of CAP 437 was in final stages of preparation and CAA was hoping to publish it on its website by the end of 2008. The 6th Edition would constitute a major revision. A table providing a comparison with the content of the 5th edition, produced at the request of IMCA, will be attached to an HSE Operations Notice (ON) to be issued early in the New Year. An important element being addressed was the need to take account of national 'best practice' within CAP 437 which reflected the latest amendments to ICAO Annex 14 Volume 2 and which following State acceptance, under the State Letter consultation process, will

become applicable for member states in November 2009. Kevin Payne asked to place on record his thanks to John Burt and Oil & Gas UK for their contributions to the new Chapters 7 and 8 – Helicopter refuelling facilities.

9. The Chairman stressed the importance of ensuring that updated guidance such as the new edition of CAP 437 was widely disseminated. HSE would be considering the most suitable means of publicising such material, including use of the HSE website and 'Tea-shack News'. **POST MEETING NOTE:** Operations Notice 78 has been published on HSE's website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/offshore/notices/on-78.htm>.

Item 8 – Presentation on the new requirements in CAP 437 for meteorological information from offshore installations

10. Colin Hord, UK Meteorological Authority, CAA provided HLG with an informative overview of the changes in CAP 437 in meteorological reporting from offshore installations. A copy of the presentation is attached.

11. Recording his thanks to Colin Hord, the Chairman noted the important link between the forecasting of local meteorological conditions and weather related EER arrangements.

Item 9 – HSE offshore helideck inspection programme

12. Mike Lunt reported that nine offshore helideck inspections had been undertaken so far in 2008/09 by OSD's Aviation and Marine Team with attention focussed on the length of time taken by duty holders to close out non-compliances identified during inspections carried out by HCA, the Verification bodies, ICP's and HSE. Guidance would be produced for inspectors in order to assist them during future inspections. A brief report summarising the results of the inspection programme will be provided to HLG separately.

Item 10 – Feedback from HCA helideck inspection programme

13. Mike Crabb confirmed HSE's observations regarding the time taken by duty holders to close-out inspection findings and also that a significant programme of helideck netting replacement was taking place. The change-out of helideck perimeter lighting from yellow to green introduced to UK industry in July 2004 as a new ICAO standard mandatory from 1 January 2009 was also proceeding satisfactorily. Kevin Payne, noting that the 10th anniversary of the HCA inspection regime had just past at the beginning of November 2008, suggested that it was an opportune time for HCA to give an update on progress made through their inspection programmes over the last decade. Members agreed that it would be helpful for HCA to report on the effectiveness of its helideck inspection regime at the next meeting. The Chairman requested that reports should be provided for members' consideration in advance of future meetings in order that any issues arising could be properly discussed.

ACTION 4: Mike Crabb to provide a report to HLG's next meeting analysing HCA's offshore helideck inspection regime since its inception.

Item 11 – International Helicopter Safety Team

DEFERRED TO NEXT MEETING

Item 12 – Research update

14. Dave Howson circulated copies of his brief describing the progress on each of the helicopter safety research projects under the joint industry HSRMC programme, and showing the current funding status in tabular form. A brief summary was provided. A copy of the update is attached.

15. Mike Lunt noted that the MoU between HSE and CAA covering the projects to which HSE is contributing was due to end in the spring of 2009, and asked that HSE be notified of any anticipated over-runs or any new funding requests.

Item 13 – Identify AOB

16. The following matters were raised:

i) Mike Lunt advised that HSE had issued an Operations Notice giving guidance to duty holders whose installations are served by helicopters which may require icing inhibitors to be mixed with their fuel load. The need for this guidance had been identified during a recent HSE offshore inspection. (Operations Notice 76 has been published on HSE's website at http://www.hse.gov.uk/offshore/notices/on_76.htm).

ii) Kevin Payne advised that BHAB was now known as BHA – British Helicopter Association.

Item 14 – Date and venue for next meeting

17. Members expressed a preference for holding HLG's next meeting in London in June 2009. Kevin Payne offered to host the meeting at CAA's Gatwick offices in view of the planned corporate location changes which would be impacting on the size of HSE's London office. The Chairman advised that possible dates and an invitation to suggest agenda items would be circulated.

Summary of actions agreed at OIAC HLG meeting on 27 November 2008

ACTION 1: Mike Lunt to provide a report to HLG in the first quarter of 2009 on the extent of duty holder compliance in response to HSE's generic letter on helideck perimeter safety nets and foam production systems.

- ACTION 2: Mike Lunt to ensure that the outcome of the work of the 1995 NUI Task Force study on risk assessment is fed into the Energy Institute NUI Working Group.**
- ACTION 3: Robert Paterson to seek approval to the circulation of ASTG minutes to HLG members at the next ASTG meeting.**
- ACTION 4: Mike Crabb to provide a report to HLG's next meeting analysing HCA's offshore helideck inspection regime since its inception.**